

TOUCHPOINTS THAT MATTER: MULTISENSORY MARKETING FOR GEN Z ENGAGEMENT IN DIVERSE INDIAN SECTORS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of experiential marketing as a tool to change consumer behaviour in the fast-moving Indian context. This report examines how companies in different areas, like hospitality, retail, airlines, and healthcare, have adopted experiential marketing to retain customers and increase their market share. The study, however, points out that experiential marketing is crucial in targeting Market Generations who are highly motivated to interact with brands.

The paper examines these trends by seeking a closer understanding of how businesses embrace experiential flavoured strategies and observes that the methods not only sway purchase behaviour but also enable a competitive edge. This is possible by appealing to emotions, behaviour, cognition, and the socio-cultural aspects of the individual consumers. It is noted that as traditional message-based and promotional marketing strategies lose their efficacy, more and more consumers seek alternative, more interesting and involving forms. This development has necessitated businesses to use experiential marketing styles that resonate with the audiences, hence increasing the customer retention arm of modern businesses as well as loyalty to the brands.

In a nutshell, the paper captures the potential of experiential marketing in India by exploring the real engagement that brings about the success of the business in the long term.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Brand Engagement, India, Marketing Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly rising consumer marketplace, along with their cynicism toward advertising, presents marketers with a new challenge: finding innovative ways to catch their audience's attention. Because of the pervasiveness of technology, the power of brands, and the pervasiveness of communication and entertainment, companies are shifting their marketing strategies away from "features and advantages" and toward "experiential marketing."

The American Marketing Association defined marketing as "an action, collection of organizations and methods for generating, interacting, trading, and delivering things that have worth for consumers and other stakeholders" (Keefe, 2008). This approach identifies three key values: value to the consumer, firm, and society (Same and Larimo, 2012). A product or brand-related sensory encounter results in a personal occurrence with emotional significance. Having understanding allows clients to feel, reason, act, interact, and encourage sustainability (Dettori, 2019). Interactions between firm personnel and consumers are examined from the standpoints of social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Conventional advertising shows a design-driven, normal, and scientific client, item, and

rivalry viewpoint; yet, it is today viewed as an untested and out-of-date model suspicions. It's a not-at-all-subtle mental speculation concerning clients' views of and reactions to things and contests. On the opposite side, experiential promoting centres on the client's experience. In an encounter, tangible, passionate, intellectual, social, and coherent worth supplants utilitarian worth. Experiential marketing differs from conventional advertising in four ways: it centres around the client experience, sees utilization as a comprehensive encounter, recognizes both rational and emotional utilitarian motivations, and consolidates a range of strategies. Experiential Marketing's vitally significant ideas are experienced supplier (Ex-Pro) and Strategic Experience Module (SEM): Sense, Feeling, Thinking, Acting, and Relating. Ex Pro's execution of SEM should be utilized to its greatest degree to make the experience. The idea of experiential marketing is now and then exorbitantly dispersed and detached, bringing about authoritative difficulties, just as issues related to corporate marketing, new merchandise, brand extension, the time factor, cost factor, and numerous other elements. The experiential Marketing hypothesis is falling behind in its work on influencing the attractiveness of organizations.

A market-based way to deal with each of the three pieces of an encounter is utilized in experiential advertising. To forestall a troubling climate, experiential advertisers establish an invigorating climate where new customers may be found. An incorporated advertising experience consolidates the inherent and outward factors of the client, just as the limitations, songs, lower atmosphere, occasions, and well-being of the market climate (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; 2002). For the unenlightened, experiential advertising is the mix of craftsmanship and science to make sensational or account corporate minutes that blend a brand message with intelligent parts and a blockaded audience and convey it in a live climate to get a foreordained outcome (Kerry and Dan, 2016).

The notion of experiential marketing has been broadly used in various industries and companies in current times. Liu et al. (2016) and Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) incorporated the concept of the experiential part of usage or consumption. According to these researchers, Feelings, Fantasies, and Fun(3Fs) is the core objective and basis for identifying ingesting patterns in the context of the pragmatic view. We can also say that consumption in an experiential context depends upon the information processing towards pleasure, enjoyment, amusement, and sensual stimulus. Experiential marketing is related to the sanity of individuals or consumers. These senses are vision, smell, hearing, touch, taste, and balance. The cause for the growth of experiential marketing is that traditional marketing does not consider the concept of customer involvement. Experiential advertising is not a trend; it happened because of practice. Michelli (2007) concluded the 5 major principles for making extraordinary products from ordinary ones, and the most important principle described by him was the unique experiences the consumer has by using your product. He also explained that you shouldn't sell your product with its features, but sell it along with the experience one has after using it. He concluded that if a consumer is having a unique experience by using your product, then your product will smell the taste of success like Starbucks. According to Kotler (2003), traditional and modern marketing are the two types of marketing, whereas Lee et al. (2011) concluded that experiential marketing into the involve men that a consumer has after using any product or service. Wu, & Tseng, (2015) suggested that with the help of experiential marketing, the marketer can gain consumers' loyalty and satisfaction. Companies take advantage of experiential marketing to increase their profit and sales over along period. Cuellar, et al (2015). According to Vân Nguyen, the next marketing nightmare is Generation Y, or millennials (2010). Their parents and grandparents were left behind by this generation,

which grew up with the internet, cutting-edge technology, and an abundance of communication routes ranging from mobile phones to Facebook. This generation is suspicious of marketing endeavour since they've been blasted with expensive advertising and commercials since they were very young.

In recent years, several businesses have begun adopting experiential marketing as a marketing strategy. Liu and partners (2016). The experience view of consuming was developed by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) as an alternative to the information-processing paradigm. According to these authors, the objectives and conditions for effective consumption in the experiential approach are the three Fs—fantasies, feelings, and fun. To put it another way, in experiential consumption, the logical and goal-oriented consumer of the information processing model becomes a pleasure-oriented individual who is always looking for entertainment, enjoyment, and "sensory-emotive" stimulation. Experiential marketing uses all six senses—smell, sight, taste, hearing, touch, and balance. The idea of active experiences has gained prominence because traditional marketing has largely ignored it. The use of experiential marketing is not common. It is being used in practice, but marketing philosophies (concepts) do not take it into account. Five criteria were outlined by Michelli (2007) for making ordinary products extraordinary. Offering customers a one-of-a-kind experience was one of the ideas he mentioned. He proceeded to say that instead of selling an item with highlights, it's desirable to sell their regular contribution with experience folded over it. He noticed that for firms like Starbucks, making an unmistakable shopper experience has been a key to progress. Lee et al. claim that (2011), experiential marketing is defined as an event or memory that sticks with a customer for a long time. According to Kotler, there are two types of marketing: traditional marketing and modern marketing. As a result of the emphasis on purchaser experience and experiential marketing, current showcasing has outperformed traditional advertising. Wu, M. Y., and Tseng, L. H. A holistic approach that contributes to customer happiness and loyalty is what's meant to be meant by experiential marketing. Cuellar et al. claim that Experiential Marketing can help businesses increase profits and sales over the long term.

Effect of Experiential Marketing

Effect on brand involvement

This intangible but crucial component is owned by the business and signifies a contract with the customer, with the gradation of superiority and worth provided by merchandise or service, according to Davis (2000). Not only one product but also other things related to that brand may benefit from effective branding in marketing.

People born between 1977 and 2000 are more likely to be influenced by brand experience impacts through experiential marketing because of the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies (people born between 1946 and 1964). A multitude of platforms and technologies are used to communicate by Generation Y (Qader and Omar, 2013). It is said that Generation Y customers are driven by eight fundamental principles, including choice, personalization, inspection, entertainment, honesty, cooperation, and invention (Qader and Omar, 2013). Because of this, an idyllic experiential vendor would try to create comprehensive experiences that push consumers to perceive, reason, sense, relate, and perform to the product and the organization (Schmitt, 1999a).

To build an actual customer connection that produces quantifiable outcomes, leading companies use experiential marketing, which relies on a brand with strong pull action. Companies like Anheuser-Busch, Unilever, Roche, Procter & Gamble, and others have relied on experiential advertising to carry the promised worth and nurture consumer allegiance through a wide range of experiences (Kerry and Dan, 2016).

Effect on Shoppers Experience

Experiential marketing places a heavy premium on customer contact. When you access, manage, employ, and recall the result of an experiencing item's effect, you're having an experience. Experiences give cognitive, relational, behavioural, emotional, sensory, and interactive standards in place of practical ethics. (Schmitt, 1999b). In the words of Shaw and Ivens (2002), a consumer experience is an engagement between a company and a consumer that involves physical performance, stimulation of the senses, and emotional response. It is the contact point that is central to customer experience (Gentile et al., 2007).

The heterogeneously variegated structure of the people, culture, and languages of India offers a dilemma. As a result, in a market, a product, service, or brand must behave locally. On the other side, complete localization is impossible. To effectively "relate" to their customers, organizations may need to localize their experience outreach, whether it's an event, promotional activities, or communications and advertising.

To achieve this experience, brand owners will need to create emotional layers around their products and services - an experience that engages profoundly rather than merely delivering a product. This means that businesses will have to appeal to customers on a personal level and strive to connect with them to offer possibilities for them to create memorable experiences.

Every experience developed is essentially re-imagined and made more shareable in the experience economy. This will be visible in retail, as storefronts may combine into experience arenas that use artificial and virtual reality to offer more immersive encounters. Customers would like to purchase limited-edition, high-quality items, which may be worth more second-hand.

Effect of Market Experience

Experiential marketing subsidizes the expansion of a strong product and a favourable market mix. A strong brand is key to achieving long-term stability and overcoming all of the questions associated with the marketing mix (Boyett and Boyett, 2003). Rather than being undertaken to find new ways to increase sales or improve consumer satisfaction, advertising investigation is the first step and the foundation for making smart advertising decisions (Kotler, 2003). Businesses can rely on consumer insights instead of just customer information, using experiential marketing. For marketing to be successful, consumers must have a positive experience, and relationships should be managed rather than advertised. Experiences boost the value of a product, a brand, or a corporation. It boosts clients' feelings and stimulates their senses without jeopardizing the quality of the offer. In practice (Schmitt, 1999a). Value proposition engagement moderates the relationship between experiential value and consumer well-being, experiential value plays a partial mediation role, and experiential marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer well-being.

Experiential Marketing: Industrial Perspectives

A growing number of generations are moving toward an experience-based economy, making experiential marketing a key idea, stratagem, and device in the advertising sector (Yuan and Wu, 2008). When there is a market offering (product or service), it is used in an extensive assortment of organizations and segments as it encourages clientele to make quicker and more favourable purchase choices (Hill, 2001; Williams, 2006). Businesses in the service sector need to give experiential marketing a lot of weight and keep improving the well-being of their customers. A state of the economy known as a "service economy" is one in which more than 60% of GDP is made up of output from the service industry. Companies ought to consider the mediating role of consumer experiential value and pay close attention to it. Modern service providers are focusing more and more on the experiential value of their customers' experiences as a result of the fierce competition in the market. This is done to cater to the various requirements that customers have in terms of experiences and provide them with. This study found that experiential value partially mediated the relationship between consumer well-being and experiential marketing.

Hospitality and Tourism Industry

A comprehensive experience is always provided by the hospitality and tourism business (Williams, 2006). Experiential advertising is crucial for organizations, particularly those in the hotel and travel business (Yuan and Wu, 2008). According to Driver and Toucher (1970), a trip is divided into five stages: preparation, departing for the terminus, experiencing the journey, coming back from the trip, and remembering the trip. Because consumers' experiences are complicated and impacted by various elements (Ittelson, 1978), including controllable and non-controllable characteristics by companies, customers' involvement in these stages is prone to alteration. The success of hospitality enterprises depends on the ability to create distinctive experiences (Yuan and Wu, 2008).

Travelers are increasingly seeking out new and exciting experiences, according to surveys. It is India's diverse wealth that makes it so attractive. The social media-enabled millennial generation is one reason for the development of experiential travel. Visitors who want to bungee jump, swim in the chilly Pangong Lake in the Himalayas, or bicycle across Kashmir's Ladakh region can find hotels that are ready to welcome them. As a small portion of India's overall tourism, experiential travel has witnessed tremendous growth in recent years and is likely to continue. There's a lot to see in India, from culture and heritage to spiritual and health tourism, adventure, and eco-tourism. There are limited reliable statistics on this category's growth because it is supported in part by the informal tourism industry.

Retail Industry

Employees and customers have more opportunities to interact with one another through experiential marketing (Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010). Touchpoints occur when products or services come into contact with a customer. Aesthetics in marketing refers to the deliberate design of a retail environment to produce a desirable (practical and emotive) impression on customers to increase their purchase probability (de Farias et al., 2014; Kotler, 2008). A few forward-thinking Indian marketers have adopted this method in the past with great success. Home shop 18, a TV shopping channel turned online Commerce site, launched India's first virtual, mobile-assisted buying experience in Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi Airport in New Delhi. They can scan QR codes on things with their mobile phones to interact with a virtual wall and shop for items. Simple, yet effective for an e-retailer with a strong brand connection.

Event Management Industry

Today, the value of an event property is mostly determined by its visibility. To increase event engagement, emotional and brand elements work together. This can lead to important benefits like referral and buying determination, which is extremely indicative of sales (Pettit et al., 2008). Events and patronages are experiential advertising tactics that emphasize the customer experience in a holistic context. Among the events that fall within this category are trade exhibitions and displays, conferences, and conventions, as well as annual business gatherings, religious crusades, and others. Unlike most advertising, trade fairs have an infectious effect on participants, who in turn influence their peers in large numbers (Pettit et al., 2008). As a bonus, event marketing allows customers to become more familiar with the business and its personality.

Airline Industry

It's a prominent topic in the service industry to make clients happy. Because of the rapid growth and increasing diversity of airline customers, the customer experience is becoming increasingly crucial. Providing good passenger experiences is essential for airlines to gain a competitive edge. An airline's customer experience differs significantly from one airline to the next due to its experiential characteristics.

Healthcare and Pharma Industry

When providing a large amount of information, experiential learning allows for a longer period of engagement, which is a plus. Even though ad on television, in print, on the radio, or on the internet might transmit information, they don't provide viewers a chance to ask questions or become more active. Two-way communication is a key element of experiential marketing. Pharmaceutical companies have not kept up with the economic, demographic, and structural changes in mature markets (PwC, 2020).

To treat their problems, patients require pharmaceutical products. On the internet, they can learn about and share their opinions on treatments, with a particular focus on side effects and patient satisfaction (PwC, 2012). A brand of health care items that produces a favourable therapeutic result-customer value-might be promoted using experiential marketing.

The Future of experiential Marketing

After Generation X, Generation Y has emerged due to rapid technological advancements across all sectors of modern society. The current century will see a shift in social interaction for Generation Y, which will be replaced with "virtual engagement" as an outcome of lockdown and communal estrangement measures taken to combat the world-wide coronavirus epidemic. Customers and competitors are demanding that businesses go virtual to stay competitive. As a result of virtual connections, several companies are downsizing their workforces. High prestige, virtual thinking, self-aggrandizement, and achievement-oriented attributes will characterize the next generation of customers. Basic values such as desire and self-identity, flexibility and cooperation, as well as integrity and fun, will form the foundation for these features. Incorporating pleasure and enjoyment into a company can encourage involvement, engagement, cooperation, awareness, and learning (Dettori, 2019; Lucassen and Jansen, 2014).

Gen Z, like its "millennial" cousins, demands actual and tactile brand experiences. Memory in experience are also important to them. For these customers, experiential marketing is therefore crucial. Not only product companies but also service providers must demonstrate

their dedication to high-quality goods and unique experiences. They want to be heard, especially if they like or support the product.

Make sure to include them in the experience and make it something they'll remember and be a part of for months, rather than just making a nice first impression or putting up a photo booth near you. But the longer you can keep your clients' eyes on your stuff, the better off you will be. First, consider going digital. When a company uses experiential marketing, it should always aim to give customers a great experience with the product or service in return for their support. Experiential showcasing ought to have a broadened and far-reaching technique. Before combining them with other methods, it's important to look at the loop points. Since experiential showcasing changes by item, the system ought to be planned and executed with the explicit intention of meeting the organization's objectives and getting an upper hand. To gain a deeper understanding of experiential marketing, it must evolve uniquely and leave a positive impression on the customer. The objective of the strategy is to close the gap between a company's claims about its service and what customers experience. A well-thought-out and effective strategy might have an impact on how customers shop. The strategy ought to be capable of competing in the market. Through experience, this new promoting blend intends to rejuvenate brands. Experiential showcasing involves effectively invigorating purchasers, drawing them into a genuine encounter, and permitting them to be receptive to the brand in a customized setting.

We already have a great selection of execution tools, methodologies, and strategies thanks to traditional marketing. The emphasis of marketing is shifting from the conventional to the experiential as we move into a new information technology era. Tactile, profound, mental, conduct, and sensible qualities supplant the practical worth in experience. Organizations should perceive the adjustment of Promoting and its execution to boost profits and improve life. Experiential Showcasing is an amazing asset that considers purchasers as level-headed and profound people worried about having pleasurable experiences. As a result, businesses must take into account novel strategies and concepts within the organization. Experiential marketing emphasizes the customer experience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the research demonstrates the transformative potential of experiential marketing in current business strategies. To make connections with their audience that are more meaningful and engaging, marketers are turning to experiential marketing in response to the growing scepticism of consumers toward traditional advertising strategies. Instead of merely promoting product features, experiential marketing places an emphasis on creating memorable experiences that engage customers on sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social levels.

Key discoveries recommend that experiential showcasing altogether influences brand inclusion and client unwaveringness. Millennials, who place a high value on authentic, interactive, and personalized brand interactions, respond well to this strategy. Driving organizations across different businesses, including cordiality, retail, occasions, carriers, and medical services, have effectively utilized experiential advertising to upgrade client experiences, drive brand unwaveringness, and increment revenue.

Experiential marketing, for instance, helps the hospitality and tourism sector by providing customers with memorable, one-of-a-kind travel experiences that fully engage them. Additionally, the retail area uses tasteful and intelligent components to establish a drawing in shopping conditions. Through well-planned experiential events that are well-planned, event management companies increase brand awareness and customer engagement.

Experiential marketing creates opportunities for interactive, two-way communication and deepens patient engagement in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. By addressing

their concerns and providing comprehensive treatment information, this strategy fosters trust and ensures better patient outcomes.

In general, experiential marketing is more than just a trend; it is a fundamental shift in marketing strategies that emphasizes customer experiences. By zeroing in on making significant and genuinely resounding collaborations, organizations can separate themselves, construct more grounded client relationships, and make long-term progress.

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