

EVENT MARKETING AS STRATEGIC CONCEPT

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Abstract

Event marketing describes the process of developing a themed exhibit, display, or presentation to promote a product, service, cause, or organization leveraging in-person engagement. Events can occur online or offline, and can be participated in, hosted, or sponsored. Sport and sport events have considerable social impact. Social impacts are consequences to human populations of any public action that alters the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society. Sport events play a significant role in a community's marketing and branding strategy as event organizers can attract spectators and participants through the staging of sport events. Key reasons for a business to participate in an event are: (1) Branding and Awareness, (2) Lead Generation, (3) Customer Engagement and Up sell, and (4) Education.

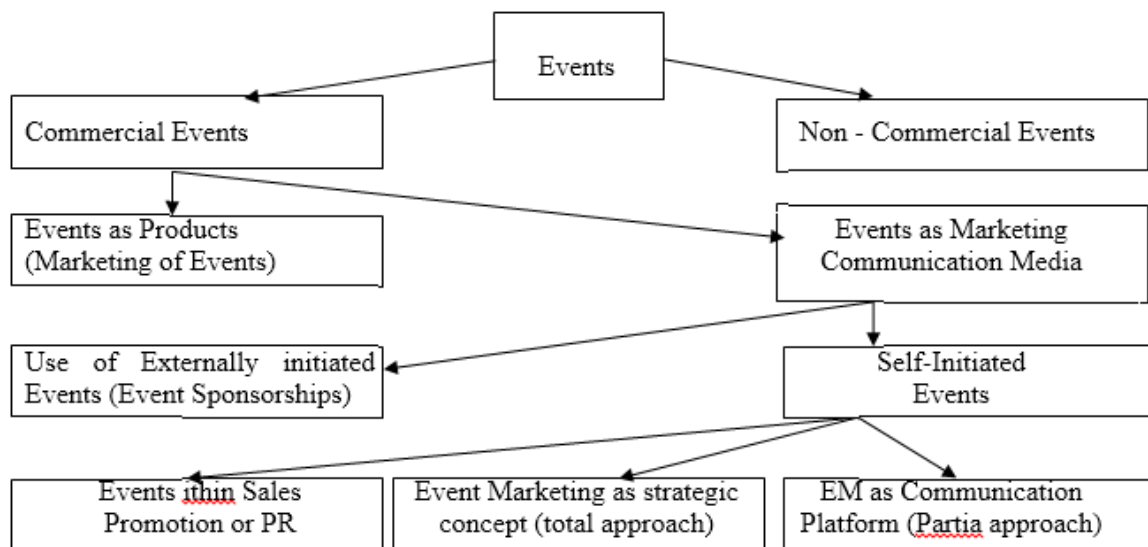
Key words: event marketing, sport, promote products, branding awareness

Introduction

Event marketing describes the process of developing a themed exhibit, display, or presentation to promote a product, service, cause, or organization leveraging in-person engagement. Events can occur online or offline, and can be participated in, hosted, or sponsored. The activity of designing or developing a themed activity, occasion, display or exhibit (such a sporting event, music festival, fair or concert) to promote a product, cause or organization is also called event creation. (Businessdictionary.com, 2017). Event marketing is one of the fastest growing forms of marketing communication. During the last few years, the term event marketing has been used extensively to describe different phenomena, like events as products, sales promotions, or sponsorships (Wohlfeil and VVhelan, 2005). In contrast, in this article, the term event marketing is understood exclusively in the sense of a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company's marketing messages by involving the target groups in experiential activities. This means that their members are themselves active during a so-called marketing event, e.g., by doing sports or being creative, thus offering the opportunity for social interaction among the participants as well as between participants and the company (Close, Finney, Lacey, and Sneath, 2006). Basically, events can be divided into being commercial or noncommercial. Commercial events in return can either be products themselves (marketing of events) or be used as media within marketing communications. Most English-speaking literature does not regard event marketing as a marketing communication strategy and, thus, refers to the marketing of events within the broader concept of event management (Schulz and Berger 2004; Nufer 2002; Getz 2002; Goldblatt 1997). Here, event marketing is the whole process of planning, managing and marketing corporate and special events. A special event describes a unique moment in time or an occasion that is different from ordinary life and involves some celebration or ceremony (Nufer 2002; Goldblatt 1997), while corporate events refer to seminars, conferences and exhibitions that are organized by corporations or institutions and aimed at internal and external audiences (Schulz and Berger 2004; Getz 2002; Goldblatt 1997). In either case, the emphasis of the event management literature is on the efficient running of events by taking into account the operational aspects of technology, logistics, catering, special effects and human resources (Nufer 2002) as well as the necessary promotion activities.

These marketing events are organized by the companies themselves and can focus on different "event objects," such as brands, product lines, or the company itself. An example for a marketing event is the worldwide series of "Red Bull Flugtag" organized by the energy drink company Red Bull during which the participants jump from a ramp in a do-it-yourself flying machine into a lake and can win prizes in different categories (e.g., longest jump, most original flying machine).

Table No. 1 Events as Marketing Communication Media



Source: The Different Understandings of “Events” in Marketing Literature (Drengner 2003; Zanger 2002)

This romantic consumption ethic has not only led to an increasing orientation towards and active participation in leisure and recreation, entertainment and cultural neo-tribes (Cova and Cova 2002; Martin 2004; Mitchell 1988), but also outlined the need for experiential marketing communications to gain consumers' attention. Event marketing is a promotional strategy that involves face-to-face contact between companies and their customers at special events like concerts, fairs, and sporting events. Brands use event marketing entertainment (like shows, contests, or parties) to reach consumers through direct hand-to-hand sampling or interactive displays. The practice works because it engages consumers while they're in a willing, participatory position. (Marketing-schools.org, 2017) A successful event marketing campaign provides value to attendees beyond information about a product or service. A discount, free sample, charity alignment, or fun event will make customers feel like they are receiving a benefit and not just attending a live-action commercial. In contrast to traditional advertising, which blasts millions of consumers with the same general television, radio or billboard message, event marketing targets specific individuals or groups at gathering spots, in hopes of making quality individual impressions. The key to pulling off an effective event marketing campaign is to identify the target audience correctly and create an experience that remains in participants' memories. By finding an opportunity to interact with the right demographic of people - both current customers and prospective buyers - a brand can build favorable impressions and long-lasting relationships. The best, most creative events create interactions that not only reflect positively on the brand at the time, but generate a buzz long after the event is over. (Marketing-schools.org, 2017) Events must be memorable to make an impact. Of course the desired impact depends on your goals, but most companies want events to be more than just a staged advertisement for their brand. When done well, events have the power to create a lasting and powerful impression of all that your company can deliver. By allowing people to experience and interact with your company, product or service while participating in an event, you are connecting with potential buyers. “Not all events are created equal. Companies must consider live events an extension of their brand and content marketing and build events that really engage. For me that means thinking about the customer experience you REALLY want to portray. A 6x6 static stand is unlikely to meet that need!” (Marketo.com, 2017). Sport and sport events have considerable social impact. Social impacts are consequences to human populations of any public action that alters the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society (Institute for Environmental Studies, 1995). Participation in sport, whether this behavioral action is active, passive, indirect, individual, or event context related, has become an attractive strategy for local, regional, and national governments to provide social benefits for community residents (Johnson&Whitehead, 2000). Sport events play a significant role in a community's marketing and branding strategy as event organizers can attract spectators and participants through the staging of sport events. The type of sport events can vary in terms of focus (e.g., participant or spectator, competitive, single purpose,

multiple sport or festival, single day, weekly, monthly, or annual). (Higham&Hinch, 2003). Key reasons for a business to participate in an event are: (Marketo.com, 2017) (1) Branding and Awareness, (2) Lead Generation, (3) Customer Engagement and Upsell, and (4) Education.

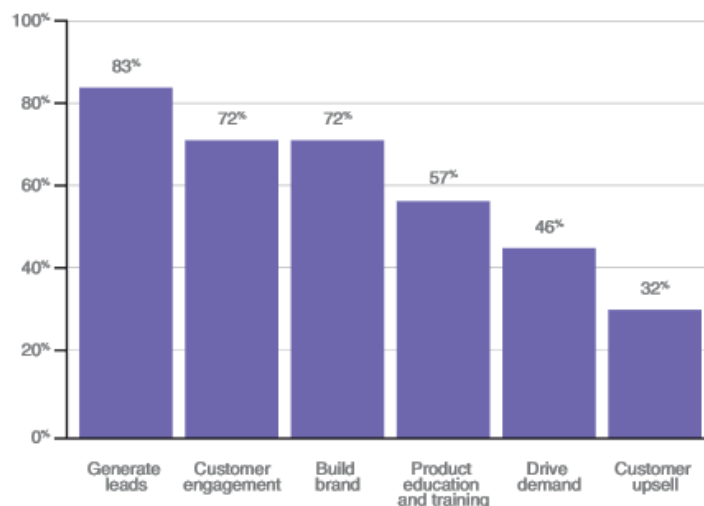
1. Branding and Awareness - A key reason for a business to participate in an event is to establish and build its brand. Event marketing allows your company to cultivate and express its identity firsthand. Through events, you gain the perfect venue to share your ideas, thoughts, and name in the exact manner you want to present them. "Don't forget that members of the media usually attend industry events. The event organizer can often give you a list of journalists and editors who will be at the event. Reach out to them in advance and schedule a meeting [...] which often can result in a feature article that highlights your company and gets the sales reps' phones ringing." (WalkerSands, 2017)

2. Lead Generation - Another important reason businesses choose to participate in an event is to generate leads. And what better way to do so than to be part of an event where your target demographic is present? The right event allows your company to interact with a group of prospects that already have an interest in who you are and what you do. "In these days of social media, face-to-face content can really enhance your online connection with your potential customers. Make sure you are using the Twitter hashtags regularly and watch the social media marketing that happens for the event on Facebook so you can comment on the posts and gain visibility with other attendees before the event." (Andreavahl.com, 2017)

3. Customer Engagement and Upsell - Events offer an unparalleled level of customer engagement, with an opportunity for positive personal interaction that builds loyalty. Plus, every marketer knows that companies can realize the biggest ROI on their marketing dollars by retaining and growing existing customers. The challenge is to gain the attention of your customers amid the distractions of daily work. At events, you enjoy the chance to upsell customers by introducing them to products and services that they may not know about - or may not realize could address their needs. "It's easy to fall back on the same type of event over and over again. Stepping out of your box will help you inspire and connect with your existing audience in a new and refreshing way. It will likely also increase the chance of attracting new attendees, participants and evangelists." - (PamMktgNut, 2017)

4. Education - Most people attend events to network and be educated. Both are powerful draws in their own ways. No matter what type of event you are at, it is critical to impart knowledge that the audience will value - and that sets your company apart.

Graphic no.1 Event program goals



Source: <https://www.marketo.com/event-marketing/>, April, 2017

As much as stunt can seem like a dirty word, marketing through stand-out events has never been so maverick. Whether you call it event marketing, experiential marketing, live marketing, participatory advertising, or any other moniker, this is a brave new world of blowing things up, building in a technological overlay to real-world places, and convincing otherwise sane passers-by to dance or change clothes in the street; all with the motive of engaging consumers. We talked with some of the smartest minds in experiential marketing to find out how they pull off memorable events; and make sure there's significant consumer engagement long after the event is over. Here's what they told us. (Inc.com, 2017)

1. Create an event within an event. "We try to create an event within an event where we can touch a consumer one-on-one, where you can engage directly, and teach them about your product, and do so by interacting in a quality way. I just got back from Sundance, and we were doing VIP and celebrity shuttling to events in our vehicles, and the goal for us is to create an event within the vehicle. For Ray Ban we did a truth-or-dare themed campaign. We have video within the shuttles, and asked the passengers truth-or-dare questions, and were giving away free sunglasses. We had people dancing in the middle of the street, we had people telling us their biggest secrets. And that was not only fun for participants, but became a huge hit online after the event. We try to make it almost mass media, where they're telling their friends to go here, or watch this video, and we create a whole social-media event around it. Why does it work? People go to these things to experience new things, and we're giving them that. They want to share it with their friends naturally when they see something cool." (Inc.com/inc 5000.profile/show media, 2017).

2. Employ GPS and real-time event tracking. "I think one of the things that we've been playing around with Real Good Chair [a documentary in which 25 chairs by Blu Dot were placed around New York City and tracked by GPS and film crews] is location and GPS. It's something that someone can participate in and watch and see in real-time. You don't have to be there in the streets of New York to see it; you have a whole other community that can go along with that experience. That connection with another event, is really new and the power of new is huge. If it feels like a different experience; if it captures your fascination, that's what really gets passed along, and builds the press and community around it. It's what flash parades were two years ago; that's the scramble in many ways. Has anyone done this before? Will this be felt like a copycat? It's all about staying new." (Michael Hart, founder of Mono, an agency based in Minneapolis).

3. Add another dimension. "A lot of the technologies that are potentially transformative to events today are essentially invisible. People have gotten used to 3D technology, projections, and augmented reality that to have them at events feels a lot more natural today. I'd say augmented reality is a great technology you can use in the live space for project demonstrations. A couple of years ago it would have felt a lot more awkward, forced, and generally very Minority Report. QR codes are pretty invisible at this point, too, becoming much less awkward, more natural, and that lets them become sparks for natural interactivity. H&M and Samsung have done very beautiful projection mapping on buildings in Europe. It's the kind of thing that's not what people think of as traditional event, but it's experience in the public domain that gets attention, and really can have the potential to get the attention online just because it's cool to watch." (Liz Bigham, senior vice president and director of marketing for Jack Morton Worldwide).

4. Use ubiquitous social networking as a conduit for exclusivity. "The giant gorilla in the room is how do you use Facebook through your event and on-site activity? The first thing that's happening is that I'm seeing a lot of brands encouraging people to become fans right there on site. It used to be that you'd have to have a computer there and encourage people to sign directly on your machine. Now, you can offer a direct reward, a prize, a premium, for fanning the product right then and there on their smartphone or mobile device. It's giving them some real immediate value. Immediate liking and friending is becoming more popular. I've also seen a lot of exclusive access to existing fans. You promote the event you're going to be at on Facebook; and you say, 'hey, if you're going to be there, here's an exclusive thing for our fans,' whether it's parking, a free T-shirt, meeting a musician or DJ. We're beginning to see, taking whatever's happening at your event, a video game event, a concert, a snowboarding contest, you're seeing not only being able to have physical access to it, but there would be content exclusive to Facebook. You can pick up about a million new brand fans by a good strategy of creating exclusive Facebook content. Do you want to see an interview with Sean White, or some neat snowboard footage? You can only see that on Facebook." (Issa Sawabini, a partner and owner at Fuse, a youth-marketing agency based in Burlington, Vermont).

5. Hire outside experts. Lots of them. When working on a campaign for Mafia Wars, in which an explosion of an armored truck would be staged in the Nevada desert, David Moranville, creative director and executive vice president of Davis Elen Advertising, said: "We were hoping to get *Myth Busters* involved with us so they'd do a show. In the meantime, we started looking into different detonations and different companies that obliterate things." Turns out, Los Angeles has quite a variety of companies that detonate blasts for hire. Moranville picked a company in Burbank called WESTefx, which had worked with special effects and blast technology in *Apollo 13*, *Transformers*, and *Batman*. The first thing Davis Elen learned was their armored truck ... didn't actually need to be armored. It was stripped of a lot of the interior weight, including armor, engine, and interior detailing. Blasting caps were added to the interior of all the doors, so at detonation each flies 20 or 30 feet. The truck was filled with artificial money, also rigged to blast away at the first explosion. Also, he knew that when there's fire, there should be fire officials.

And an EMT. And some hired police. The number of officials you'll need to hire depends on geography and how many civilians will be nearby the stunt. In this case, where about 75 people would be present, Moranville needed between two and four Fire Marshalls, between four and six hired law enforcement agents, and an EMT. The total cost was less than \$10,000.

6. Don't fear consumers' brutal honesty. "We did a ride and drive campaign for Hyundai Sonata this part year, which was part of a bigger campaign called Sonata Uncensored. The cars had cameras in them, and we invited people to give the cars test drives. So the drivers and passengers, once inside, could record themselves giving uncensored feedback on the car. It was used as part of a Facebook campaign, and a lot of that content-; and content like it-; was used for TV ads. The insight: Events are not just a moment in time, they are content that can be used in lots of ways, whether that's online, or on TV." (Liz Bigham, senior vice president and director of marketing for Jack Morton Worldwide)

7. Mash-up your technology. "You have to be in tune to what has been done before. It's trying to mash up things that haven't been mashed up before. Bringing a couple of technologies and mediums together that haven't been brought together before is the key. Old media with new media, or new tech with more comfortable older tech. And with that, you build a fascination with a new way the world can work. It's increasingly true that tech and creativity are becoming one in the same. I think they were a period of time where technology was a platform, and it was a group of people who solved problems for systems and machinery. There was a creative group, separately. They didn't get together. Now there are minds that come from a technology background and have creativity. The great melding of those worlds is right now. Geek has been cool for a while, and is only getting cooler." (Michael Hart, founder of Mono, an agency based in Minneapolis)

8. Tweeten the deal. "Almost every brand that has an audience in the Twitter age group-; young adults who aren't too young-; and is becoming used to making constant updates from the on-site/booth/whatever it is. It used to be you put up a sign up outside your booth when something was happening. Now you post updates online. Brands are also getting good at creating on-site experiences over Twitter. It could be an on-site scavenger hunt. It could be taking a photo; something fun and challenging, and if they bring that back they win a prize." (Issa Sawabini, a partner and owner at Fuse, a youth-marketing agency based in Burlington, Vermont) Since events are such a large part of your marketing mix, you want to make sure that you are thinking about all the details. Here are seven secrets to make sure that your events are consistently outperforming expectations: (Marketo.com, 2017)

1. Set realistic and targeted goals up front - ROI is not just something you consider after the event, you must plan for ROI from the outset and continue measuring ROI after the event. Your goals should not be limited to only registration and attendance models. The best goals will get into pipeline and revenue impact. Build a model up-front to understand the sensitivities of your event ROI based on various metrics. For instance, if you hold an event that is well-attended by the wrong people, you will increase your costs without impacting revenue. Your model may show that the percentage of qualified attendees tends to be a high indicator of success (this sensitivity may only be relevant for physical events, as virtual events are less costly). You also want to use the model to understand potential scenarios, i.e., best case, worst case, and risk. By preparing for all of these, you can proactively identify and manage risks up front. The best event programs incorporate intentional measurement strategies in advance, that means you should define what, when, and how you will measure during your initial planning phase so you have a benchmark to work with.

2. Incorporate a strong theme and be creative - Whether you are partaking in a virtual or physical event, delivering a cohesive look and feel helps create a seamless brand experience. Even with a virtual event you will have to think about how your booth looks, how you present your collateral, and what sort of contests you might want to incorporate. Hold a brainstorming session with your team to come up with viable ideas. And remember to think about all of the potential elements such as booth staffing uniforms, promotional materials, swag, and other collateral. It's not enough to just have a presence at an event. In a sea of vendors, how do you make your booth a smashing success? You want to create a presence that compels someone to stop, not just walk by. Consider using games or interactive tools as a way to pique the interest of attendees. Cool swag giveaways are also a great way to entice someone to enter.

3. Include multiple touches in your promotion - When putting so much time and energy into planning your event, you want to make sure that you do the promotion right. To generate the highest amount of registrants, you need a mix of email, social, public relations, and other types of paid promotions to get the biggest bang for your buck. By communicating with your audience early and often leading up to the event, you will have a better turnout as your event will be top of mind for your attendees. Finding the right number

of times for email promotions for an event has a great deal to do with the type of event you are promoting. For a larger tradeshow you should send a series of promotional emails starting roughly a month before the event, and spaced a week or so apart from one another to allow people to plan accordingly.

4. Segment your promotions to reach the right audience - No matter what sort of promotion you are using, segmentation is vital to getting the right attendees registered for your event. Make sure you spend time on data quality to ensure that the lists can be reused in the future. For segmentation you want to focus on demographics like: Job title, Company, Industry, Location, etc.

5. Include Social Media in Your Event Plans - Being active on social networks before, during, and after your event is crucial for success. Since events are in real-time, attendees often use social networks to engage with other participants in a live environment. Here are a few channels you should think about engaging attendees through: (Marketo.com, 2017)

- Twitter: Twitter is a powerful tool for not only marketing and promoting your events, but also engaging and connecting with the attendees in real-time. You will want to set up a hashtag, schedule a series of tweets, build twitter lists, and remember to live tweet.
- Facebook: Because Facebook is so visual, it is a great place to promote your events using eye-catching graphics. Begin posting 2-3 weeks before events and use a mix of custom graphics, memes, and images taken at the event to encourage attendees to register.
- Google+: The Google+ events feature allows users to send out customized invitations and syncs with Google calendar when a user confirms. You can also leverage Google Hangouts to get influencers, prospects, customers, and other attendees in the same place discussing event highlights.
- LinkedIn: Use LinkedIn to promote your registration page and use LinkedIn groups to get some additional traction.
- Foursquare: Leverage foursquare at an event to drive traffic to a physical location while using gamification to build buzz.

6. Be the first to follow-up with attendees and non-attendees alike - Making sure of proper event follow-up will set you apart from the competition and keep you fresh in the minds of your prospects. Always plan your follow-up strategy before the event begins—email follow-ups should be written and designed, offers should be decided on, and any other call-downs should be planned. Here are the steps you should consider when designing your follow-up campaigns: (Marketo.com, 2017)

- Lead List and Qualification: The lead list is a critical aspect of any event and lists should be created either directly after the show or every night after the exhibit hall closes.
- Email Follow-up: All email follow-ups should be written before the event takes place. Reading event synopsis, session descriptions, and blog posts will help you craft the email messaging.
- Lead Nurturing and Scoring: Lead nurturing and scoring are critical for a comprehensive event lead management strategy. Continue engaging event attendees through lead nurturing, and score new leads appropriately after events.

7. Base measurement around proving ROI - When it comes to measuring ROI, every company is unique in their level of sophistication and what they want to track. But where do you start? Below are three different levels of measurements. (Marketo.com, 2017) (a) Good: Basic Progression Measurement; (b) Better: Leads by Category and (c) Best: Pipeline Measurements.

You need to cover lots of details when it comes to events, and the best way to do that is to be over-prepared. That said, it is easy to make mistakes when planning or hosting an event. Here are some common ones to avoid and some ways that you can be as prepared as possible: (Marketo.com, 2017)

1. Going in Blind - Make sure you plan, plan, plan, and plan some more! Set proper expectations for the event, including training your staff, reviewing messaging, and doing your research on the exhibitors prior to arriving. Details matter. Events are a big investment, so make sure that everyone is on top of their game and you know all of the detail prior to the actual event.

2. Not Knowing How Much Staff You Need - Nothing looks worse than having booth staff standing around and doing nothing. Not only does it decrease your productivity, it also cuts down on the amount of real estate you have to hold a conversation with your prospects. And it just looks plain bad. On the other end of the spectrum, you want to make sure you have enough resources to effectively represent your company and engage with attendees.

3. Forgetting Relevant Conversations - This is a tough one, since there is so much going on at an event. How can you remember everything that was said if you had a good conversation with a very viable prospect? Make sure each and every staff member logs the key points of each conversation. You can do

this on the back of a business card, a sheet of paper that you can staple to the business card, and many iPad scanners now have the ability to save conversations directly in the app. This will make it easy for you to insert notes into your CRM system for targeted follow-up based on your conversation.

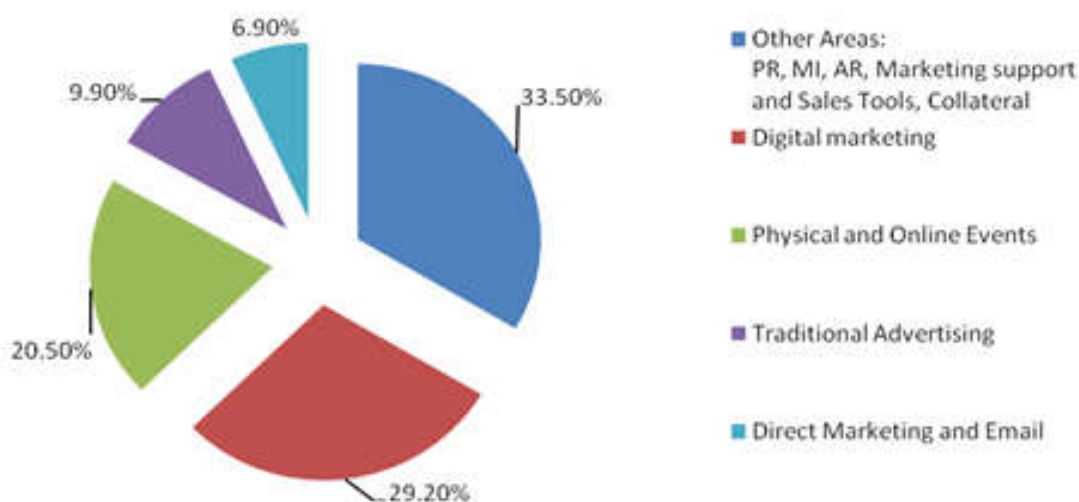
4. Missing Deadlines - We all know that tradeshow are expensive. The cost of missing discount deadlines will come back to bite you in the place that hurts most-your wallet. Many events offer early bird specials for registration, shipping, hotels, etc. If you procrastinate you may end up paying double the price. So plan early, and make sure you stay on top of all deadlines.

5. Not Standing Out from the Crowd - What have you done to promote your presence at the event? Think of ways to create buzz. This can be in the form of social media, swag, games or contests, etc. Remember, other exhibitors and sponsors at the event are trying to connect with the same audience. Make sure you give that audience a reason to seek you out.

Companies choose to participate in an event for various reasons. A small company may want the exposure that a live webinar can provide, while a large company may need the face-to-face interaction that a tradeshow affords. (See graphic no.1)

The aim of the research in this paper is to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each of these statements about Event marketing (physical and online) - EM and traditional advertising (TA). The survey was conducted on a random sample of respondents. With a sample size of 260 respondents, 41% female and 59% male, the survey was conducted in the beginning of 2017. The respondents answered on the asked questions with the following scale (5) Totally agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly disagree.

Graphic no.1 Percentage of Marketing budget allocated to events



Source: <https://www.marketo.com/event-marketing/>, chart from B2B Magazine's State of Event marketing, The top goals for attending events, April, 2017

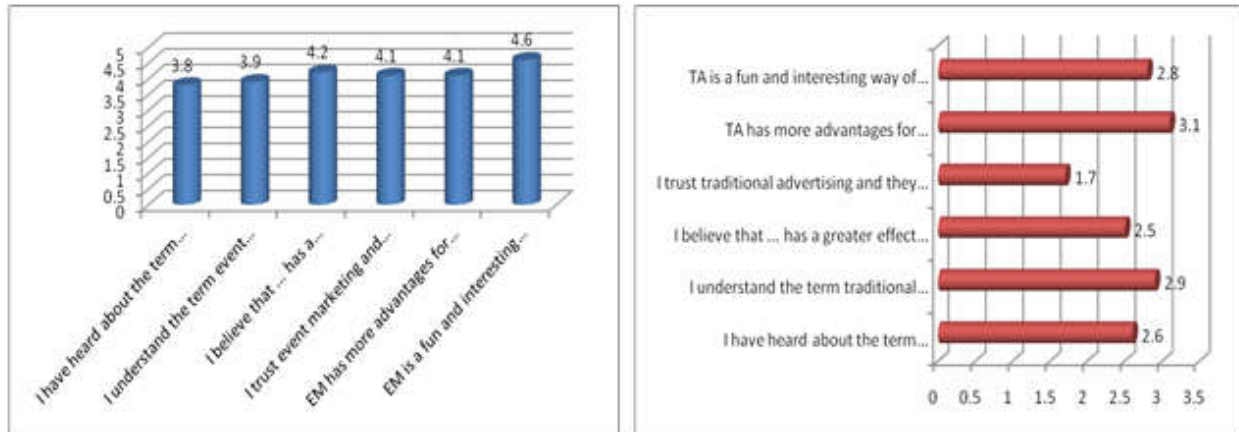
The results of both scales were summarized in a table to make a comparison between event marketing (physical and online) and traditional advertising. It is necessary to note that respondents who never heard of the terms and do not understand them, did not continue to respond to the questionnaire.

For the first statement that the respondents are familiar with the terms, the degree of consensus on the event marketing is 3.8, while the degree of agreement with this statement of traditional advertising is 2.6, which means that consumers are more familiar with the term event marketing, and the term traditional advertising is not very prominent.

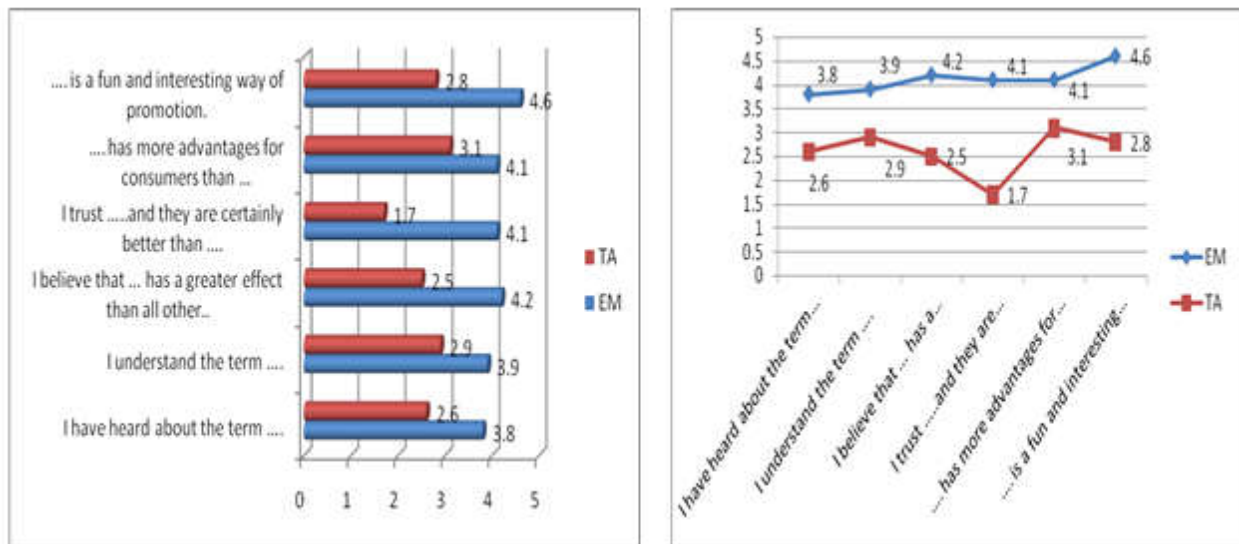
For the second statement that respondents understand these two terms, event marketing has a degree of agreement of 3.9, which means is more understood by consumers than traditional advertising with degree of agreement 2.9.

In the third statement about which form has greater effects, the degree of agreement is 4.2 for event marketing, as opposed to 2.5 for traditional advertising, which means that the respondents think that event marketing is more effective.

The fourth statement that consumers trust event marketing and traditional advertising ads and that they are certainly better than other promotion activities, the degree of consensus on the event marketing is 4.1, and traditional advertising is 1.7, which means that consumers trust event marketing ads more than traditional ads.



For the fifth statement that event marketing or traditional ad has more advantages from consumers, the level of agreement is 4.1 for event marketing and 3.1 for traditional advertising. The statement of event marketing shows that respondents believe that the event marketing is a better communication activity than traditional advertising.



For the sixth statement that event marketing or traditional ads is fun and interesting, the degree of agreement is 4.6 for event and 2.8 for traditional advertising, which means that they think event marketing is really the more interesting way of promotion.

Summary

Event marketing is a promotional strategy that involves face-to-face contact between companies and their customers at special events like concerts, fairs, and sporting events. Brands use event marketing entertainment (like shows, contests, or parties) to reach consumers through direct hand-to-hand sampling or interactive displays. The practice works because it engages consumers while they're in a willing, participatory position. Seven secrets to make sure that your events are consistently outperforming

expectations are: 1. Set realistic and targeted goals up front; 2. Incorporate a strong theme and be creative; 3. Include multiple touches in your promotion; 4. Segment your promotions to reach the right audience; 5. Include Social Media in Your Event Plans; 6. Be the first to follow-up with attendees and non-attendees alike; and 7. Base measurement around proving ROI. The authors describe how marketing sport and related event products and services differ from traditional marketing in terms of ten aspects and are worth reviewing to understand the unique nature of sport consumer behavior: 1. Sport organizations must compete and cooperate; 2. Sport consumers are experts; 3. Supply and demand fluctuates; 4. Sport is an intangible product; 5. Simultaneous consumption; 6. Social facilitation via sport; 7. Inconsistent nature of the product; 8. Lack of control over the core product; 9. Reliance on product extensions; and 10. Consumer vs. industrial nature of sport.

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