

CREATING A MOMENT TO REMEMBER



Living it: The 2010 Shanghai World Expo brought audiences a taste of Chinese culture through stunning 3D visuals on an outdoor LED screen.



BY MIKE AMOUR

Marketers are constantly looking for new and creative ways to engage and establish an emotional connection with consumers. At the same time, they face added pressure to demonstrate a tangible return on marketing investments in an increasingly complex, information-overloaded environment; one where it has become increasingly harder to connect with consumers in an engaging and relevant way. The solution? Experiential marketing.

What is experiential marketing?

Experiential marketing is not a specific marketing tool, but an approach. It focuses on creating fresh connections between brands and consumers out in the world where things happen. Connections in the form of experiences that are personally relevant, memorable, interactive and emotional; allowing brands and products alike to cut through the marketing clutter.

It refers to actual consumer experiences or interactions with products or services with the aim of driving improved ROI. It can also be described as the difference between telling people about features or benefits within the confines of a 30-second television spot or letting people share an experience on their own terms to discover their "aha" moment.

Experiential marketing is rapidly growing as a way of more effectively managing brands.

According to a research study by international services firm, MICE Group, experiential marketing is forecast to become one of the most prominent growth areas in marketing over the next five years; with the majority of respondents (80%) describing experience-based activities as an effective and important segment within the marketing mix.

Typically, the strength of a product or service alone does not sustain it for long in today's marketing environment. New products are constantly introduced into the market with better features or benefits, making it difficult for marketers to maintain customer loyalty.

This often leads to a rise in advertising

spend among competing market players in an attempt to win customers or market share, creating a good deal of noise along the way. For the consumer, the ability to experience a product or brand remains an authentic, risk-free opportunity to try something new. So, what is the solution to this paradox?

Experiential marketing in practice

As a way to bridge a positive connection between consumers and marketers, experiential marketing can be executed in many different forms to allow audiences to be emotionally and rationally driven within a holistic framework of experience.

The opening ceremony for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo was a good illustration of experiential marketing. More than just a showcase of creative ideas, complemented by a combination of music, lighting, fireworks and lasers, the team responsible focused on building a multi-sensory affair and strived to create a quality experience that carried the emotion, essence and personality of Chinese culture to connect with consumers in a relevant and engaging manner.

Spinifex Group, a member of the Project: Worldwide network of agencies, was engaged by the Expo as the creative screen content producer. Its canvas was the largest outdoor LED screen in the world on the banks of the Bund, based on a brief to visually capture and communicate the story of previous world expos, as well as relate aspects of Chinese and Shanghai culture, history and symbolism to attendees.

This task of telling a multifaceted story, while engaging a large-scale audience through the provided medium, posed a challenge for the team.

Spinifex Group employed 3D motion graphics, allowing content to be presented in a breathtaking visual style to produce an evocative story for audiences with no prior knowledge of the Expo or Chinese history and culture.

The project served to demonstrate how far China had progressed in the world. For Spinifex Group, it provided an opportunity to showcase experiential marketing to a wider public and enabled an emotional connection with a brand through a sensory live display to provoke a sense of personal meaning. **ME**

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