

Measuring Event Marketing

The paper presents a comprehensive introduction of event marketing measurement techniques from both academic and practitioner points of view.

After defining “event marketing,” its possible goals are summarized and analyzed. Based on these findings, an overall review is presented on measuring possibilities and techniques. The research uses mainly secondary data but also uses in-depth interviews. The paper is based on international material, but also deals with the Hungarian situation.

Keywords: event marketing, measurement

INTRODUCTION

Many research studies have shown the growing importance of event marketing. Marketers agree that there has been a constant increase in event spending, and there is a widespread, positive attitude towards this marketing area.

Event marketing is a relatively new phenomenon in marketing practice and literature—approximately twenty years old. Its rise is connected to the many changes in the marketing environment. These are the increasing amount of advertising, the fragmentation and overuse of traditional media (Schreiber, Lenson 1994), changing attitudes of consumers, such as desire for novelty, individualism and added value (Wood, Masterman 2008), decreasing attention towards classical advertising and rising attention towards experiential consumption (Drengner, Gaus, Jahn 2008), high fragmentation of the population, the necessity to focus on the important segments of the market, increasing role of branding (Schreiber, Lenson 1994), and the need to build an emotional attachment to brands (Wood, Masterman 2008). As Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2010) note: “Instead of treating people simply as consumers, marketers approach them as whole human beings with minds, hearts, and spirits.”

The need for and importance of measurement is constantly increasing in marketing practice. It is even more relevant in relatively new communication areas such as event marketing, where the absence of data is one of the greatest obstacles of the use of the area. But before we can measure it, we have to define what exactly event marketing is. It is still not obvious in English, nor in Hungarian literature, and a slight difference exists between the definitions given in these various bodies of research. So the paper first reviews the explanations of different publications. The literature relating to event marketing is not too extensive and uniform, but it gives a sufficient platform for the analysis.

Event objectives play a prominent role in defining event marketing and also in measuring it. The literature suggests

that measuring “begins with clearly stated objectives developed from an understanding of what can be achieved” (Wood, Masterman 2008 3)

It is still a question how to measure event marketing and its effects. There is limited research on the topic, but some literature can be found from both academic and practitioner perspectives. With a review of the literature and help from professionals’ opinions, a comprehensive introduction can be framed of the topic.

EVENT MARKETING

First, it is necessary to define the term event marketing. It has been used extensively (Drengner, Gaus, Jahn 2008, Wohlfeil and Whelan 2005a), and there are broader explanations and also focused approaches to event marketing. At its widest interpretation, every event is event marketing. This interpretation certainly does not lead us closer to the point, since the range of events is too broad. We have to exclude events such as private parties, and focus on marketing-related events, as Cornwell and Maignan (1998 5) describe: event marketing is “marketing of events and marketing with events”. Wohlfeil and Whelan (2005a) consider events as products, sales promotions, or sponsorships. Gaur and Saggere (2001) attach exhibitions and fairs, festivals and celebrations to event marketing. Berger (2004) connects sponsoring, conferences, seminars, and internal events as well. Wood and Masterman (2008) state the necessity of limiting the included events to those that are created for primarily marketing purposes. This certainly is a very exclusive approach, since marketers can be sponsors at events, such as sporting events or music festivals, which are not marketing events in the first place. But Drengner, Gaus, and Jahn (2008) point out the necessity of detaching „event marketing” from „event sponsorship”.

Scholars emphasize that event marketing is an element of integrated marketing communication (Sneath, Finney and Close 2005). Some identify it as a separate tool of the com-

munications mix (Butterfield 1999, Garrison 2006), while others consider it to be part of another tool (Jobber 1999, Kotler 2001).

According to a complex approach (Wohlfeil and Whelan 2006a,b) event marketing is an interactive communication of brand values by staging marketing-events as 3-dimensional brand-related hyper-realities in which consumers are actively involved on a behavioral level and their familiarity, image, attitude and emotional attachment is positively influenced to the brand. Sneath, Finney and Close (2005 374) agree that events offer opportunities for personal interaction with products and brands. Wohlfeil and Whelan (2005a,b) adds that the major peculiarity of event marketing is the fact that target audiences are encouraged to experience the brand values actively by becoming an essential part of its hyper-reality. In Pope and Voges’ view (2000), events provide an opportunity to engage the consumer with a company, its brands, and the community. Events help raise attendees’ involvement level, therefore, attendees are apt to be more receptive to marketing messages and images associated with the event (Close et al., 2006). According to Wood and Masterman (2008), the greatest effect is gained through peak experiences. Drengner, Gaus, Jahn (2008) show that flow experience is an important contributor to the effect of the event.

Gaur and Saggere (2001) define an event as “a multimedia package carried out with a preconceived concept, customized or modified to achieve the client’s objectives of reaching out and suitably influencing the sharply defined, specially gathered target audience by providing a complete sensual experience and an avenue for two-way interaction.”

In the scarce Hungarian literature, Bauer and Berács’s (1999) interpretation is quite inclusive, not separating event sponsorship from event marketing. Bíró’s (1997) definition for event marketing is: a complex public relations activity, that establishes an event and provides sufficient publicity to increase

the reputation of the organization and help to develop a positive image amongst important target groups. This approach underlines the connection to PR. In a simple interpretation, event marketing is organizing and executing events with an objective that is the connection of message (brand, company, organization) with a unique, entertaining, and memorable experience (Fazekas and Harsányi 2011). Garrison (2006) connects event marketing to experiences, and in his opinion, marketing events are the most persuasive instruments of the communications mix.

ADJACENT CATEGORIES

Many marketing approaches, areas and methods can be related to event marketing. The closest connection definitely lies with *experiential marketing*, and sometimes the two terms are used as synonyms. Wohlfeil and Whelan (2006b 644) emphasize that an understanding of consumers' motivations and experiential needs is a key factor in designing effective event marketing strategies. They add that experiential marketing communications are needed to gain consumers' attention (Wohlfeil and Whelan 2006b 644)

The literature on experiential marketing is relatively extensive (Schmitt 1999, Smilansky 2009). A wide but very useful definition, which emphasizes the most important points of experiential marketing, is Jack Morton International's (2006): "Live events where audiences interact with a product or brand face to face". This is very close to event marketing, however Schmitt (1999) and Jaffe (2005) draw attention to the differences. According to Jaffe (2005) event marketing is a subset of experiential marketing, and it is the holistic intersection between brand and event marketing: "It is the nontechnological or 'offline' expression of the ability to involve. This is becoming one of the hottest touch points today, offering to consumers a tangible and sustainable experience. Where once a series of messages (or promises) was used, marketers now have the ability to demonstrate the promise." (Jaffe 2005 175).

Professionals consistently associate interaction, involvement, relationship, sensory experience with experiential marketing.

Schmitt (2003) created Customer Experience Management (CEM) as an overall corporate strategy, Pine and Gilmore (1999) go even further and frame something called the experience economy, which is driven by the provision of experiences.

The other closely related term to event marketing is *sponsoring*. Many sources discuss event sponsoring as event marketing, because of their similarities. Both of their objectives can be raising awareness, interaction with the attendees, brand building, or creating long term effects. But proprietary events (staged by the company) act differently than sponsored events in many ways (Drengner, Gaus, Jahn 2008, Wohlfeil and Whelan 2006a). Mau, Silberer and Weihe (2006) state that the communication of the marketing message is limited at event sponsorship. Drengner, Gaus, Jahn (2008) emphasize that sponsors have to compete for visitors' attention. Odell (2004) adds that a sponsored event is not connected very closely to the brand—but event sponsoring has lower risk and costs, and less work is needed.

It is important that connecting the company name to an event alone is not a sufficient event marketing solution. Using company banners at location, putting logos on invitation cards and such are merely media appearances. Moreover, these are even worse, as it is like showing a logo on TV for 30 seconds instead of using a real advertising video (Schreiber, Lenson 1994). Sponsoring takes real effect when the sponsor pays attention to related communications, such as proprietary programs, or attendee activations at locations. In this case we can call sponsoring event marketing.

Sponsoring an event is not the only choice that companies have. Other subjects can be sponsored, such as people, sport teams, or organizations. International Marketing Reports 2007 claims that only 23 percent of sponsoring budgets are spent on events (Kassay 2008).

There are many specific *events* that are *closely related* to event marketing. According to Berger (2004), tradeshows are seen as the preferred event marketing tactic, providing the best ROI for marketers, and the largest percentage of event budgets is also allocated to tradeshows and sponsorships. Some PR events and in-store activities can also be seen as event marketing. Berger (2004) mentions internal events as an important part of event marketing.

Event marketing is also connected to many *other terms*, such as special events, branded entertainment, brand activation, lifestyle marketing, conferences, seminars and word of mouth marketing.

The following diagram shows a comprehensive explanation of event marketing in connection with the most adjacent disciplines (Figure 1).

This paper deals with mostly experience-focused, proprietary events; however it seemed useful to include other closely related events, as well (Figure 2).

The closest category to the proprietary experiential event is definitely event sponsorship. These two categories have adjacent opportunities and similar goals. Fairs are also related to event marketing, though their goals are partly different. At its broadest interpretation, event marketing also includes those events which are marketed by their organizer.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of events play a significant role as we have already seen this far. Events are characterized and categorized by their objectives, so we should pay attention to this criterion. As Patterson (2004) claims, marketers must have a clear understanding of the goals, to determine which success factors to measure. Boehme (1999) points out the connection of company, financial and event goals, and the importance of harmonizing them. It is also relevant, that objectives have to be discussed and agreed by the marketer and the event organizer. It is very beneficial to take a look at some

surveys related to event marketing, and compare the goals respondents felt were most important (Figure 3).

Accurate objectives are elemental success factors. As in the case of other marketing instruments, a wide variety of goals can be achieved by events as well. With one single event, different objectives can be accomplished due to the multi-purpose nature of marketing events. So it is useful to group these objectives for better perspective (Figure 4).

Objectives can be formulated in connection with the event and / or with the event's effects to product or brand. Many times these are mixed together, but a separation is advisable. These two certainly are close to each other – but they are not the same. An event can be successfully organized, but it can still fall short in reaching its communications objectives.

Most scholars agree that event marketing can generate short term impacts but is more effective in reaching long term goals (Sneath, Finney, Close 2005, Bíró 1997, Bauer and Berács 1999, Arany et al 2002). Usually quantitative measures are central, but numerous professionals emphasize the qualitative aspects of event marketing measurement (Joyce 2003, Patterson 2004, Wood and Masterman 2008).

Objectives also can be divided into three categories, which reflect the main subject of event communication: generating contacts or awareness, changing attitudes, and changing behaviors (e.g. increasing sales). All the goals can be classified into these groups. Combining these aspects, the following system can be set up (Figure 5). This system also shows such points when measuring can take place.

MEASURING EVENTS IN GENERAL Measuring Problems

One of the most important aspects of event marketing is measurability. Managers are increasingly under pressure to measure the ROI (return on investment) of marketing activities (Joyce 2004). Measuring is also at the center of interest concerning

Figure 1: The "Flower-model", a simplified model of event marketing and adjacent categories

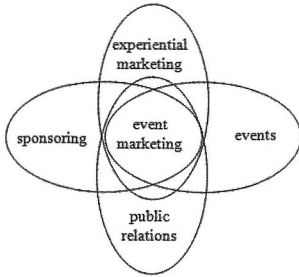


Figure 2: The "Onion-model" – the layers of event marketing

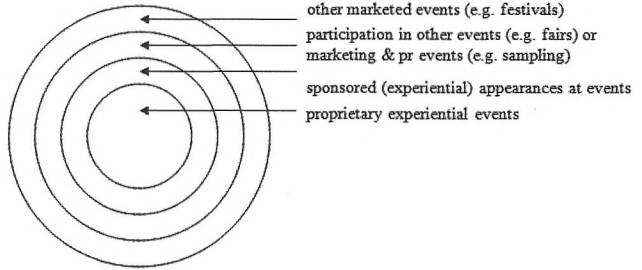


Figure 3: Objectives of Events

Event Marketing Study by Promo Magazine 2004 "goals of event marketing"		Survey on Experiential Marketing by Jack Morton Worldwide 2007 "key benefits of experiential marketing"		European Sponsorship Survey by ESA (European Sponsorship Association) 2007 "sponsorship objectives"	
boost sales	79%	generates advocacy, WOM recommendations	93%	impact brand image	4.2
raising brand awareness	74%	builds brand awareness	92%	increase brand visibility through media	4.1
capturing market share	64%	builds brand relationships	92%	increase brand awareness	4.0
desire to meet customers face-to-face		generates sales/leads	77%	increase brand loyalty	3.9
capture customer data		changes behaviors	72%	improve brand credibility	3.8
generate trial				showcase social/community responsibility	3.3
introduce a product or service or brand				entertain clients/prospects	3.2
foster retail relationships				stimulate sales/trials/usage	3.0
				motivate employees	2.9
				network with co-sponsors	2.8
				sell to co-sponsors	2.7
				product demonstration	2.7
				on-site sales/supply rights	2.5
				1: not at all important 5: extremely important	

Sources: Odell (2004), Jack Morton (2008), ESA (2007)

Figure 4: Types of event objectives

event related		effect related	
short term		long term	
quantitative		qualitative	
awareness	attitude	action in focus	

Figure 5: Categories of Event Objectives

	before event	during event	right after event	later after event
event	raising event awareness	reach high participation level / meet customers, partners, media, co-sponsors and community members face to face	raising event awareness	
	generate publicity / media coverage	length of stay / liking of event / satisfaction / provide event experience	generate publicity / media coverage	memorable long-term impact
	generate word of mouth	entertain clients / prospects / courtesy to attendees	generate word of mouth	
	internet and e-mail hits pre-event	show social / community responsibility	internet and e-mail hits post-event	
brand	reach brand connection to event	raise brand awareness / introduce a product or brand / product demonstration	increase brand visibility through media	
	increase brand visibility through media	provide brand experience / transfer brand message / positioning	memorable brand experience	memorable long-term brand experience
		change in attitude / enhance brand image / increase brand credibility / enhance brand preference		
		build or reinforce relationships with consumers and other target groups / generate advocacy	increase brand loyalty and partnership	increase brand loyalty and partnership
		motivate employees, team building	motivate employees, team building	motivate employees, team building
		change in behaviors		
		distribute samples, coupons		
		stimulate testing, trials		
		capture customer data / build database		
		reach future purchase intent		
		generate leads or orders	generate recommendations	generate recommendations
		help sales / increase on-site sales	increase sales / intensify usage /	increase sales / intensify usage / capture market share
				enhance equity

Explanation of colours: awareness / contact, attitude / feelings, action / sales

event sponsorship (Pope and Voges 2000, Close et al 2006). The European Sponsorship Association (ESA) pays pre-eminent attention to this subject (ESA 2007) as the most important challenge of sponsoring. A Jack Morton survey (2008) showed that the most important obstacle to using event marketing is the lack of demonstrating ROI. As an early study conducted by Gardner and Shuman (1987) finds, nearly half of the companies surveyed did not measure event marketing outcomes (Sneath, Finney, Close 2005). According to Promo's 2007 Event

Marketing Trends survey (Johannes 2007) marketers are getting better at determining ROI and acting on the results.

So the important task and challenge is the explanation of the effect mechanism of events and the establishment of sufficient measuring systems. Research pays off: In a U.S. survey almost half of the respondents claimed that event marketing delivered a higher ROI than sales promotions, advertising, Internet marketing, and public relations (Staffers 2002). EventView 2006 (MPI 2006) confirmed these findings that event

marketing delivers the greatest ROI in marketing. Global Event Trends study ranked event marketing second only to direct marketing in perceived return on investment (Berger 2004).

The marketer and the organizer share responsibility for event success and achievement of objectives (Wood and Masterman 2008). Bell (2010) points out that in most cases, companies do not entrust the measurement of the event to their organizer, which would project proprietary evaluation. Surveys show that among those who measure, it is overwhelmingly done internally (85%) as opposed to an independent third party (15%) or by the organizing agency (12%) (Berger 2004). European results are similar as 80% of the sponsors measure internally, and 42% with research agency (ESA 2007). The survey suggests that external research agencies are involved where greater objectivity is needed.

Overview of Event-Measuring Techniques

Measurement of event marketing shows wide variety. Due to its complexity, many types of research can be done on this topic. It is useful to review the most important directions (Figure 6).

Event Industry

In 2005, more than 96 percent of U.S. corporations included event marketing in their promotional strategies (GPJ, 2005). In 2009, (EMI 2010) the ratio was similar: event marketing is a lead tactic (10%), a vital

component of the plan (32%) or taken under consideration with other mediums (50%).

The size of the international event industry is constantly increasing. After the year 2000, many firms were optimistic about their plans to spend more on event / experiential marketing the following year (Staffers 2002, Berger 2004, Johannes 2007, Jack Morton 2008, Experiential Marketing 2009). This shows great optimism towards events, even if in some years budgets decreased in reality (Johannes 2007). So survey results are not coherent even in the U.S. According to the survey by Promo Magazine, 10% of total marketing budgets were spent on event marketing in 2003 (Spethmann 2004). In contrast, MPI Foundation's data on 2004 show that 22% of total marketing budgets were addressed to event related sponsoring activities (Sneath, Finney and Close 2005). The problem is that methodology is not published concerning the size of the industry, and samples are relatively small (100-300 interviewees) when evaluating marketers' attitude towards events.

The recession of 2008 and 2009 certainly had its effects on the industry in budget cuts. But event organizers have adapted to the situation and still concentrate on planning events that are creative, inspiring and motivating, but also cost effective (Crawley-Boevy 2009, Hurley 2010).

Unfortunately there is only scarce information on the Hungarian event industry. Mainly practical articles deal with certain questions related to events, and Promo Direkt holds annual surveys on the basic

Figure 6: Typical research fields on experiential events

subject	approach	sample	researcher
size of event industry, use and measuring of events, opinion on effectiveness	practical	professionals	Promo, MPI / EMI / GPJ: Event-View, EMF / IMI, ID, Jack Morton
opinion on events, attitude towards events in general	practical	visitors	Jack Morton, Event Marketer, ID
development of event measuring techniques	practical / theoretical	visitors	SponsorMap Experiential, BATS
influence mechanism of events	theoretical	visitors	Academic professors (e.g. Close, Wohlfeil)

parameters of the event industry (Promo Direkt 2010).

MEASURING PARTICULAR EVENTS

Measuring Aspects of ROI

Many factors have to be taken into consideration when measuring certain events. Professionals believe that the ROI of events is essential, but the literature is not coherent regarding what the exact measures of ROI are.

In a Global Event Trends study, the majority of respondents indicated brand preference and brand awareness as the perceived ROI drivers (Berger 2004). According to Promo's survey (Johannes 2007) respondents declared the following aspects the most important in measuring ROI: event headcount (45.7%) register sales data per event days (45.7%), future likelihood to purchase (45.7%), Internet hits post-event (43.6%), samples, coupons distributed (37.2%), length of time engaged (25.0%), and other (5.9%). The survey adds, that "measuring the consumer experience" means: sales volume (66.0%), expressed purchase intent (39.9%), brand preference altered (29.3%), other (brand awareness, loyalty, email hits, etc.) (7.4%).

Though ESA's survey (2007) deals with sponsoring, the results are useful for other events as well. The most preferred evaluation techniques according to ESA (2007) are: media exposure (80%), event attendees / participants (69%), TV ratings (45%), consumer / sponsorship research (44%), sales figures (43%), competitor sponsorship activity (42%), interest levels from clients / trade partners (43%), employee feedback (42%), demographics (35%), fan passion (29%) provided by rights holder (20%), and psychographics (16%).

Westcott (Joyce 2004) advises professionals to use at least seven ways to measure event marketing: track lead quality and quantity; calculate total audience size and the quality of impressions; assess the overall effectiveness of the brand message; gather competitive intelligence (from a trade show floor, for example); gain a better

understanding of audience behavior; find specific sales opportunities at the event where an incentive is given; and evaluate the impact on public relations.

As we can see, these specifications give information on ROI aspects, but do not determine a clear categorization. Some professionals even question the use of ROI, and talk about ROT (return on goals, return on targets) or ROE (return on – brand – equity). According to Batalis, (Joyce 2004) events cannot be measured by ROI, since their goal is brand building.

Some scholars categorize event measuring methods. Patterson (2004) summarizes the general metrics that marketing can use. In his opinion the three specific performance areas that Marketing can impact are acquisition, penetration, and monetization. The three connecting metrics gauges of marketing are market share, lifetime value, and brand equity. Though this is a comprehensive framework, it can be adopted to event marketing.

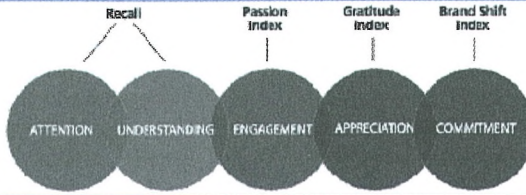
Wood and Masterman (2008) quote Hofman (1991) who believes that while the appeal of some experiential events is hedonic (art, sport, music), others have instrumental appeal (sampling, trade shows) and others combine both (test drives, consumer shows). Evaluation therefore needs to consider both the hedonic and instrumental experiences of the consumer.

The Association of Hungarian Exhibition and Fair Organizers (AHEFO 2006) groups exhibitors' targets and measures into six categories: sales, customer relationships, retail channel, research, brand building and PR.

There are three broad schools of evaluation according to Gupta (2003): measuring awareness or attitude change; quantifying in terms of sales results; and comparing the value of sponsorship-generated media coverage to the cost of equivalent advertising time or space.

In SponsorMap's (2009) model, measurement of the effectiveness is based on five key stages. Attention and understanding (measured by recall of the event and brand),

Figure 7: The five key stages of the SponsorMap model to measure event effectiveness



Source: SponsorMap Experiential

engagement (measured by passion index), appreciation (measured by gratitude index) and commitment – change in attitudes or behavior (measured by brand shift index).

The most useful and comprehensive categorization is Wood and Masterman's (2008). They suggest three categories:

1. The event (attendance, media coverage, satisfaction)
2. Consumer experience of event
3. Consumer response to the experience (feelings, attitudes, intentions, behavior)
 - a) Attitude change as a result of experience (perceived brand values, preference, liking)
 - b) Behavioral change as a result of experience (purchase behavior, WOM, recommendations, advocacy, trial)

According to them, in order to evaluate the outcomes of particular marketing activities (i.e. event marketing) it may be more practical to measure the 'value' to the customer. This requires both benefits and costs of the experience to be considered (Value = Benefits – Costs). Costs can be monetary, cognitive, psychic and psychological as can the benefits. It is of primary importance that measures have to be based upon the communication objectives of the event (Woods 2003). So it is useful to adapt the categories of event goals to event measuring. These parameters are:

- measure the event or the effect of the event
- quantitative or qualitative methods
- short term or long term effects
- awareness / contact, attitude / feelings, or action / sales in focus

As we saw earlier, companies can formulate goals for the event itself, or for the effects of the event. The situation is the same with measuring, as firms can measure the event or the effects of the event (Wood and Masterman 2008).

Patterson (2004) emphasizes the importance of measuring and metrics, and most scholars look for quantitative measures. However, Schreiber and Lenson (1994) believe that the qualitative dimension is as important as quantitative. Wood and Masterman (2008 9) also draw attention to qualitative aspects at the same time: "Use of interviews, focus groups, consumer panels, surveys and control groups can obtain data which can be used to enhance and better understand simple numerical results." This confirms Joyce's (2003) opinion as quantitative measures fail to collect other categories of information that should be judged when evaluating an event. An example of that is the on-site impression of marketer and organizer, which can not be quantified. AMP's Brand Ambassador Tracking System (BATS), a Web-based reporting tool also includes qualitative data such as photos and consumer quotes transmitted by organizing staff members (Joyce 2004).

Woods (2003) warns that "the simple marketing truth is that the dynamic between many brands and most consumers is a 'relationship' — not a math problem". He points out that short-term ROI is many times not what companies really should look for. Joyce (2003) agrees that short-term evaluation needs to be supplemented with a longer-term perspective. She adds that collecting data from consumers months and even years after an event helps evaluate the impact. Sneath,

Finney and Close (2005), as well as Wood and Masterman (2008) also emphasize that evaluating requires longitudinal data tracking, or at least research before and after each event (pre- and post-event surveys). Wood and Masterman (2008) draw attention to the necessity of archived historic data over a number of campaigns in order to provide a usable base for the analysis. It is also useful to compare results of event periods to no activity periods. U.S. Concept measures sales volume in the weeks after the event, it conducts direct questioning as attendees are leaving the event, and in many cases, it does an e-mail follow-up in the succeeding weeks (Joyce 2004).

Some argue that all of these aspects need to be taken into account if event success is to be credibly evaluated. But due to the variety of communication effects that can be achieved by events different evaluation techniques are appropriate in every single case, customized to the parameters and objectives of each program.

THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES OF MEASUREMENT

Three Categories

From the many aspects of event evaluation, there is one grouping principle, which seems prominent. This divides measuring into three groups, which can be characterized by the event objectives, such as:

- Awareness (contact, knowledge, etc.)
- Attitude change (feelings, relation, etc.)
- Action (behavior, trial, sales, etc.)

Practically every measuring aspect belongs to one of the above groups. The three “A”-s also follow the decision making process of purchasing that a target member of the event can go through.

Awareness

Event effectiveness is often measured by awareness or contact numbers, such as:

- range of media coverage
- word of mouth
- number of event participants
- event connection to the brand

Event awareness and change in brand awareness both can be measured, and awareness level is important before and after the event.

It is common to compare events’ media exposure to advertising campaign coverage, usually in the case of great customer events. When the company concentrates on achieved contact numbers, this can be a good evaluation method. It is sometimes the case at event sponsorships as well, where the most important goal can be enhancing brand awareness. In these events, displayed logos play great role, acting like traditional advertising. In this case events are defined as media, and equivalent media costs can be calculated. Professionals tend to believe that events are short in terms of contact numbers which means that a relatively small group of people can be reached from a relatively high cost per capita. But according to Experiential Marketing Forum and IMI International (EMF 2010b), events can be equally effective as media appearances, when “impact” and not contact is evaluated involving other aspects, such as length of contact, quality of contact, or the word of mouth effect.

Recently the influence of social media has been growing exponentially. So it is important not just to reach journalists and the mass media, but other opinion leaders, bloggers, and hubs to generate word of mouth. Creating consumer conversations, word-of-mouth or buzz, can be one of the main goals of an event and is therefore one of the potential outcomes which needs to be evaluated. According to Jack Morton’s (2006) study, live experiences are the best medium to generate word of mouth, as 85% of respondents claimed that participating in experiential marketing events would cause them to talk about the product or brand. SponsorMap (2009) also looks at the WOM impact as a major feature of experiential marketing. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest a tool for measuring WOM following an event: interviewing the friends of event attendees shows what has been said about the activity. Another way to measure WOM

(Reichheld 2006) is to ask event attendees how likely they would be to recommend the brand to a friend. This method of course only measures the potential recommendations.

Another aspect of measuring events is participation, but this still shows only contact numbers, not real effects. A better way is to measure whether attendees can connect the brand to the event, but Wood and Masterman (2008 10) point out that “awareness measurement is a less useful tool for experiential events as attendees will undoubtedly be aware of the brand. Awareness measurement can be applied to the wider nonattending audience to measure awareness of the event and/or awareness of the brand message communicated through the event.”

Scholars emphasize the shortcomings of contact measurement. Many professionals claim that what really need to be measured are the communication effects – not broadcasted messages or CPM (Garrison 2006, Schreiber and Lenson 1994). According to Pham (1991), measurement of media coverage may not be appropriate, because it does not provide information about recall or attitude change (Sneath, Finney, Close 2005).

Attitude change

It is important to measure not just whether company or brand messages were seen or heard, but whether they had an impact, and what that impact was.

According to a survey (Berger 2004), the majority of professionals answered indicated brand preference and brand awareness as the perceived ROI drivers. As Boehme (1999) claims, the objectives of certain events are not to make profits directly but to enhance goodwill. ROI is important in both cases, but it is measured differently in each. Wood and Masterman (2008 18) believe that “the event becomes the brand, representing the brand values in a physical and interactive form. This suggests then that one of the most important aspects to measure is the strength and characteristics of the emotional connections made as a result of the event.” Sneath, Finney and

Close (2005) prove that contacting with the product or brand has a greater effect on attendees’ attitude and brand preference than title sponsorship, logos, and banners on site. So companies should concentrate on experience and involvement.

Marketers can measure many aspects such as liking of the event, feelings of attendees, event experience, brand experience, transfer of brand message, impact on brand image, development of emotional connections or relationship between brands and consumers, change in brand preference and credibility, increase in brand partnership and loyalty.

As we can see, attitude change can be reached towards the event and / or the brand. Measuring is more complex than in the case of awareness (media equivalent, contacts or simply attendance), since the numerous objectives and effects that can be reached. Most aspects require longitudinal research, so measuring attitude change is a complex question. Scholars believe that current methods are not seen as comprehensive or reliable due to the intangibility of the event experience. Wood and Masterman (2008) emphasize the difficulty in standardizing methods and measures, since a wide variety of tools and measures exist which could be adapted and combined. Later on we return to this point to analyze the difficulties of event measurement.

The few academic research studies concentrate on the attitude change towards brands caused by marketing or sponsored events.

Esch et al’s (2006) research is not connected directly to events. However, it is very useful to understand the brand’s long term effects on purchase. As they find brand knowledge is not sufficient for building strong brands in the long run. Brand knowledge influences future purchases through brand relationship, and brand relationship has factors such as brand satisfaction, brand trust and attachment to the brand.

Wohlfeil and Whelan (2006a) examine how a consumer is motivated to participate in marketing events. Sneath et al (2005) concentrate on immediate effects and find

positive links between sponsorship and favorable brand perception. They add that purchase intention is also favorably influenced by the attendees' brand experience. Close et al's (2006) research shows that attendees' knowledge of the sponsor's products, activeness and enthusiasm in the event topic (e.g. sport, arts) is linked to appreciation of the sponsor which leads to positive brand opinion and to purchase intention.

Martensen et al (2007) analyze brand involvement, fit between brand and event, and event involvement to positive and negative event and brand emotions, event and brand attitude, and these effects on buying intention. They find connection between these, but only indirect impact of event emotions and attitude on buying intention.

Drengner, Gaus and Jahn (2008) concentrate on measuring the relation between flow experience of attendees and brand image. The results show indirect connection as follows: flow > positive emotions to event > event image > brand image. They also point out that event providers should motivate consumer interaction not just with brands but with other attendees, which can stimulate word of mouth and sales.

Action

Actions such as trials, accepting coupons, giving contact data, ordering, or buying are what many marketers believe the most important factors of event effectiveness. Some of the companies assess effectiveness solely through sales and market share, even though event marketing is a communication-oriented activity.

These measuring aspects are very popular because of their simplicity and immediate data accessibility. But purchases usually come some time after the event, so Garrison (2006) considers the effect on buying intention to be the most important metric related to an event (he calls it PIM, that is Purchase Intent Measurement).

Many professionals believe that too much emphasis is given to sales aspects. Woods (2003) claims that measuring should

incorporate a reasonable balance of sales numbers and relationship matters. According to Joyce (2004), as consumers become more complex, so does marketing, therefore measurement techniques cannot concentrate only on financial terms.

COMPLEXITY OF MEASUREMENT Events and IMC

Events have to be considered as a relevant part of the integrated marketing communications strategy, and not as a separate communications tool (Sneath, Finney, Close 2005, Jack Morton 2008). Some professionals believe that one single communication method cannot be evaluated separately. So the primary challenge for marketers is the difficulty of isolating event effects from the effects of other promotional activities. As Sneath, Finney, and Close (2005 375) summarize this idea, "the IMC approach suggests that unlike sales- and profit-oriented approaches, it may be more appropriate to measure event marketing effectiveness using exposure-based methods (Hulks, 1980), tracking measures that measure recall, awareness, and attitudes (McDonald, 1991), and experiments that allow for control of the effects of advertising (Pham, 1991)". During post-event research, wider target groups (control groups) have to be interviewed, who did not attend or did not hear from the event, and their answers have to be compared to those participated the event (Schreiber, Lenson 1994). This of course still leaves open the question of whether attendees were originally more familiar with the company, brand or event.

Some believe it is advisable to evaluate an experiential event separately only when it represents a relatively large proportion of the overall communication, or when its results can be compared to periods when events are not in use.

Modifying factors

Many other factors can modify the effect of events, even from outside the planned campaign. "Event effectiveness is related

to individual emotional response, to the influence of other communications, both marketing driven and in a wider social context, and to the previous experience and expectations of each individual in the audience” (Wood and Masterman 2008 4).

Labor, Cost, and Time

Research can be labor intensive in terms of field work, but the most important aspect is professionalism concerning research design, and analysis. This is why marketers may need the assistance of event organizers or research institutes. However it is said to be doubtful to use the agency providing the events, because of lack of neutrality.

Joyce (2003, 2004) has analyzed event evaluation expenditures, and states that costs can be relatively high. For the reasons she quotes Wescott (as cited in Joyce 2004) who suggests measuring as many parameters as possible, and Woods (as cited in Joyce 2003), who claims that a valid statistical pool is about five to ten percent of attendees at a retail-based event and two to three percent at a festival event. Joyce (2003) points out that an extensive long term research study needs significant investment in database resources, as well. Events are usually stronger concerning long-term effects. Impacts on customer behavior often appear with a time delay: days, weeks, even months after the event. So measuring should be organized to meet this challenge (Schreiber and Lenson 1994). Uncertainty can be reduced by tracking research, and measuring can be conducted before, during and after the event. Wood and Masterman (2008) draw attention to the problem of ‘Short-termism’. It is one of the main obstacles to improving event evaluation, as the brand manager is often handling the brand for a short time and thus he or she is not interested in brand building but in winning market share for a short time. This is a practice marketers should avoid.

Research Techniques

In practice, those measures are in favor which do not demand much work, budget

and time involvement. But many research tools were developed to give marketers sufficient background for evaluation. For example the ROI Tool Kit (Biba 2008) is a Web-based calculator developed to help marketers determine trade show ROI. SponsorMap Experiential (2007) measures the interaction between the event, the brand and the consumer at proprietary events. It also deals with WOM. The Brand Ambassador Tracking System (BATS) is a Web-based real-time accessible reporting tool. Besides capturing attendance figures, demographics of visitors, numbers of samples distributed, it allows field staff to transmit consumer quotes, photos to the system (Joyce 2004).

There is a wide range of data collection methods that can be applied to evaluate experiential marketing events. In connection to event awareness, media cutting services can be used to measure achieved media exposure. The volume of attendees can be found out using door counters or registration. Gift or sample distribution also gives information. A relatively new way of measuring visitors’ movement is using Radio Data System (RDS). Special gadgets that transmit radio signals are distributed among participants, and with receivers at main areas of the event, it can be seen, which program elements were most and least favored by attendees.

To measure the attitude of those who got in touch with the event, mostly face-to-face or self completion questionnaires are used. Not only attendees and prospects are interviewed, but with questionnaires, the experiences of staff also can be established. Using questionnaires is quite popular, but it does have its shortcomings. It is sometimes expensive, and disturbs event experience. According to Batalis (as cited in Joyce 2004), marketers should consider investing in new methods of evaluating an event. Product sales data and exit quizzes on future buying intent are the old-school measures of event success. She advises marketers to find out what consumers really think vs. what they say they think. To do so, effective analysis

should use an appropriate mix of both direct and indirect data, qualitative and quantitative approaches.

A recent solution for measuring event attendees is using sensors. These are put on participants like vests and detect the person's emotion changes. With this data very deep analysis can be made concerning feelings of attendees. Sensors are especially effective with the combination of RDS. A fascinating idea by Joyce (2003) is giving bonus cards to event participants. With this, attendees' post-event buying activities can be measured. AHEFO (2006) suggests comparison of costs reaching marketing goals with the event or with other marketing tools. Another interesting point is the effect of single or repeated events. Sneath, Finney, and Close (2005) find that first-time event participants can be better candidates for persuasion than returning attendees. According to EMF (2010c) with repeated events the effect on brand love is substantially greater (55% -> 71%) and buying intent also increasing (56% -> 77%). As Wood and Masterman (2008) analyze in their essay, every method has its own shortcomings. The situation, the event objectives and company resources (e.g. budget) determine the selection of research method(s). Moreover, according to Westcott (as cited in Joyce 2004) marketers and market sectors have different event measurement priorities.

For these challenges a complex measuring method could give the answer. However, a universal method would be almost impossible to create, due to the diversity of marketing events, the various event types and goals. Moreover, in practice there is hardly enough time and financial background for such deep research. So the field is unlikely to develop a methodology that is perfectly applicable to every event. The solution can be focus, as it is for other marketing and communication methods.

MEASURING IN PRACTICE

The Experiential Marketing Forum (EMF 2010a) suggests three easy steps to measure experiential marketing:

- Step 1: Isolate the experiential impact
- Step 2: Use consistent measures (efficiency, effectiveness, cost effectiveness)
- Step 3: Compare to objective database.

This gives a reasonable frame for research, but the procedure is too simplified.

As a conclusion, some key aspects can be defined to measure event marketing in practice.

- marketers should think in advance to have time for research design, and to allow of necessary pre-event surveys
- research focus has to be harmonized with clear event objectives
- the researcher has to be appointed (in-house department or colleague, organizing agency, or third party / research agency)
- a sufficient budget has to be allocated
- modifying factors which also influence the outcome have to be determined (parallel or previous marketing activity)
- research method, sample and the most appropriate metrics have to be chosen and agreed before the event (or even included in contract) in order to protect both parties
- benchmarks have to be assigned (situation before event or non-promotional periods, using of control panel, etc.), many times data have to be collected prior to event

SUMMARY

Events are constantly developing promotion tools. There is no universal definition for event marketing, and many other communication areas are overlapping, such as experiential marketing, sponsoring, and public relations. The objectives of event marketing play a pre-eminent role in practice, but are so widespread, therefore comprehensive categorization is advisable.

Many research studies show the advantages of event marketing, but its presumable effectiveness is often based on managers' beliefs rather than empirical evidence. Events are very complex, so holistic measur-

ing methods are almost impossible to create. However, with a clear focus on objectives and sufficient planning, event effectiveness can be measured adequately.

There is much more research to be done in understanding the effectiveness of events. One topic is, for example, the success factors of events (such as location, program, catering, staff, etc) that make dominant effects on attendees' attitude and behavior. And of course adaptable long term evaluation techniques are still to be developed.

REFERENCES

Arany E. és tsai (2002), *Üzleti rendezvényszervezés I. – Titkok és trükkök* [Business event planning I. – Secrets and Tricks], B+V, 128p
Bauer A., Berács J. (1999), *Marketing*. Aula, Budapest
Berger, J. (2004), "Study predicts increased value, role and spending for event marketing", *Los Angeles Business Journal*, June 28, 2004
Biba, E. (2008), "Tech can help quantify events" *B to B*, 5/6/2008, 93 7, p30-30
Bíró P. (1997), *Eseménymarketing: Új eszközök a kommunikációban*, KITK, Budapest
Boehme, A. J. (1999), *Planning Successful Meetings and Events*, Amacom, 174p
Close, A. G., Finney, Z. R., Lacey, R. Z., Sneath, J. Z. (2006), "Engaging the Consumer through Event Marketing: Linking Attendees with the Sponsor, Community, and Brand." *Journal of Advertising Research* 46 4 pp.420-433
Cornwell, T. B., Maignan, L. (1998), "An International Review of Sponsorship Research", *Journal of Advertising* 27 1 p1-22
Crawley-Boevy, S. (2009): "Keeping up Appearances", *Marketing*, September 16 2009 p33-34
Drengner, J., Gaus, H., Jahn, S. (2008), "Does Flow Influence the Brand Image in Event Marketing?", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48 1, p138-147
EMF (2010a) Experiential Marketing Forum / IMI International: "How to Measure & Optimize Experiential Marketing", www.consultimi.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/EMF-IMI-How-to-Measure-and-Optimize-Experiential-Marketing.pdf accessed January 2011
EMF (2010b) Experiential Marketing Forum / IMI International: "Mass or Experiential?" experientialforum.com/xmr/MassvExM.pdf accessed January 2011
EMF (2010c) Experiential Marketing Forum / IMI International: "Repeat Experiential Event Attendees: Greater Brand Love, Purchase Intent", experientialforum.com/xmr/repeatxmevent.pdf accessed January 2011

EMF (2010d) Experiential Marketing Forum / Clickin Research / International Experiential Marketing Association (IXMA): "Experiential Marketing – Changing the Way You Relate to Brands", *Special advertising section to Adweek and Brandweek*, experientialforum.com/survey/AWBWEMF.pdf 5p accessed January 2011
EMI (2010) Event Marketing Institute / George P. Johnson: "EventView 2010", www.mpiweb.org/Libraries/NTA-Reports/EventView_2010.pdf accessed January 2011
Eredményesség-mérés – Kiállítási részvételéknél [Measuring efficiency at exhibition participation], Hatékonysági fórum [Efficiency Forum] 2006, www.mkvsz.hu accessed January 2011
ESA (2007) European Sponsorship Association: "European Sponsorship Survey 2007, Bruxelles, ESA Annual Conference, November 2007 www.sponsorship.org/content/downloads_public/resInfo_DL/ESA_European_Sponsorship_Survey_2007_SMS_final_1.pdf accessed January 2011
ESCH F-R, LANGNER T, SCHMITT B H, GEUS P (2006) "Are brands forever? How brand knowledge and relationships affect current and future purchases", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 15 2, p98-105
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING (2009): Working The Front Lines, www.experientialforum.com/content/view/205/48/ October 5, 2009 17p accessed December 2010
FAZEKAS I, HARSÁNYI D (2011): *Marketing-kommunikáció egyszerűen, Szókratész*, Budapest
GARRISON P (2006): *Exponenciális marketing*, HVG, 239p
GAUR S S, SAGGERE S V (2001): *Event Marketing and Management*, Vikas Publishing House, 243p
GPJ (2005) George P. Johnson Company / MPI Foundation: "Fourth Annual Trends Study, Event-View '05/'06", Press Release, July 11, 2005 www.mpiweb.org/archive/250/56.aspx, accessed January 2011
GUPTA S (2003): "Book Review on Event Marketing and Management", *IIMB (Indian Institute of Management Bangalore) Management Review*, December 2003, 15 4, p98-99
HURLEY L (2010): "The New Day for Corporate Special Events", *Special Events*, May/June 2010, 29 3, p15-17
JACK MORTON International (2006): *Experiential Marketing Study – A Survey of Global Response*, 4p www.interpublic.com/news%2Bideas/research# accessed January 2011
JACK MORTON International (2008): *Survey on Experiential Marketing – Executive Summary*, January 2008, 17p www.experientialforum.com/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_download/gid,111/Itemid,30/ accessed January 2011
JAFFE J (2005): *Life After the 30-Second Spot – Energize Your Brand with a Bold Mix of Alternatives to Traditional Advertising*, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 304p

- JOHANNES A (2007): "Time Out", *Promo*, Jan 1, 2007 promomagazine.com/eventmarketing/marketing_time_4/ accessed January 2011
- JOYCE K M (2003): "Show Me the Money - And More", *Promo*, Mar 1, 2003 promomagazine.com/mag/marketing_show_money_2/index.html accessed January 2011
- JOYCE K M (2004): "Return On...What?", *Promo*, Jan 1, 2004 promomagazine.com/microsites/magazinearticle.asp?mode=print&magazinearticleid=189131&releaseid=&srId=11534&magazineid=122&siteid=2 accessed January 2011
- KASSAY L (2008): Szponzoráció – kommunikációs eszköz és médium, [Sponsoring – communications tool and medium] AKTI Füzetek, Budapest, March 2008, Issue 24, archiv.akti.hu/akti/dok/fuzet24.pdf accessed January 2011
- KOTLER P (2001): Marketing management – Elemzés, tervezés, végrehajtás és ellenőrzés, [Marketing Management – Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Control] Műszaki, 875p
- KOTLER P, KARTAJAYA H, SETIAWAN I (2010): Marketing 3.0 – From Products to Customers to the Human Spirit, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 188p
- KRUEGER R A, CASEY M A (2000): Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 206p
- MARTENSEN A, GRØNHOLDT L, BENDTSEN L, JENSEN M J (2007): "Application of a Model for the Effectiveness of Event Marketing", *Journal of Advertising Research*, September 2007, 47 3, p283-301
- MPI (2006) MPI Foundation / George P. Johnson Company: EventView 2006 8p www.mpiweb.org/CMS/uploadedFiles/Research_and_Whitepapers/Event-View2006-FINAL-060705.pdf accessed January 2011
- ODELL P (2004): „PROMO Exclusive: By the Numbers”, *Promo*, January 1, 2004 promomagazine.com/research/eventtrends/marketing_promo_exclusive_numbers/index.html accessed January 2011
- PATTERSON L (2004): "If you don't measure, you can't manage. The best metrics for managing marketing performance." *Marketing profs.* 23 Nov, 2004
- PINE B J, GILMORE J H (1999): The Experience Economy: Work Is Theater & Every Business a Stage, Harvard Business Press; Boston, MA, 272 p
- POPE N K, VOGES K E (2000): "The Impact of Sport Sponsorship Activities, Corporate Image, and Prior Use on Consumer Purchase Intention." *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 9 2 p96-102
- PROMO DIREKT (2010): Rendezvényszervezői piackutatás 2010 [Event planning survey 2010] www.promo-direkt.hu accessed January 2011
- REICHHELD F F (2006): The Ultimate Question, Driving Good Profits and True Growth, Harvard Business School Press, 224p
- SCHMITT B H (1999): Experiential Marketing: A New Framework for Design and Communications, Free Press, 304p
- SCHMITT B H (2003): Customer Experience Management: A Revolutionary Approach to Connecting with Your Customers, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 288 p
- SCHREIBER A L, LENSON B (1994): Lifestyle and Event Marketing: Building the New Customer Partnership, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 263p
- SMILANSKY S (2009): Experiential Marketing: A Practical Guide to Interactive Brand Experiences, Kogan Page, 272 p
- SNEATH J Z, FINNEY R Z, CLOSE A G (2005): "An IMC Approach to Event Marketing: The Effects of Sponsorship and Experience on Customer Attitudes.", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Dec 2005, 45 4, p373-381
- SPETHMANN B (2004): „Event Marketing: Street Smarts”, *Chief Marketer*, April 1, 2004 chiefmarketer.com/presence/events/marketing_street_smarts/index.html accessed January 2011
- STAFFERS E (2002): Event Marketing to Increase in 2002 www.thenewsletterplace.com/001eninews/issue11/article2.html accessed January 2011
- Wohlfeil, M., Whelan, S. (2005a), "Event-Marketing as Innovative Marketing Communications: Reviewing the German Experience", *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 4 2, pp.181-207
- Wohlfeil, M., Whelan, S. (2006a): "Consumer Motivations to Participate in Marketing-Events: The Role of Dispositional Involvement", *European Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 7, pp.125-131
- Wohlfeil, M., Whelan, S. (2006b): "Consumer Motivations to Participate in Event-Marketing Strategies." *Journal of Marketing Management*, 22 5/6, pp.643-669
- Wood, E. H., Masterman, G. (2008), "Event Marketing: Measuring an experience?", 7th International Marketing Trends Congress, 17-19 Jan, 2008 Venice marketing-trends-congress.com/2008_cp/Materiali/Paper/Fr/Wood_Masterman.pdf accessed January 2011
- Woods, S. M. (2003), "Chasing the ROI Grail", *Promo*, Mar 1, 2003, promomagazine.com/event-marketing/marketing_chasing_roi_grail/index.html accessed January 2011

Dávid Harsányi
Assistant Professor
Budapest Business School
harsanyi.david@kkfk.bgf.hu