



The Experiential Marketing Playbook

How to Engage Customers Using
Immersive Branded Experiences

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It can be a bit difficult trying to create a relationship with customers through a phone or computer screen. If you want to give potential buyers the authentic experience of your brand, then limiting yourself to just a snazzy website or a couple of social media channels sadly isn't enough.

We get it, it's hard trying to get consumers' attention (and keep hold of it). But it's easy to see why more brands are diving into some experiential marketing campaigns to drive their audience-brand relationships.

Experiential marketing is getting more and more popular, especially since brands have left traditional marketing methods in the smoke. That's why we created this playbook, to give you all the information you need to run your own successful campaigns. From the proven benefits to the real-life examples you can take inspiration from, we've covered it all in this guide.

What are you waiting for?

Go ahead and find out how you can successfully engage your customers and create experiences that they'll never forget.



What Is Experiential Marketing?

Experiential marketing is all about creating memorable experiences between your brand and consumers. The campaigns use a method of ‘activation’ that brings your brand to life and directly interacts with your intended target audience.

The best part is, there are loads of activation ideas to take your pick from. These can be anything from product showcases right through to mega crazy stunts and massive events to create immersive experiences.

Think of it as a two-way channel of communication between your brand and customers as you advertise to them interactively and engagingly. You aren't giving them a lecture and they won't get bored. Simple. They'll just remember the good stuff.

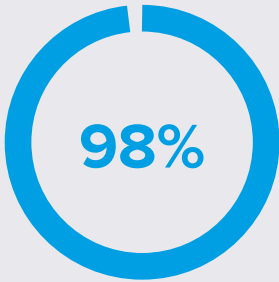
The interactive bit is what makes experiential marketing so different compared to other techniques. Marketing has evolved at breakneck speed and continues to sprout different types brands to choose from.

Funny thing is, other forms of marketing can't achieve the same results. Outbound methods like cold calling doesn't work any more because it's intrusive and annoying. Brand marketing forges an emotional connection but is a one-way channel of communication. Guerrilla marketing lacks that important interactive feeling and traditional marketing methods are just, well...boring, aren't they?

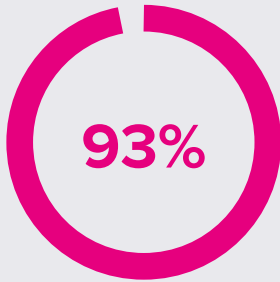
Now that technology has advanced, throwing countless and pointless ads at consumers or showing them cheesy commercials won't impress them. Research has shown that people only really remember 10% of what they read but 90% of what they do - the 'do' is where experiential marketing comes in.



Experiential marketing lets consumers ‘do’ or experience something related to your brand. Want to increase brand loyalty? Then you need to forge an emotional connection with consumers. If you still have doubts about whether or not experiential marketing works, then get ready for a bunch of killer stats:



98% of people who attend an experiential event say they're more inclined to purchase a product from the brand.



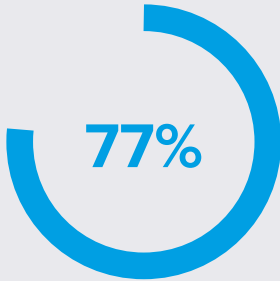
93% of consumers said brand experiences are more influential than TV or internet ads.



70% of people who engage in an experiential marketing event become a regular customer.



74% of consumers said they form a more positive attitude towards a brand when it launches experiential content.



77% of marketers use experiential marketing as a vital part of a brand's advertising strategy.



80% of attendees said that live demonstrations and free samples significantly help define their purchasing decision.

So yeah, it's probably time for brands to rethink their approach if they want to be relevant and meaningful. When done right, you can leave consumers intrigued with long-lasting impressions and make sure they remember your name over the competition.



The Proven Benefits of Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing has loads of benefits which makes it effective. Plus, you can be creative as campaigns happen in real-life, not virtually through a computer screen.

The main thing is people will engage with your brand. When they do that, it'll help you sort out which customers you should target and which you shouldn't bother wasting your time and effort on.

Here are some benefits to show why this marketing technique is as popular as it is.

✓ **Receive Media Attention**

When doesn't the media love to sink its teeth into a big juicy story? If you want to get their and other influencers' attention, then a creative experiential marketing campaign can help. The media loves to jump on campaigns like these because they're newsworthy and audiences find them entertaining. It's what helps their viewer numbers increase.

The bolder and more creative you are, the better chance you have of going viral. All right, this might be a bit of an extreme example but it still works. Red Bull launched its Stratos experiential marketing campaign in 2012 and the brand sent skydiver Felix Baumgartner to freefall from over 127,000 feet - a world record. As a result, **Red Bull earned tens of millions of dollars in global exposure.** Not bad at all.



What's your equivalent of sending a skydiver to the edge of space?

✓ Gain Social Media Exposure

People love sharing anything funny or engaging on social media. Whether it's **The Wealdstone Raider** or **the Zombie Kid who likes turtles**, social media has made lots of people and brands famous. Do it correctly and watch your follower count and brand recognition go through the roof because it's something memorable.

It's where social media and experiential marketing meet in the middle.

Look at Coca-Cola's campaign as a good example. The exceptional idea for its Sprite brand was one that had plenty of social media traction. The brand created an outdoor shower which resembled a giant drinks dispenser and placed them at beaches and other locations.



A quick '#spriteshower' search shows just how well it did.

It's blended the familiar and the unusual in a playful way. Can you do the same?

✓ **Helps You Stay Relevant**

One of the most successful activations is a pop-up store. The aim is to surprise existing and future customers and have them encounter your brand in a totally unexpected location and in an unforeseen way. Pulling this off can help keep your brand more relevant by doing things that are more creative and out-of-the-box.

Look no further than what Hermès did. Fans of Hermès' scarves received the opportunity to make their silk scarves one-of-a-kind in a New York City laundromat-inspired shop. Guests either brought in their own scarf or purchased one in the Hermès branded pop-up shop to dip-dye in denim blue, fuschia or violet. They stuck their scarves in a devoted washing machine and after a 48 hour spin, they had their new creation.

A perfect way to engage guests and have a brand's product they'll cherish. And share on social.



How can you get your existing customers shouting about you to their network?

✓ Establish Your Values in a Unique Way

Whatever your brand values are, experiential marketing initiatives can help you show them to consumers, rather than just tell them about it. Memorable activations work perfectly when you align with meaningful causes as it appeals to customers' desire to feel that their purchases are part of something bigger. It just makes them feel good.

For luxury brands, this high-level, white-glove experience is vital in a customer relationship. As a result, it helps brands stay relevant and memorable with affluent buyers. Luxury spirits brand Louis XIII Cognac launched its "100 Years: The Song We'll Only Hear If We Care" campaign with a focus on fighting climate change. It also highlighted the century-long process that goes into making a single bottle of cognac.



The brand partnered with Pharrell Williams where the musician created a song for the campaign.

The song was recorded on a clay vinyl and put in a safe for public release in 100 years - as long as 'we care about the planet.' Louis XIII Cognac is playing the long game, but it's drawn plenty of interest. Here's hoping the song is a banger and well worth the wait.

✓ **Helps You Drive Sales**

Sticking with the cognac theme, Hennessy's Le Grand Voyage art installation is the perfect example of how experiential marketing can drive sales. The brand turned a stunning former warehouse in Brooklyn into (in their words) a "spectacular production that will stir your senses, excite your imagination and immerse you in the saviour-fire of the world's most prestigious cognac."

We've already mentioned that attendees love demonstrations. And free samples. They influence them to feel more inclined to purchase from the brand. Hennessy tackled this perfectly by creating art installations which transported people to the heart of cognac and its history. The experience also featured Hennessy mixologists and brand ambassadors hosting masterclasses in mixing classic cocktails - an ideal way to involve attendees.



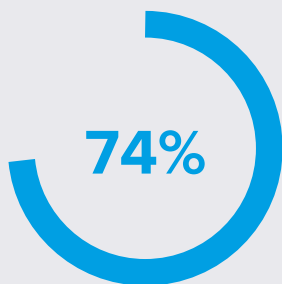
Can you teach your potential customers a relevant skill that they'll be happy to shout about?

✓ It Makes Your Brand More Memorable

What do you think of when you hear Chanel? Perfume? Makeup? Shoes? So just imagine how intrigued consumers would get if you link the luxury brand with a cafe. A key to staying memorable is by doing something nobody expects you to do. Chanel enjoyed a boost in social coverage and sales when opening Coco Cafe for short stints in cosmopolitan cities such as London, Tokyo, Singapore and Shanghai.

Although there were probably no fry-ups, this pop-up store saw visitors lining up to enjoy a selection of drinks and snacks - which also sold a range of Chanel products.

The biggest benefit is that experiential marketing gets results:



74% of people had a more positive brand perception after an event.



70% of participants became regular customers.



Source: EventTrack surveys

You'll give consumers a new way to experience your brand. It appeals to how people now use media as it gives them a chance to interact with your brand on a new level.



How to Run an Experiential Marketing Campaign

Ready to learn how to do it?

For any experiential marketing campaign to be a memorable success, you need to plan carefully. Brands don't rush the process in the hope of seeing instant results as a fair few factors come into play. This includes the timeframes of pulling off something that will immerse thousands of guests, the perfect location, the costs and loads more.

Forget the campaigns you've run in the past, it's time to start from scratch. Here's a good starting point to begin planning your own campaign.

1. How Much Does Experiential Marketing Cost?

The honest answer? It depends. There's no right or wrong answer as it depends on the scale of your project, what's involved, who's involved, how long the initiative lasts and more. Although, if we go by **the quarterly Bellwether Report from the IPA** then the investment from brands in experiential marketing grew in 2019, up by 3.4% from 2018.

Some areas that could affect the cost include:

- Your location.
- The scale of your project.
- Technology, such as VR.
- How long your experiential campaign will last.
- If you'll try and do this yourself or work with a third-party.

If you want to leave a huge impact, don't even think about cutting any corners. It can be the all-important difference between a forgettable event that nobody cares about and one that delivers real ROI.

Cheap can be spotted from a mile away. Run-down, incomplete or boring projects communicate to guests that your brand cuts corners. Refer to the luxury examples in the previous section - Louis XIII Cognac, Hennessy, Chanel and Hermès all created effective campaigns which reflected their brand image.

You wouldn't find them handing out free samples in supermarket aisles near the cereal. They're high-end and the efforts and budgets they placed in their experiential projects reflect that. Follow in those footsteps and realise that if you don't cut corners, attendees will associate your brand with luxury to reflect your products and service.

Also, not being cheap doesn't mean you need to have a budget on par with those aforementioned historic brands. It just means not cheapening the experience, whatever the budget.

2. What Trends Are Driving Experiential Marketing?

To be successful, you need to keep up with the trends or pay the price. You don't want to be the MySpace or MSN of 2020. You want to be a giant like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Basically, you need to keep an eye on the trends to stay ahead.

Consumers demand relationships with their favourite brands and experiential marketing can help you achieve that by building lifelong connections. Here are some of the trends which have driven experiential marketing.

Innovative Technology

Fully-integrated software platforms allow brands to become a one-stop-shop for consumers. Fancy tech like wearables, NFC, mobile apps, RFID, facial recognition and data collection can all help drive connections between brands and audiences.

Ticketed Campaigns

Research shows that one-third of attendees pay a ticket fee to enter an experiential event. You can put ticketing funds towards more elaborate projects and the metrics from software can help you understand your audience more. This also helps improve future projects.

Sense Engagement

Might sound weird but a big trend in experiential marketing is utilising all five senses during events to fully immerse consumers. Now, brands incorporate sight, sound, touch, taste and smell into strategies. With shrinking attention spans, engaging all five senses captures the attention more effectively.

Personalisation

You can personalise various aspects of your campaign for attendees. This includes seating preferences, dietary requirements and even what they want to get from the campaign. Remember how the 'Share a Coke' campaign took the world by storm? They can help attendees feel more connected to your brand and engage them much better.

Giving Back

Emotional connections are effective. Experiential marketing campaigns can build on this and provide attendees with ways to give back and encourage taking up a social cause to connect with audiences. **Research shows** that 57% of millennials and 55% of Generation Z brand consumers believe brands should use their voice to be a force of good for ethical or social issues.

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As experiential marketing continues to grow, the trends will continue to adapt so you'll need to stay on top of them. You can find even more effective trends like the ones we've mentioned above in this blog.



How to Measure Experiential Marketing: ROI and KPIs

Ah, the stuff your boss will *actually* care about. It's always a good idea to have solid measurements in place so you know if the campaign was a success and the changes to make next time.

Here's how you can measure ROI for your campaign and some KPIs to drive success.

Measuring ROI

- **Put Measurement Into Your Budget:** Establish the baseline level of awareness or engagement upfront. You should also measure once your campaign is over.
- **Build Measurement Into Your Campaign:** Do some clever planning beforehand to make measurement easier. If your brand does giveaways, then make sure to collect emails and contact details of survey attendees. However you interact with attendees, design your event in a way so you can record valuable data otherwise you'll miss out.
- **Measure Real Objectives:** Avoid asking questions and gaining one-size-fits-all data as you won't gain much with that. Ignore any data that doesn't match your objectives and make sure to design a way to measure the metrics your brand really needs to know.
- **Build Money Into Metrics:** If your brand wants to increase leads and engagement, it's not enough to just count these metrics. You need to ask how much it costs to get those leads or engagement for your campaign and if it was cheaper than other ways.

KPIs

- **KPIs for Awareness:** Unique visits and traffic sources to get the word out for your experiential campaign.
- **KPIs for Evaluation/Consideration:** Average session duration and heat maps to measure dwell time and the consumer experience to measure success.
- **KPIs for Decision:** Check-ins, conversion rates and overall event ROI to measure the numbers and who walked away with a favourable association of your brand.
- **KPIs for Retention:** Crowd count and pictures taken to show what consumers cared about the most.
- **KPIs for Advocacy:** Brand mentions, hashtags and follower growth rates to see the true lasting value and impact your experiential marketing campaign.

To find out more about experiential marketing KPIs and ROI in more detail, check out our blog which explains how you can measure them.



Experiential Marketing in Action

To truly pull off memorable, engaging and immersive experiential marketing campaigns, it takes loads of hard work behind the scenes. Regardless of the industry you're in, the results you can achieve can live long in the memory. If your brand needs some inspiration from what others have done in the past, here's a collection of images to showcase the amazing results experiential marketing can achieve.



A Lively Visitor Centre for Scottish Power

Sitting on the edge of Europe's largest wind farm, check out this lively visitor area for Scottish Power. Using a range of interactive experiences through wall graphics, models and displays, visitors of all ages can now learn more about natural energy solutions. Fun, attractive and informative.

Encouraging Children Participation for Aldi

A fun and educational exhibition stand turned up a notch for Aldi. Take a look at this campaign to see how the tactile and interactive games stations encouraged children to participate and engage audiences.



Wedgwood - Tradition Meets Elegance

An iconic brand deserves a campaign to match. Here's a magical Christmas campaign using custom printed wall coverings, cardboard engineered tables, printed gift boxes and loads more to create a truly charming festive scene.

Setting the Scene at Sheffield Theatre

The warm glow of this curved wall to floor graphic was the perfect backdrop to set the scene. Here's the entire graphic which was printed on carpet, tailored and installed to fit perfectly around the stage shape and doors.



Encouraging Visitor Interaction - National Grid

Take a look at this campaign involving a bespoke, bright exhibition stand which incorporates information points and interactive models. It encouraged visitors to stop, browse the screens and talk to other visitors.



Warm and Inviting - Pita Pit

Here's a quick look at the warm and inviting display created for London's Pita Pit by using creative window graphics.

Think Tank's Beautiful Product Display

This beautiful display at Liberty London is a perfect example of a product showcase done right. The limelight was on Escentric Molecules' perfume range which included embedded LED light sheets, a pretty sick 3D snowflake centrepiece, a mirror silver vinyl and more.



[View More Case Studies](#)

See Even More Examples of Successful Experiential Marketing

And they're just some of the many amazing examples of successful experiential marketing campaigns. If you're searching for experts to work with that can help you leave a lasting impression, look no further. At Service Graphics, we create visual experiences that connect people to brands.

We're also pretty damn good at helping brands like yours run successful experiential marketing campaigns. Rather than blowing our own horn about how amazing we are, why not see for yourself? We have expert teams specialising in exhibitions, events, signage, retail, sports and more.

To look at some of our previous work and why we're trusted by brands to deliver exceptional results, take a look at the case studies below.

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