

## Events Marketing 4-D Research

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In this article, there is presented a 4-D research regarding events. If a 360-degree research takes into account the direct audience at the event, the organization that ordered the event and the company that organized the event, it undertakes a 3-D research, bearing in mind that the event is seen from three different points of view. A 4-D research, implies the indirect audience of an event as well, as it may be very important for each and every one of them. At a first glance, although the indirect public does not seem to be very important for the success of an event, they must be borne in mind for further editions of the event as those from the indirect audience might turn into direct audience. In this paper, we will reveal the most profitable communication channels for this kind of audience. And consequently, those, who organize an event, should be interested not only in how to modify the behavior and the way direct audience views the organizations, but also the ways and means by which the indirect audience's behavior can be changed at the same time with the manner they value the organizations.

**Key words:** events marketing, 4-D research, communication channels

**JEL classification:** M31, M30.

### 1. Introduction

Events play a very important role in the development of the society in general and the individual in particular. Not only the direct audience must be considered important for the present event, but also the indirect audience for the future editions must be taken into account and investigated to see what elements of an experience may be communicated to them in order to make them become direct audience.

If a 360-degree research takes into account the direct audience at the event, the organization that ordered the event and the company that organized the event, it undertakes a 3-D research, bearing in mind that the event is seen from three different points of view. A 4-D research implies the indirect audience of an event as well, as it may be very important for each and every one of the events. At a first glance, the indirect public does not seem to be very important for the success of an event. Consequently, those, who organize an event should be interested not only in how to modify the behavior and the way direct audience views the organizations, but also the ways and means by which the indirect audience's behavior can be changed at the same time with the approach they value the organizations.

### 2. Defining direct audience and indirect audience

One important issue is to define and to delimit the direct and indirect audience of an event. Although at first it might seem very easy to do this classification, for a rigorous analysis, sometimes it is a very thin line in delimiting them precisely. If most specialists admit that the direct audience of an event is made up of only those who physically take part in an event, while those, who watch, no matter if it is live or replay, hear or read about the event, are the indirect audience.

The problem rises regarding the events that take place due to the technology development that made them possible by establishing connections between people, regardless of their place, city, country, continent and we might even add time as an important factor if we discuss about different time zones where the people taking part of the event are. The only condition is a phone connection for teleconferences, or internet, using software like Skype for video conferences. But seen from this point of view even the indirect audience, that watch a sport event, cultural event, a concert on TV or the internet, can be considered direct audience as the event is transmitted on live stream.

In the US, the Super Bowl (Mohr, 2007) is annually the nation's highest-rated TV program and the most watched single-day sporting event. Despite the increasing fragmentation of viewing audiences, Super Bowl is an event in itself, which became an entertainment and social extravaganza in its own right, that not only for the sport competition itself, but also for the half-time show and the advertisements, considering that on average 80-90 million Americans are tuned in at any given moment.

However, in 2004 during the Halftime Show of Super Bowl XXXVIII, when a concert was held by two American famous singers Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake (Vance S., 2014), the last one by "accident" revealed the breast of Janet during the choreography of their performance.

The incident did not just spark (Duca, 2014) a legal battle between CBS Broadcasting Inc. and the Federal Communications Commission about the "wardrobe malfunction" that culminated with a total fine of \$550,000, but also no events were allowed from that point forward to be transmitted live, no matter if they are sport events, competitions, concerts, even conferences, without a buffer of at least ten seconds in order to give time for televisions to insert generics or advertising if it is necessary, if situation requires so as not to create panic and mislead. Regarding this, in 2005, a bill was enrolled in the USA named Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2005.

After the incident (Wenner, 2008), even the commercials aired during the Super Bowl breaks came under closer moral interrogation. Different commercials were banned starting from the 2005 Super Bowl broadcast.

Bearing this in mind, those, who watch a direct transmission, cannot be considered direct audience. The problem arises regarding a video conference or teleconferences, where the participants can interact, influence and change the way meeting is deployed and ends. There are sport games, like wrestling, where the outcome is usually established by the reaction of the public, as well as the numbers of viewers, and the organizers make the decision who should win only to please both the spectators and viewers.

Direct audience (Berman, 2011) is defined as the population to which messages regarding the events are sent directly and purposefully, with the intention of effecting behavioral change, while indirect audiences are people who are not directly targeted by the messages, but for whom there is concern as to how they will react to the delivery of a certain message to a direct audience.

With respect to the ideas presented, direct audience can be considered those who physically take part in an event, at the site of the event, but also direct audience can be considered those who can interact, influence the outcome of an event and the way it ends, while the indirect audience is represented by those who watch it on TV, internet, radio, regardless if the event is transmitted live or replay, or read in newspapers, magazines about the event.

When the organizers start to promote the event, which in timeline is pre-event, direct and indirect audience are perceived as potential audiences that can attend the event. During the event and post-event, the potential audience becomes direct and indirect audience depending if they attend the event, or are implicated in the deployment of the event.

### **3. Impact of the events**

Events (Richards & Palmer, 2010) are emerging worldwide and are seen to have significant economic and socio cultural impacts on the destination and host society. It is widely recognized (Wilson, 2006) that events can act as a 'catalyst' for economic development and urban regeneration. Even small scale events have the potential to generate unequivocal economic benefit to their host communities providing that secondary expenditure opportunities are available, where commercial accommodation, food, drink, shopping and souvenirs are very likely to increase during the deployment of such events.

Hosting and realizing events (Kruger, Rootenberg & Ellis, 2012) is the best way of providing different types of experience, not only to the tourism industry. Events, no matter if they are cultural, sport, entertainment or corporate, offer a wide range of experiences that are different from day-to-day living offering a lifestyle package. Tourists travel to leisure-related experiences, including opportunities for social and/or cultural experiences, interactivity and personal development. Therefore, events should provide an experience that can influence the quality of life not only for the attending tourist, but also for the community where it is held, like involving more people, job creating, social inclusion and even developing the infrastructure of the city, region where they are carried out.

Many facilities, buildings and infrastructure developed for an event are subsidized (Crompton, 1995) either directly, or indirectly by investments from public sector funds. The scarcity of tax money, like the lack of investment in the three main domains for every country, which that wants to succeed and develop in the long term, are education, healthcare and security, has led to growing public scrutiny of their allocation and in this environment, there is likely to be an increased use of economic impact analysis to support public subsidy of these events. Additional revenues might not counterbalance the investment costs that must

also fit into the city's long-term plan to make the event economically successful. The prospect of governmental funding (Solberg & Preuss, 2007), however, provides motives to exaggerate the socioeconomic value of the events. This complicates the job of deciding which events to support and by how much. Expenditure on infrastructure sometimes exceeds regional economic benefits and the long-term demand for the infrastructure.

People from most communities, are afraid of not so strategically investments, the construction of imposing buildings and infrastructure development that unfortunately will raise the final costs and especially the local and national public budget will be affected only to maintain them. They are called white elephants (Mate, 2015) that are prestige projects, which are unnecessary and cannot be utilized in the future, in a broader sense, all venues and areas which remain unutilized after international events, sometimes in the middle of nowhere, and which are badly dilapidated. They are expensive to maintain and most of the times there is no solution for their utilization. Such examples are the sport buildings (Tiron, 2012) constructed in communities where the number of the locals does not exceed 500 people and the average age is above 40, the expenditure of more than 31 million euro for swimming pools with no demand, playgrounds that are on the outskirts of the town and difficult to reach without any means of transportation and roads that do not link any important cities, that do not lead to anywhere. Also, there was much debate regarding the National Arena turf (M.D., 2013) that was changed more than six times and the total costs of the operations exceeded more than 1 million E.

The next big event that will be organized in Romania in 2021 is the "Universiade" (Agerpres, 2015) that is an international sports and cultural manifestation, organized once every two years in a different country, on the basis of a selection procedure drawn up by the International University Sports Federation, being the second sporting event by size after the Olympic Games. Romania has organized, up to now, a single "Universiade", in 1981, being the largest sporting event organized in our country so far. The Romanian President, Klaus Johannis spoke at a press conference (Vandenplas, 2015) that "An event of this scale will be beneficial for Romania both economically and socially. The "Universiade" will improve the image of our country and develop tourism. With Universiade, large investments will also be made to the development of sport in Romania, which is more than necessary nowadays."

#### **4. Qualitative research**

A qualitative research was conducted to see what are the main obstacles and incentives that can make the potential audience become direct audience and how the indirect audience can become direct audience for the future events. We used in-depth interviews in order to explore the potential audience, but also the indirect audience, perspectives, experiences, feelings and point of views, regarding the communication about events. In this research were interviewed young adults with ages ranging from 19 up to 25 that took part at different kind of events regardless if they were direct or indirect audience. The interview was structured in three modules.

The first module was the introduction with questions referring to the respondents' quality of life and lifestyle, what their main objectives are and how they spend the leisure time, taking into account that events have to compete not only for their money, but also for their time.

The second module considered all the respondents as potential audience and discussed the pre event timeline, no matter if they attended, or not the events taken into discussion.

The respondents usually attend different kinds of events like fairs, festivals, concerts, conferences or sport competitions. The main sources of information are the mass media, like TV, radio, newspapers and internet where a big importance is given to social media, are not excluded posters, or banners as sources of information for events. If it is appealing and in their area of interest, they usually search for more information. The main information that they are looking for when they see an announcement regarding an event, is about the date, place, hour, but also the ticket price, or if it is free of charge. Their friends, peers, colleagues are taken into account and can influence them to take part in an event, being considered at the same time, as a more credible source of information.

The main factors that they considered whether to attend, or not, an event are the theme of the event, the scope, the speakers, or the singers, in the case of a concert, the sports team that is playing, their hobbies, the place and the time where it is going to take place, indoors or outdoors, the weather conditions on the day of the event, the price of the tickets, conditions or restrictions and also if others are going, too.

As potential audience, they expect for the event to start on time, with no delays as their past experience taking part in different kinds of events there were strict rules regarding the consumption of food and drinks that are not bought from the location of the event and thus they were forced to stand in big queues for food and also at the toilets, the no-umbrella rule, or no cameras or photos, although the new generation of phones and more precisely, the smart-phones allow them to take very accurate footage and captures. The experience, that they will receive, is expected to be like no other and also the information in case of conferences, or fairs should meet their expectations. The possibility of buying souvenirs, or to receive as gifts testimonials that were manufactured for the occasion of that event. Most of the respondents want to see pictures or footage on social media networks like Facebook, YouTube or even on the website of the company, or the organizers of the event taken on that occasion. A respondent, who took part in a marathon, was very impressed that, after the event, although the organizers posted hundreds of photos taken during the event, it was pretty easy to find photos only with her, as they had a software where everyone could search after the number from their t-shirt and, in a very short time, only the photos with that number appeared as the result. On the other hand, another respondent was pretty disappointed that, though the organizers had many drones that took pictures and footage during the event, they did not post them anywhere as movies or photographs.

Organizing events are seen to have an economic impact, like an increasing number of businesses that provide goods and services, not only for the tourists, but also to the locals, giving them the opportunity to purchase and consume products, to which they, otherwise, they could have access only outside their region. Another consequence would be an increase in the number of tourists that will spend money, not only for accommodation, but for food, drinks and other leisure activities related. The infrastructure of the city is usually improving, as one respondent mentioned that Romania is obliged by UEFA to build, until 2020, a new thoroughfare for subways that will connect the international airport, Henri Coandă with the National Arena stadium, as well as the number of parking lots around the stadium must be doubled. Even new highways connecting the capital with the western boarder must be constructed in order to meet UEFA demands, all of them are seen as economic improvement and attracting more investors in the long term. The restoration of buildings, or constructing new facilities means more jobs, especially, for the young. Also the project "Universiade" is seen as an event with great potential for the development of the capital of Romania.

The third module, post event, took into consideration only the events where the respondents were indirect audience in order to analyze how they perceived the events that they did not attend physically or involved online, and what are the main communication channels that they trust. The most common reasons that they did not attend those events were lack of time, interest and other urgent matters. While the price of the tickets was not considered to be so important an obstacle, especially, if it is an event that is considered to have a greater impact on their life, regarding improving knowledge, or if it is a sports team, or band they are fans of. Even the prizes that can be won at the event, or backstage passes are seen as a regret for not being direct audience.

The main source of information and the most credible ones are considered to be those who took part in the event, like friends, relatives, colleagues, no matter if they discuss about it face to face, or through other communication channels like social media networks, chat or telephone. Media coverage of the event plays an important role, mainly, if there are events which they had the intention to participate, but for different reasons, they could not attend. The regret is most likely to appear if, during the event, prizes are offered to the participants, the possibility to develop networking, such as in the case of conferences, or job fairs, new information or knowledge that could be gained by that experience.

## **5. Conclusions**

Major events (Gratton, Dobson & Shibli, 2010) are now regarded by many as a significant part of their development strategy for their community and even region. However, staging a major event, normally, involves that the host city should bring a substantial contribution to the costs and whether such a contribution is justified, depends on the economic benefits generated in the local economy.

There is a clear need for much greater policy commitment and consistency, better synergies between public health and community efforts, mass communication campaigns to change social norms (Craig & Bauman, 2014) about being active, and building on the events infrastructure development and community

interest. A much stronger investment and partnership across sectors and agencies are required, with careful evaluation of the impact at the population level.

With intensified competition in the tourism market place and, especially, events market, it has become paramount for businesses and organizations that communicate through events (Neuhofer, Buhalis & Ladkin, 2015) to explore the potential of new technologies, not only to optimize existing processes of transmitting the events, but at the same time, to facilitate the creation of more meaningful and personalized services and experiences, during and after events, in order to attract more and more direct audience.

The event must be flawless so that it should create buzz and word of mouth regarding it, as the direct audiences have a greater influence upon the indirect audience, the experience should be unique and magnificent so it will be talked about and finally, it will make the indirect audience feel regretful for missing the event. Organizers should conduct, if possible, raffles for the direct audience with lots of prizes as possible, or backstage passes, or meeting with the sports team to take pictures and autographs. The organizers should even promote the experience through which the winners pass, so the cognitive dissonance will be greater for the indirect audience, by news or press releases, testimonials, photos, or footage that will be shared on social media networks, or special websites created for the event. Photos or footage taken during the event with the spectators or participants, and if the technology allows, with applications, or even details like place or section and time when it was taken, or even the dates for events that take place for several days in order to be easier to find by those who want to praise and share it.

As further researches must be conducted, especially, quantitative ones to see the impact regarding the news of the construction of sites for mega events that also imply public funds which can be used in other fields, or economic sectors and which might seem more important for the national economic growth in the long term.

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