

# INFORMATION ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING ACTIVITY PERFORMED BY ROMANIAN MARKETING AGENCIES

A.M. URDEA<sup>1</sup> C.P.CONSTANTIN<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *One of the main objectives of today's marketing strategy is to create holistic experiences that approach multisensory techniques, a goal that was accomplished due to the appearance of experiential marketing strategy. Despite its advantages, in Romania, this relatively new concept is not yet very popular among companies or marketing agencies. Therefore, qualitative marketing research was conducted to identify experiential marketing activities, the technology used, and marketing effectiveness metrics applied by six marketing agencies. The results have shown that experiential marketing is becoming quintessential as a modern-day communication arsenal, amplifying the customer's direct contact with a brand.*

**Keywords:** *experiential marketing, marketing agency, marketing technology, marketing effectiveness*

## 1. Introduction

In today's multi-connected world, it can be anticipated that many consumers seek an experience that combines engagement, interactivity, and entertainment. According to these aspects and compared to traditional marketing strategy, experiential marketing is an innovative and creative method (Same, et al., 2012) that is expected to grow drastically in the years to come in Romania. As a communication strategy, experiential marketing enhances the customer's direct contact with a brand or a product, offering a personalized experience, instead of spreading it by above-the-line techniques (ATL) that include so-called non-personal mass-media channels such as television, radio, or billboards (Tustin, 2002).

Even if the field of experiential marketing brings many advantages to companies that use its strategies, only few Romanian companies are open to this new concept or have budgets available for the adoption of new technologies that has an important role when it comes to experiential marketing campaigns. Moreover, a study conducted by a

---

<sup>1</sup> *Transilvania University of Braşov, ana.urdea@unitbv.ro, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9747-3570*

<sup>2</sup> *Transilvania University of Braşov, cristinel.constantin@unitbv.ro, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0928-7717*

Romanian experiential marketing agency shows that 94% of the content advertising is visual in Romania (MVcom, 2015), a fact that should encourage brands to embrace a new sensorial perspective. Therefore, to be in alignment with the changes occurring in customer behaviours, experiential marketing has received increased academic and practitioner attention over the recent years. However, a considerable lack of experiential activity is evident in Romanian companies' approaches to considering and applying the concept, aspect that might have a high managerial significance. The practical importance of this study comes into view through identifying the experiential marketing activities during a campaign, its marketing effectiveness, and the technology implemented by the targeted marketing agencies.

## **2. Background**

Targeting experiential marketing key characteristics, author Schmitt(1999) proposed the customer experience concept, the consumption as a holistic experience, the consumers that are considered both "rational and emotional beings", and the eclectic techniques. To apply these elements, experiential strategies have been designed based on communication channels, visual and verbal identity of a brand, product presence, and visibility, or technologies (Yeh, et al., 2019) that establish drivers of customer satisfaction.

Companies are redefining their provided services in the matter of personalized customer experiences as a need to develop new abilities in creating and applying memorable experiences that maintain a positive customer perception of a specific brand (Jain, et al., 2017). Moreover, if companies attempt to increase perceptions of customer confidence, desire, and overall satisfaction after an experiential marketing campaign, they will reach a high perception of customer loyalty (Wu, et al., 2019).

Experiential marketing creates a big opportunity for brands to involve existing or potential consumers by implementing customer-initiated engagement in their campaigns. The conceptual framework of Vivek et al. (2012) accommodates a wide range of the customer engagement values such as "trust, value, affective commitment, word of mouth (WOM), loyalty, and brand community" involvement. In this regard, supporting new and futuristic technology with a focus on a high level of entertainment, social presence and interactivity, an experiential marketing campaign can trigger vividness by increasing customer engagement, which will enhance customer loyalty and sales (Grewal, et al., 2020). The success of experiential marketing actions includes the research and concept development, the process of running the campaign, as well as the evaluation of the marketing effectiveness (Khotimah, et al., 2016).

## **3. Methodology**

The research was based on qualitative data concerning both the decisions and processes related to experiential marketing strategy implemented by six Romanian marketing agencies. The main selection criteria were the transparency on the online environment, especially regarding the experiential marketing campaign framework and

its impact on consumers. The data were collected based on documentary analysis using websites, press releases, and Social Media networks, which are analyzed using content analysis techniques. The content analysis table contains information about the implication of six marketing agencies on experiential marketing activities and other essential elements, such as services provided, target clients, technology, or marketing effectiveness (see Appendix 1). For analyzing the results, horizontal analysis which measures the frequencies of occurrence of certain words of each theme, and vertical analysis which describes the topics addressed for each agency were conducted.

#### **4. Results**

The results of this study emphasize the marketing services provided, experiential marketing activities, marketing effectiveness tools, and the technology implemented by the targeted marketing agencies as follows:

##### **4.1. Horizontal analysis**

###### ***Services provided***

The frequency of service occurrence is high for experiential marketing and interactive marketing, with all selected marketing agencies focusing on connecting a brand with its consumers through a memorable experience during a marketing campaign. From the content analysis, it was discovered that some of the agencies offer digital marketing, video marketing, and social media marketing services for brands that want to increase their online presence, reaching a new target audience with quality multisensory experiences on different digital platforms. Moreover, one marketing agency offers shopper marketing, a service that focuses on connecting with the customer first, and discovering which channel suits best based on their past habits and behaviors. Additionally, it was discovered that implementing hybrid campaigns creates the opportunity for more consumers to engage in an experiential journey.

###### ***Target clients***

Identifying the target audience is one of the most important aspects of experiential marketing strategy. The selected agencies examined what is their role in the market and how they differentiate from the competition in order to discover which target clients they might help with the services provided. All agencies' target clients are mid-market and large enterprises that look for innovation and specialized solutions for their clients' needs, most of them looking to get the potential clients through different marketing channels.

###### ***Marketing Technology***

New technologies have a crucial role in an experiential marketing campaign's success, highlighting the new mechanics developed into digital experiences for the customers. Besides mobile and web usage, all agencies integrate advanced technologies such as augmented and virtual reality, Kinect, 3D video, video-mapping, robotic technology, or

drones. These technological trends show a positive effect on customers that allows them to communicate with brands in an innovative way, becoming an important element of the consumer decision-making process.

### ***Experiential marketing actions***

Experiential marketing is implemented by the Romanian agencies to engage the target audience with a specific brand, creating real-time interactivity, personalized communication, sensorial illusions, or gaming sessions, culminating with an unexpected revealing, referring to the new product. Agencies try to discover the emotional insights as the starting point in developing the campaign concept, where all the experiential actions are meant to test the senses and attention of customers, most of the time rewarding them with samples of different products.

With the consequences of COVID-19 lockdown, marketing agencies had to adapt their processes of production creation, while reaching creative ideas like the concept #ThinkOutsideTheMask, as Pastel agency called their pandemic work. The results of the agency's projects aimed to create marketing campaigns that would turn into safe social interactions, while the pandemic forced the population to practice social distancing.

### ***Measuring marketing effectiveness***

An effective experiential marketing campaign generates marketing qualified leads that, eventually, turn into sales revenue. Even if the impact of these experiential marketing actions was difficult to count, lately, technological advancements developed marketing effectiveness metrics. Therefore, most marketing agencies use different tools to measure the success of a marketing campaign, to evaluate the responses of potential consumers, engagement and impressions, the perceived value, the exposure, or the loyal customer rate.

## **4.2. Vertical analysis**

The first agency, SyscomDigital, has rich expertise in digital and interactive platforms, and proposes innovative ways to involve the consumer in positive experiences to increase brand awareness. The agency uses technologies that combine entertainment with utility, such as mobile, web, Kinect, AR, VR, or drone. Experiential marketing activities include real-time interactions with consumers, personalized communication techniques, online activations, and award-winning content.

Similar to the first agency, Pastel, offers integrated communication services for mid-market and large firms that are aware of the role that consumers' satisfaction has, focusing on attracting and retaining them through brand experiences. Being active during the pandemic, the team has a real success delivering a meaningful, and emphatic message of the brands.

Mind Treat Studio, the third marketing agency, develops new and unconventional solutions that prove real-world results, connecting the brands with the right technology to get new customers. Including sensorial illusions, gaming sessions, interactive billboards on their experiential work portfolio, the agency added value to the brand

through captivating concepts and professional implementation by using innovative technology.

The fourth agency, The Syndicate, covers a mix of experiential and digital marketing, creating the design, concepts, and content for campaigns, catalogs, or special magazines. One of the most successful experiential marketing campaigns implemented robotic technology for a product launch event.

Mercury 360, the fifth marketing agency, designs a brand communication strategy by getting real insights from customers about their behaviours and beliefs. Their objective is to activate the shopper through the path of purchase, developing personalized, engaging, and effective experiential marketing campaigns. Moreover, the agency integrates websites, mobile apps, social media channel management, and games for in-store activations.

The last agency, MVcom, is the first Romanian experiential marketing company and it has a multisensory vision of communication through experiential trials and real-time interactivity campaigns. The agency focuses on implementing memorable experiences, aiming to reach both multisensory marketing and guerrilla marketing. Moreover, they associate the classic out-of-home (OOH) advertising with dedicated sounds and lights to increase the durability of the campaign.

## 5. Conclusions

The findings yield new insights into applying experiential marketing concept in practice. Its focus on sensorial experiences through new technology should enable managers to identify emotional connections in differentiating and distinguishing a brand's identity and values to consumers. It can be observed from the qualitative analysis that the interest of Romanian marketing agencies in implementing experiential marketing activities is growing. The targeted agencies embrace this strategy because an experiential marketing campaign might offer visibility and might increase notoriety for the brands among the consumers. A unique experiential event refreshes the consumer relationship and generates a powerful word-of-mouth activity. As indicated by the services provided, it is essential the usage of diverse techniques for experiential marketing to full impact to get maximum coverage.

As mentioned in the literature, technological advancements are expected to consumers' behaviour, making them more open to digital and social engagement, which will enhance the consumers' ability to experience different products, leading to enhanced sales (Vivek, et al., 2012). The selected marketing agencies' viewpoints offer detailed directions on main aspects of experiential marketing implementation, including the application of new techniques like virtual and augmented reality marketing, digital marketing, mobile and web marketing, or video content strategy.

Services as digital marketing and social media marketing have a crucial role in facilitating the communication of an experiential marketing campaign, allowing digital consumers to interact and engage with a brand through a personalized experience. For a campaign to be successful, it requires a mix of "strategy, creativity, and technology" to discover the consumers' needs and preferences (Dwivedi, et al., 2021). With the help of

digital marketing tools, marketers can measure or track the experiential marketing campaign performance (Nidhi, 2018).

Accordingly, the practical importance of this research comes into view through identifying the experiential marketing activities implemented by the marketing agencies together with the technology, and the tools to measure the marketing effectiveness of the campaigns. As a result, this will benefit other marketing specialists to gain a better insight into implementing experiential marketing campaigns.

## References

- Dwivedi, Y.K., et al., 2021. Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, p. 102-168. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168.
- Grewal, D., et al., 2020. The future of in-store technology. *Journal of the Academy Marketing Science*, 48 (1), pp. 96–113. DOI: 10.1007/s11747-019-00697-z.
- Jain, R., et al., 2017. Customer experience – A review and research agenda. *Japan Society for Technology of Plasticity*, 27 (3), pp. 642–662. DOI: 10.1108/JSTP-03-2015-0064.
- Khotimah, K., et al., 2016. Event Marketing and Experiential Marketing towards the formation of Net Marketing Contribution Margin (NMCM). *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Conference on Business and Social Science (GCBSS), 16-17 December 2015, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, pp. 431-439.
- Nidhi, A., 2018. ATL, BTL, and TTL Marketing in Education Industry. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 2 (1), pp.13-15.
- Same, S., et al., 2012. Marketing Theory: Experience Marketing and Experiential Marketing. In: Romualdas Ginevičius, Aleksandras Vytautas Rutkauskas (Eds.), *The 7th International Scientific Conference "Business and Management 2012"*. 10-11-12 May, Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Publishing House Technika, pp. 480–487.
- Schmitt, B., 1999. *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate to Your Company and Brands*. New York: Free Press.
- Starcom MediaVest & MVcom Experiential Marketing Agency. *The study of Multisensorial Experiences*, [Online] Available at mvcom.ro (Accessed: October 2021).
- Tustin, D.H., 2002. *The relationship between above-the-line advertising and below-the-line promotion spending in the marketing of South African products and services*. *Business*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-relationship-between-above-the-line-advertising-Tustin/452cec11bad08678666cee184a6cfe8249f005d9#paper-header>
- Vivek, S.D., et al., 2012. Customer Engagement: Exploring Customer Relationships Beyond Purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(2), pp. 122–146. DOI: 10.2753/MTP1069-6679200201.
- Wu, H.-C., et al., 2019. Experiential quality, experiential psychological states, and experiential outcomes in an unmanned convenience store. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 51, pp. 409–420. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.07.003.

Yeh, T., et al. 2019. The Relationships among Experiential Marketing, Service Innovation, and Customer Satisfaction - A Case Study of Tourism Factories in Taiwan. *Sustainability*, 11 (4), p. 1041. DOI: 10.3390/su11041041.

**Appendix 1**

*Content Analysis*

Themes	Agency 1 (Syscom Digital)	Agency 2 (Pastel)	Agency 3 (Mind Treat Studio)	Agency 4 (The Syndicate)	Agency 5 (Mercury 360)	Agency 6 (MVcom)	Horizontal analysis
<b>Services provided</b>	1. Experiential marketing 2. Interactive marketing 3. Email, SMS & Mobile marketing 4. Direct & database marketing 5. Digital marketing	1. Experiential marketing 2. Interactive marketing 5. Digital marketing 6. Video marketing 7. Social Media marketing	1. Experiential marketing 2. Interactive marketing 5. Digital marketing 6. Video marketing 7. Social Media marketing	1. Experiential marketing 2. Interactive marketing 5. Digital marketing 6. Video marketing 7. Social Media marketing	1. Experiential marketing 2. interactive marketing 4. Direct marketing 5. Digital marketing 8. Shopper marketing	1. Experiential marketing 2. Interactive marketing	1 = 6 x 2 = 6 x 3 = 1 x 4 = 2 x 5 = 5 x 6 = 3 x 7 = 3 x 8 = 1 x
<b>Agency's target clients</b>	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise 3. Government institutions	1. Mid-market enterprise 2. Large enterprise	1 = 6 x 2 = 6 x
<b>Marketing Technology</b>	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 4. Kinect technology 5. VR & AR 6. Drone	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 4. Kinect technology 5. VR & AR	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 4. Kinect technology 5. VR & AR 7. 3D video 8. Video-mapping	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 9. Robotic technology	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 10. OOH mobile	1. Mobile 2. Web 3. Hardware & Software 10. OOH mobile	1 = 6 x 2 = 6 x 3 = 5 x 4 = 2 x 5 = 2 x 6 = 1 x 7 = 1 x 8 = 1 x

