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Experiential Marketing not as a tool, but an approach

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Integration of experiential methodology into the marketing mix is key to engagement

With the burgeoning number of choices and competition, the rapidly evolving "super-fluid, new media landscape", as well as rising consumer expectations, marketers are seeing the need to find new ways to capture their audiences' attention, engage, and win the hearts and minds of their consumers. Increasingly, and rightfully, marketers are turning toward experiential marketing as a solution to this uphill battle.

However, it would be erroneous to see experiential marketing as the next big marketing trend, and similarly myopic if marketers were to (pardon the pun) blindly incorporate experiential marketing into every marketing initiative. Experiential marketing needs to be understood as a concept, a philosophy which aims to provide holistic experiences to consumers at the right place and time. It involves engagement - appealing to consumers rationally to elicit logical thought, and simultaneously connecting with them emotionally through personal and meaningful experiences.

Erik Hauser, Founder of The Experiential Marketing Forum and The International Experiential Marketing Association, and VP of Innovation Red Peg, says, "Whereas in the past, traditional marketing methodologies simply appealed to the left brain, the analytical, rational side of the consumer, brands must (now) utilise the more holistic experiential approach to appeal to both the emotional and rational buying triggers, to ensure that they maintain and even steal market share away from their competition."

An issue of concern to marketers delving into experiential marketing is the ability to measure their ROI. Ben Taylor, Senior Vice President, Managing Director, Asia Pacific, of Jack Morton Worldwide, says, "The holy grail of experiential measurement is a topic that is under much debate and the accuracy of metrics are often challenged due to the complexity and sheer volume of brand touchpoints. It is important to break down how marketers can measure not only the effectiveness of their experiential spend in isolation but also how this can be measured on a consolidated basis with other integrated marketing disciplines."

There is also a common misconception that experiential equates to events marketing, and this fallacy of mistaking strategy for tactic not only restricts the brand experience to a limited communications platform, it also hampers the measurement process. Ben Taylor clarifies, "An event that stands in isolation is just a tactic whereas a brand experience that draws on a holistic creative base and provides a consistent communication provides a more viable and measureable element of the overall marketing mix."

Hauser and Taylor will be addressing these issues in a conference held in Singapore and Hong Kong in October this year. Some of the key highlights of the conference include activation as an experiential methodology, experiential design, developing hyper-personalised conversations, and delivering brand experiences through live communications. They will be joined by other experts in the field, such as Hélène Blanchette, Founder of the Xerox 1to1 Lab, Steve Llewellyn, Partner and Executive Creative Director of Rocket X, Alex Ritchie, Creative Director and Co-founder of e2, and Antony Spanbrook, Managing Director of Luminous Experiential Marketing Communications.

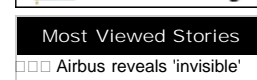
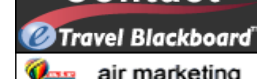
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