
EVENT MARKETING EXPERIENCES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN KERALA

Safeer.C

Research Scholar, Bharath College of Science and Management,
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. K. Kumar

Principal and Research Guide, Bharath College of Science and Management, Thanjavur,
Tamil Nadu, India (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)

ABSTRACT

Today event-based marketing is succeeding the traditional approaches, Event-based marketing proceedings with human sensations, emotions and that serves the brand to attach with them for a more sustained time thus building product sales. Event-based marketing is also experiential marketing and trigger marketing. If a brand event stimulates positive feelings in people then they are more likely to join those emotions with that brand. This promotes brand loyalty and the greater possibility of sales. Experiential marketing is a kind of marketing that provides unbelievable one-to-one experiences among customers and a brand. By giving consumers physical, memorable experiences, brands can join with their target market and on a more personal and emotional level. The authenticity of event-based marketing is to create various kinds of sensations inside the people. Emotions deeply influence the way people imagine and act; and, in experiential marketing, customers who experience events that create goodwill associate those positive feelings with the appropriate brand. These productive outcomes enhanced consumer brand recognition and brand loyalty. This study investigates the impact of event-based marketing experience on customer engagement in Kerala state.

Key words: Event, Experiences, Marketing, Influences, Experiential Marketing, Emotions, Event-based marketing, Trigger marketing, Consumers, Brand

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, any business without event-based marketing activities is like a boat without oars. Event-based marketing affects human feelings and emotions which cause long-term brand commitment and hence growing product sales. If a brand excites positive emotions in people they are more likely to connect those emotions with that appropriate brand. This incites brand loyalty and a greater possibility of sales (Gopinath, 2016). Experiential marketing gives fascinating personalized experiences between a brand and its customers. Rendering consumers with real and lasting experiences can help the brand to attach to its target market on various levels. Trigger marketing and experiential marketing are similar to event-based marketing.

Event marketing is defined as the "use of promoting the interests of a company and its brands by joining the organization with a particular activity" (Shimp, 1993, p. 8; Van Heerden, 2001). Event marketing occurs in many forms, including event sponsorships, trade programs, pop-up brand stores; product launches project, press conferences, customer contests, games, and street shows, etc. We know from our experience that any of the worst products have become number one in the world by using various marketing methods (Gopinath, 2014a). That's the marketing magic so businesses utilize various kinds of marketing devices to influence the consumers.

Customer engagement is a component of relationship marketing, which reinforces customer communication and customer experience (Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan 2012). Customer engagement is a psychological element that comes with interaction and co-creation of customer experience with a focal instrument - object (Brodie et al. 2011). The focal object for the engagement modifies from context to context. It may be a person, community, company, product, brand, or some other marketing-related activity that may influence customer experience. Communication and involvement are key elements of customer engagement. Involvement without communication may not create desired consumer experience, but when active interaction and engagement are present, it helps in the co-creation of a positive buyer experience (Gopinath, 2014b).

As mentioned above today a business can take various marketing procedures like advertisements, different kinds of promotional methods, event-based marketing, or experiential marketing. This article explores event-based marketing and how it influences consumers in the state of Kerala.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To learn the factors influencing the consumer engagement in branded marketing events in Kerala
- To examine the present systems of event marketing in Kerala.
- To analyze the reason for branded marketing events experience influence consumer engagement Kerala

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This article will be a detailed one examining marketing management concepts of event base marketing, customer attitudes towards experiential marketing, etc. This investigation will examine the impacts of event-based marketing experiences on customer engagement in Kerala state. The role of event marketing in a strong combined marketing communications approach is more important. Event marketing or experiential marketing concentrates on consumer experiences and employs emotionally and rationally forced use as a holistic experience

(Schmitt, 1999). "Experiences often involve "sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values that replace functional values" (Schmitt, 1999, p. 26).

Communicating through events includes promotional activities designed to interact with attendees and add value to the consumption experiences. Events allow engaging the consumer with a business, its brands, and the community. Events build a social environment for attendees and help them to enhance attendees' engagement levels; therefore, attendees are likely to be more sensitive to marketing communications and thoughts blended with the event.

This article serves to explain the various factors influencing consumer engagement in branded marketing events (Gopinath, 2020a). It also assists to know the reason for branded marketing event experiences influence customer engagement in Kerala state. The scope of the article is limited only to the geographical area of Kerala.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In today's buyer-empowered world, businesses need to take every opportunity to create relationships, make goodwill, and gain the trust of prospective users and customers. The present customer requires more than a strike when assessing solutions or making buying decisions.

Event marketing gives a unique opportunity for them to interact with brands to create a firsthand sense of a company's focus, and characteristics (Gopinath, 2020b). Customers today are studying for particular products. With so numerous choices, it can be difficult to get a buying decision. An event encourages face-to-face discussion with your proposed consumers, treating them to develop a more personal and trusted relationship with your brand than what is probable in the digital space.

The event marketing arising from combined marketing communications is the communication device which can strongly enhance the direct contact between businesses and consumers. The event marketing emerging from interracial marketing communications is the attachment tool that can best make direct contact between businesses and consumers. The foremost reason is that the primary experience given by the event marketing is used to strengthen the interaction between consumers and brands that serves to improve sales volume (Gopinath & Chitra, 2020a). Through the direct interactive communication of event marketing, the outcome generated by event marketing is more meaningful. Event marketing enables the company to plant and show its uniqueness firsthand. It assists to build awareness about the particular brand. Another vital reason businesses choose event marketing is to create leads and reliability. Event marketing allows an outstanding level of customer engagement, with an opportunity for positive personal communication that creates loyalty and goodwill.

The level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional behavior in their association with a service organisation. (Patterson 2006). "A psychological process that represents the underlying mechanisms by which consumer loyalty forms for new customers of a service brand, as well as the devices by which loyalty may be reserved for repeat shopping customers of a service brand." (Bowden 2009)

5. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING DESIGN

- **Type of Research Design:** A descriptive research design was used to recognize event marketing experiences through customer engagement in branded marketing events in Kerala.
- **Methodology of Data Collection:** A self-administered questionnaire applying online surveys was used for the research.
- **Universe:** The entire population of the Malappuram district of Kerala was regarded as a sampling frame out of which sample was drawn

- **Sample Size:** A sample size of 110 respondents was collected for the research study, after editing and removing unfinished questionnaires a total of 95 samples were applied for study.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the data obtained following results are received. Considering our first objective that is determinants affecting or influencing the consumer engagement are:

- Social factors essentially the social support the firm contributes to the society, social presence, and relationship quality the business maintains with the public.
- Technical factors such as Service quality refers to the degree to which a user assesses supports and services given by the service provider, Information quality provided

In case of objective two the present market scenario applied different techniques of event marketing related are as follows:

Types of events:

- **Conferences:** These large-scale events make up a notable portion of the events industry. Conferences can be either B2B or B2C and normally have a schedule packed with engaging speakers, informative workshops, and relevant networking sessions. The numerous successful conferences are the ones that balance a professional environment with an active, social atmosphere.
- **Trade Shows:** Trade shows and expos try to introduce new products and services from a variety of relevant brands in a professional way. Typically these kinds of experiences have a theme that matches the stands together.
- **Seminars:** Seminars normally get a place in an extra special setting and are heavily concentrated on educating attendees. The smaller crowd of attendees provides for more in-depth reviews and valuable experience sharing. Seminars ordinarily last one day and oftentimes only for a few hours.
- **Thought Leadership and Networking Events:** The purpose of a thought leadership or networking event is to give a brand's authority in an appropriate domain and present opportunities for people with related business interests to engage and communicate with one another. This event model can incorporate VIPs or concentrate more on general acceptance.
- **Ceremonies and award shows:** Ceremonies and award programs follow a kind of purpose but these formal events have one thing in popular: they give an elegant way of performing a brand and its product or service. Whether it's a black-tie fundraising event in a chartered art museum or a kick-off for an annual meeting at a conference, ceremony, convention, and provides an advanced way of rating a specific occasion.
- **Product Launches:** Product launches are practiced to showcase new products or resolutions to customers and candidates. The goal of a product launch is to make current customers and possible customers excited about features and functionalities that are happening to their commodity.
- **VIP Events:** VIP events (or sales acceleration events) concentrate on producing the most powerful shareholders, consumers, and other honored guests with an exclusive (and impressive) experience. The purpose of any VIP event is to eventually raise income through keeping the loyalty of these key figures.
- **Job Fairs and Recruiting Events:** The purpose of most job fairs and recruiting events are to locate and acquire talent for their business across a number of departments.

Typically held at colleges and universities, this event type is common among start-ups or businesses regarding finding fresh minds to assist develop their business.

- **Team Building:** Team building events are internal meetings centered on producing fun and exciting ways for workers to bond. The aim is normally to promote relationship building so workers can become more competent leaders and collaborators. It’s also a healthy way to get people from departments without close contact to be entered to one another.
- **Field Marketing and Activations:** The aim of most field marketing or brand activation events is to create stronger emotional bonds between a business and its audience. Since relationship-building is the main center of this event model, it’s mainly significant to identify which particular audiences you are targeting to design the activities accordingly.
- **Virtual Events:** Virtual events are ideal for businesses that may not have the resources to receive a full-scale live event and for businesses that cannot manage to travel to an international conference. Virtual events enable people to join from all over the world and strive for a more globalized and different group of attendees. As the technology for practical and augmented reality proceed to grow at a rapid pace, virtual events may immediately become a mainstream method of live events.

Table showing the awareness of the customers about different event marketing methods

Table 1

Sl No:	Type of events	Mean Score	Rank
1	Trade shows	7.36	1
2	Field Marketing and Activations	6.97	2
3	Ceremonies, award and TV shows	6.89	3
4	Job Fairs and Recruiting Events	6.38	4
5	Product Launches	6.37	5
6	Virtual Events	5.96	6
7	Thought Leadership and Networking Events	5.73	7
8	VIP Events	5.68	8
9	Seminars	5.33	9
10	Conference	4.80	10
11	Team Building	4.76	11

#Source: Primary data

Out of the 11 events majority respondents are aware of the Trade shows and have a mean score of 7.36 and ranked 1. Field marketing and activations with a mean score of 6.97 is in the second position and ceremonies, awards and TV shows with mean score of 6.89 comes in the third place. Job fairs and recruiting events (mean score 6.38) comes in the fourth place and product launch with 6.37 mean score in 5th place. Though companies are spending more on virtual events its accessibility is less to the customers and it is in 6th position followed by leadership and networking events. VIP events and seminars with mean score 5.68 and 5.33 are in 8th and 9th position respectively. Conference and Team building are least noted event marketing as per the customer’s opinion and ranked at 10th and 11th position.

In order to study the third objective 5 variables has been selected on the basis of various literature surveys and the following variables was selected

- **Cognitive aspects** – is which involve thinking and mental process which is directly related to the brand change the customer’s perception of the brand and its products. It

mainly aims at getting customer attention and thereby customer engagement (Gopinath & Shibu, 2014).

- **Emotional aspects** – it appeals to the customer’s emotion by stimulating their excitement, joy and interest in the activity. It is the enthusiasm that a created in the mind of customer about the product
- **Sensory aspects** – it provides positive sensory stimulation addressing sight, sound, smell, touch, taste. It also ensures interaction and participation in event activities.
- **Behavioural aspects** – it is the behavioural manifestation of a customer’s relationship with the brand beyond traditional consumptive behaviour.
- **Relational aspects** – Events are always public and have many people to attend it. So the entire event occurs with a social context. For this the brand provides resources that encompass activities designed to be experienced with other people.

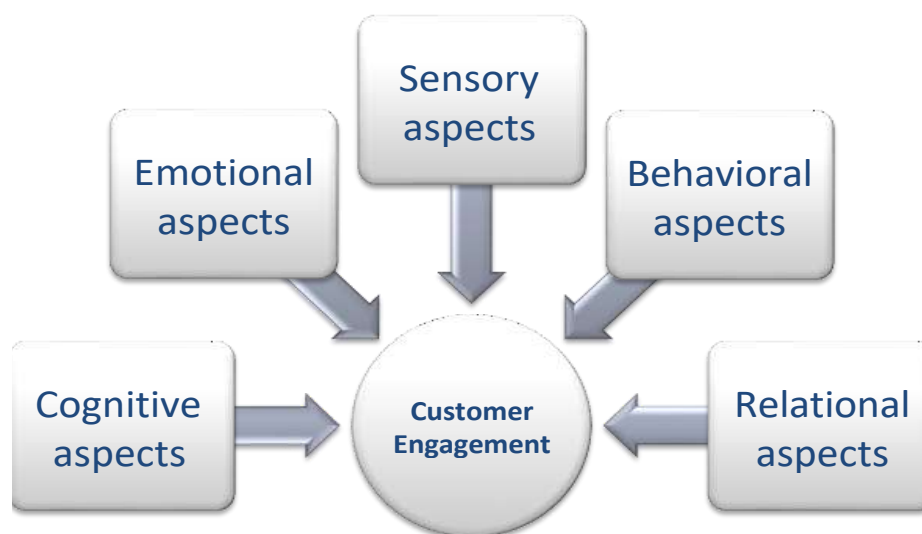


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Various literature reviews

For the purpose of study the following hypotheses was framed

H₀: There is no significant relationship between event marketing and customer engagement

H₁: There is no significant relationship between event marketing and customer engagement

Following variables and its codes used to test the hypotheses is given below-

Table showing code of variables

Table 2

Code	Variable
EM1	Cognitive aspects
EM 2	Emotional aspects
EM 3	Sensory aspects
EM 4	Behavioural aspects
EM 5	Relational aspects

Table 3 Model fit Indices for CFA

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Satisfaction on settlement procedure	3.650	6	.724	.608	.996	.987	.994	1.011	1.000	.011	.000

Source: Primary data

All the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data.

Table 4 The regression coefficients – Customer Engagement

Path	Regression Coefficient	C.R.	P	Variance explained(%)
EM1 → Customer Engagement	0.621	12.925	<0.001	39.3
EM2 → Customer Engagement	0.611	12.650	<0.001	37.3
EM3 → Customer Engagement	0.771	18.210	<0.001	59.4
EM4 → Customer Engagement	0.804	19.760	<0.001	64.6
EM5 → Customer Engagement	0.614	12.736	<0.001	37.8

#Source: Primary data

The results exhibited in Table revealed that the regulatory all construct has significant influence on customer enlargement as the regression coefficient, is more than the recommended value of 0.4 (p value is significant). So the alternative hypothesis is accepted and concludes that event marketing has significant influence in customer engagement.

7. CONCLUSION

This study helped us understand the challenges of engaging the customers. To sustain, a company need to rely on loyal customers that will stay faithful to their brands. However, to do so, a company has to create a relationship with the customers (Gopinath & Chitra, 2020b). The relationship may vary depending on the industry and on the kind of customers, but this concept is applicable to all companies, and the challenge is important to every company.

All strategies of engagement differ from industry to industry and from companies to companies. However, they are some fundamental rules that can assist marketers to develop relationships with the consumers: being ready for customers at any time, being capable to interact with consumers through different ways, adapting the method of connection to the consumers, listening and learning to enhance the services and the commodities, and personalizing the answer to every consumer (Gopinath, 2020c).

The study indicates that event sponsorship is a way to further engage the consumer with the sponsor's products via establishing community attachment. However, community attachment alone is not sufficient for effective event sponsorship (Gopinath & Kalpana, 2020). While providing an interactive display of the product at the event along with price promotions may contribute to engaging the attendee with the brand, marketers must also consider attendees' passion for (i.e., enthusiasm and activeness) the type of event.

Engaging the consumer at a sponsored event involves affect, emotion, and cognition. Event marketing also provides sponsors with opportunities to educate consumers about their offerings. Events provide ways for active information exchange; therefore, companies considering sponsorship and event marketing activities should not avoid events even if attendees are unfamiliar with their products prior to the event.

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