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Guidelines for producing a live brand experience

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Guidelines for producing a live brand experience
Case: Project A in Company X

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The objective of this thesis was to define the stages required to produce a live brand experience, as well as to prepare guidelines which organizations can use as a tool when executing field marketing activities. The live brand experience constitutes the core of experiential marketing, which refers to two-way communication between consumers and brands. Implementation of experiential marketing activities requires an organization to have certain assets such as knowledge of footfall and demographics in several locations, good relationships with specialist suppliers and experienced field staff. Therefore, it is advisable that companies outsource experiential marketing to specialized agencies. The topic discussed is written from this point of view.

The production process introduced in the text is based on Helena Vallo, and Eija Häyrinen's star model of the success factors of an event. Related literature, as well as interviews with people working in the marketing field, was used to support, the theoretical framework.

In addition to the theoretical base, the production stages introduced in the text are discussed through a case example, Project A in Company X. The case example provides the reader with practical examples of implementing the theoretical topics introduced in the thesis. Recommendations for improvement are also included in the thesis.

Key words live brand experience, experiential marketing, field marketing, production process

Tuominen, Niina

Ohje live brändikokemuksen tuottamiselle

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena ja lähtökohtana oli määrittää live brändikokemuksen tuottamiseen tarvittavat vaiheet sekä tuottaa ohjenuora jota organisaatiot voivat hyödyntää kenttämarkkinointi aktiviteetteja toteuttaessa. Live brändikokemus on keskeinen osa kokemuksellista markkinointia sisältäen kaksisuuntaista viestintää asiakkaiden ja brändien välillä. Kokemuksellisten markkinointi aktiviteettien toteuttaminen vaatii organisaatiolta tietynlaisia ominaisuuksia kuten eri alueiden asiakaskunnan sekä väestön tuntemusta, hyviä suhteita tavarantoimittajien sekä kokeneiden kenttätyöntekijöiden kanssa. Siksi on suositeltavaa, että yritykset ulkoistavat kokemuksellisen markkinoinnin tähän erikoistuneille toimistoille. Keskeinen aihe on tarkasteltu tästä näkökulmasta.

Tekstissä esitetty tuotanto prosessi perustuu Helena Vallon ja Eija Häyrisen tapahtuman menestystekijöitä kuvaavaan tähti malliin. Aiheeseen liittyvä kirjallisuus sekä haastattelut markkinoinnin parissa työskentelevien kanssa tukevat teoreettisia aspekteja.

Teoreettisen viitekehyksen lisäksi, tekstissä mainitut tuotannon vaiheet on esitetty esimerkki projektin avulla, Projektin A yrityksessä X. Esimerkki projekti tarjoaa lukijalle käytännön esimerkkejä opinnäytetyössä käsitellyistä teoreettisista aiheista. Työ sisältää myös kehitysideoita.

live brändikokemus, kokemuksellinen markkinointi, kenttämarkkinointi, tuotanto prosessi

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Several studies indicate that experiential marketing is one of the fastest growing field in marketing and is likely to continue its growth for years to come. According to a study (PR Newswire n.d.) conducted in 2006 by MICE Group, an international marketing services group, "of the nineteen (19) main marketing activities undertaken by global companies, thirteen (13) could be considered components of experiential marketing." Sixty-two percent (62%) of the study participants believe that in the next five years experiential marketing will be one of the big growth area in marketing. Eighty percent (80%) of the participants see experience-based activities as an important factor of their businesses' marketing mix. Despite the future predictions and growth of experiential marketing, the participants of MICE Group's study have a low level of awareness and understanding of the term, experiential marketing.

One of the latest study of event marketing, EventTrack2013 (Event marketing institute 2013), indicate that event and experiential marketing budgets grow annually about five percent (5%). In 2012, the budgets increased by five percent (5%) from the previous year's three point six percent (3,6%). Outlook for 2013 continue the same path with an estimate of four point seven percent (4,7%) increase in event and experiential marketing budgets.

According to survey findings presented above, experiential marketing is currently blooming but still struggling with a lack of knowledge within marketers. As an intern and an employee in a case company, Company X (introduced later in the text), I experienced a lack of knowledge within marketers and brands organizing experiential marketing activities. Organizations operating in marketing as well as companies using outsourced agencies to execute experiential marketing activities do not posses clear and consistent idea of experiential marketing. During an internship term in Company X, personal interest towards marketing's latest 'buzz-word', experiential marketing, increased as well as urge to study and gather more knowledge about this field of marketing developed.

1.2 Objectives

Main objective of this thesis was to define the stages required to produce a live brand experience, as well as to prepare guidelines which organizations can use as tools when executing field marketing activities. The live brand experience constitutes the core of experiential marketing, which includes two-way communication between consumers and brands. Implementation of experiential marketing activities requires an organization to have certain assets such as knowledge of footfall and demographics in several locations, good

relationships with specialist suppliers and experienced field staff. Therefore, it is advisable that companies outsource experiential marketing to specialized agencies. The topic discussed is written from this point of view.

Another objective of the thesis was to create a tool, which Company X can use in the future operations. Currently, working knowledge inside the company is based on tacit knowledge. Producers operating for the company have worked in marketing business for several years. Therefore previous projects and experiences play a crucial role in the company's operations.

One of the disadvantages of tacit knowledge is that the information is not documented. For example in case of new personnel, knowledge of the company's policies of conducting work is shared by discussions and tutoring. This method is very time consuming as well as without a proper guideline or supportive tools for example some of production stages of live brand experience, could be missed or neglected. If one of the cornerstones of a project, e.g. a team member or visual elements, are missing or fell of during the production, whole production process might corrupt or collapse. Projects that are left unfinished or receive reclamation have taken assets such as time and money from a company and therefore affect the company's productivity and profitability. In some cases, might even affect customer relationship between a service provider and a client.

With the finalized thesis, Company X's personnel and management should have a better understanding of tasks required to execute a live brand experience and a connection between these tasks.

1.3 Methodology

Structure of the thesis follows a zipper model, in which theoretical findings and practice are incorporated into same sections. This type of structure provides the reader with a better pragmatic understanding of the topics discussed in the text. (Boedeker & Vuorijärvi, 2006)

Theoretical findings used in the thesis consist of articles and books related to the topic. Shaz Smilansky, author of one of the main resources used in the thesis, *Experiential marketing: a practical guide to interactive brand experiences*, is one of the central persons in experiential marketing. Smilansky is actively involved in the development of educational side of the industry. Currently, she is co-developing a master's degree programme in experiential marketing at London Metropolitan University. (Event Magazine 2013) The production process introduced in the text is based on Helena Vallo and Eija Häyrynen's star model of the success factors of an event.

Interviews and conversations with a case company, Company X's representatives, form pragmatic perspectives introduced in the text. First discussions with the interviewees were placed during the writer's internship term in Company X, between January 2nd and April 15th, 2012. Further questioning and conversations were conducted in two parts: between January 14th and 31st, 2013, as well as between April 17th and 21st, 2013. Interviews were held as an open conversation in which discussed topics and questions were modified along the interview goes on.

2 Marketing operations

2.1 Marketing process

Kotler et al. (2013, 5-12), define marketing as "the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return." The marketing process is divided into five (5) steps. First, marketers need to be familiarized with the marketplace as well as the customer needs and wants. After this a customer-driven marketing strategy can be chosen based on the defined target market and value proposition. Third (3) step in the marketing process is creating an integrated marketing programme, in which the firm's marketing mix tools are combined together. The major marketing mix tools, also known as four (4) Ps, are: product, price, place and promotions. The four (4) Ps are used implementing the company's marketing strategy. In the integrated marketing programme the marketing strategy is transformed into action.

Fourth (4) step in the marketing process is seen as the most important step. Customer relationship management (CRM) is the main concept of this step. CRM is "the overall process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships by delivering superior customer value and satisfaction." (Kotler et al. 2013, 13) In the first four (4) steps in the marketing process, value is created for customers, but in the last and final step value is captured from customers. Sales, market share and profits are example forms of the captured values. (Kotler et al. 2013, 19)

2.2 Marketing communication

Companies use marketing communication in order to communicate with a variety of audiences. By marketing communication, companies are seeking to influence the target audiences' responsiveness towards the organization or product/brand. The responsiveness can be immediate for example effecting purchase behaviour, or the information can be mediated later. Either way, the communication with the audience has attracted attention. (Fill 2011, 9) Brand identity is the outward expression of the brand, including visual aspects of the brand

such as name, trademark, visual appearance, and communications. The way consumers comprehend the company's aim, create brand image. In order to establish the correct image in the minds of consumers, the marketer must express the brand identity by using every marketing mix variable. (Kotler et al. 2009, 426)

Marketing communications may be planned or unplanned. Planned communication events are controlled and delivered to target audience. These events are developed through research and involve resources as well as timing. As a comparison, unplanned communications may occur for example through word-of-mouth or accidents. In addition, audiences' experience of using companies' products as well as consumption of services create communication between companies and audiences. (Fill 2011, 7)

As incorporated together; tools, media and messages form marketing communication mix. The tools of marketing communication mix also known as methods of communication are: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. Difference between the tools and media is that media can be seen as a tool that conveys advertising and other marketing messages to target audience. Organizations are mainly responsible of the content of messages delivered to audience despite the fact that currently popularity of word-of-mouth is increasing. (Fill 2011, 16)

In integrated marketing, marketing activities are coordinated and implemented to support each other in order to communicate and deliver value to customers. Companies using integrated communication strategy choose communication methods that reinforce and complement each other, for example television, print advertising, radio, and so forth. The importance of delivering consistent brand image to customers at every brand contact is crucial. By integrated channel strategy companies are able to ensure that both, direct and indirect channels operate together to maximize sales and brand equity. (Kotler et al. 2009, 58) Contradictory information from different sources may confuse customers and might lead into unsuccessful information delivery process and collapse of an entire marketing campaign. (O'Guinn 2009, 11-12) A figure below (Figure 1) illustrates the marketing mix variables' relations in integrated marketing communication process.



Figure 1: Integrated marketing communication
(Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 437)

Advertising and public relations are two (2) tools of the marketing communication mix that provide information to the audience and this way develop brand loyalty among the targeted. Whereas rest of the tools; sales promotion, direct marketing and personal sales, endeavors audience to response. For example direct marketing and personal selling seek to engage customers directly and in an explicit manner. Most notably, these two (2) communication disciplines affect the audience's behaviour. (Fill 2011, 278)

3 Field marketing

Main disciplines of direct marketing are: direct mail marketing, telemarketing and email direct marketing. What is common within each of these disciplines is that they use consumer-direct channels in order to reach and deliver services to customers. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 557-558) As well as, generally involve one-to-one communication between a company and carefully targeted consumers. By this type of customer approach, companies are seeking to gather immediate and measurable consumer response. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 520)

Many of the direct marketing disciplines, including field marketing, are part of the Europe's largest marketing trade body, the Direct Marketing Association (DMA). Together with different trade bodies, government agencies and the government itself, the DMA is the protector of consumers' interests as well as the direct marketing industry. Councils represent each discipline, for example the Field Marketing Council (FMC) is the industry body of field marketing in DMA. (Williams & Mullin 2008, 3)

Field marketing agencies applying for the FMC has to pass the standards set by the FMC and the DMA. Before an agency is admitted with a membership, the company is visited and checked against the FMC best practice guidelines and the DMA codes of conduct. The FMC's vision statement and mission goes as follows: "Vision: To achieve widespread brand owner recognition of the value and the importance of FM for the personal expression of their brands. Mission: Our mission is to ensure that FMC members operate to the highest professional standards producing the best possible project outcomes, making GMC members the automatic first choice for every client.". (Williams & Mullin 2008, 4)

According to Williams and Mullin:

"Field marketing is the outsourcing of a sales or marketing project to direct face-to-face marketing which explains, educates and influences the customer to affect the future purchasing decisions, either ongoing or a short-term fix. The outsourcing of this function to highly trained staff, specializing in delivering brand experience, brand values and sales, allows flexibility of budget and releases the client to focus on his core business.". (2008, 3)

Field marketing is divided into six different disciplines:

1. Sales
2. Merchandising
3. Auditing:
4. Sampling & demonstrating
5. Experiential marketing, road shows, events
6. Mystery calling and shopping

Telesales, handling, despatch and warehousing are some of the newest services joining the field marketing mix. (Users guide to field marketing 2002)

3.1 Experiential marketing

Live brand experience is a core of an experiential marketing campaign. It involves real time two-way communication between a brand and target audience. (Smilansky 2009, 6)

Experiential marketing communicates features and benefits of a product or service, as well as connects a brand and consumers with a unique and an interesting experience. One of its targets is to demonstrate how a brand or a product itself can enrich the customers' life.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, 549) customers seem to appreciate this; "in one survey, four of five responders found participating in a live event was more engaging than all other forms of communication.". Majority of the respondents also felt that other forms of communication do not provide as much information as experiential marketing does. The

respondents also stated that participation in live events would also encourage them to tell others about their experiences with the brand or product.

AIDA model is one of the methods introduced in marketing when developing an effective message. It is a process through which marketers are aiming to take customers. Experiential marketing campaigns are effective for achieving each stage of the AIDA model. The acronym forms from four (4) key words, listed below with experiential marketing examples.

- **Awareness:** live brand experiences reach large numbers of consumers and drive word-of-mouth. "Consumers who engage in a live brand experience are likely to tell 17 people." and "...each of those people who heard about the live brand experience is likely to tell an additional one-and-a half people." (Smilansky 2009, 7)
- **Interest:** live brand experiences create interest towards a brand/product by engaging consumers, allowing them to try, feel and play with the product.
- **Desire:** target audiences' desire towards a brand/product can be provoked through experiences that communicate the aspirations of the targeted for example by creating the subconscious sense that the lifestyle that the targeted desire is reached by using the product.
- **Action:** compared to other marketing channels, purchase decisions are more likely to be driven by live brand experiences.

(Smilansky 2009, 6-8)

4 Using an agency for producing live brand experience

When an organization decides to use experiential marketing as a marketing tool, it has to decide whether it wants to organize the campaign in-house or use an outsourced agency. The agency can be the organizations' normal agency, which it uses for other purposes as well, or a specialist agency. The organization may also consider sourcing an experiential agency specialist to conduct planning and implementation of the campaign. Smilansky note that live brand experiences include handling of complex environments and therefore it is advisable that an organization uses an expert who possesses great knowledge of footfall and demographics in several locations, good relationships with specialist suppliers and experienced. In addition, the campaign needs to be managed by trained and experienced team in order to effectively and smoothly run the campaign despite many external factors that can cause problems along the way. (Smilansky 2009, 36)

In terms of number of different factors affecting the campaigns' outcome, live brand experiences differ from other forms of marketing. For example the process of completing a magazine advertisement does not involve a large number of factors that may interrupt the implementation process. After an advertisement is designed and printed it can be placed into the media, for example a specific magazine. Whereas, an implementation process of live brand experiences include several factors. Once the creatively and logistically planned campaign goes live there is still large number of factors that can occur and affect the success of the campaign.

In order to produce results, planning and execution of live brand experiences should be in the hands of right people. According to Smilansky (2009, 38): "Activation requires careful operational logistics planning, detailed execution schedules, and a fanatical attention to detail to be a success. This is of course additional to the fact that the experiential idea should be powerful in the first place."

To name few pros of bringing an experiential marketing team in-house, in other words recruiting a special experiential marketing team to operate inside an organization. The main advantage of in-housing is, that the team will know the key players within the organization much better than agencies outside of it. In addition, the team will be more familiar with the organizations' goals as well as buying and decision-making process. In-housing also enables the team to adapt customer experience, which supports the creation of experiential marketing programme to achieve the organization's marketing communication objectives. Additional advantage of in-housing is that once the organization is the team's only client, it will focus only on the organization and its goals. The team does not have other commitments or priorities; therefore their energy is spent on satisfying key decision makers and assigned projects. As a comparison, outsourced agencies may not only focus on one client and have several clients to serve at the same time.

Cons of in-housing the experiential marketing team are both financial and resource-based. Execution of live brand experiences includes large number of people, to name few: creative team, an operational or a project management team, brand ambassadors and suppliers. In addition, it requires a promotional staff booking team, warehousing, storage and other logistics facilities. Before investing time, money and effort on creating an effective experiential marketing team, the organization should have a long-term plan for using experiential marketing methods. For example if the organization does not run live brand experiences at all times, during the interim period logistical and activation part of the team will be doing nothing. (Smilansky 2009, 39-42)

4.1 Types of marketing agencies

Two (2) main roles that advertising agencies undertook originally were creative message design as well as media planning and purchasing. (Fill 2011, 166) Currently advertising firms rather call themselves marketing firms to emphasize their capability of creating successful marketing activities rather than only for example advertising. Marketing companies are pursuing of becoming a partner of client companies' marketing planning. From clients' point of view this is beneficial because the partnership boosts into better and more efficient marketing communication as well as supports the managements' consultancy. For marketing companies the partnership creates possibilities for long-term customer relation and therefore enables forecasting/budgeting the near future. (Sipilä 2008, 213-214)

As a result of the growth in importance of direct marketing and the increasing range of media, the number of different types of agencies has increased. Also the interest and drive towards integrated marketing communications has supported agencies adopt and fulfill particular roles in the communication industry.

A full-service agency, also known as an advertising agency, is the most common type of an agency. This type of an organization provide its clients with full range of advertising services for example strategic planning, research, production, interactive and media planning and buying, often on a global basis. Despite the name, a full-service agency, the organization may outsource some of the activities. Overall responsibility in this type of cases rests with the full-service agency.

A boutique is an agency type that provides creative services such as copywriting and developing creative content for its clients. Personnel of the agency often consist of former full-service agency's creative team members. Willingness to use of a particular style and an approach for creative work drive organizations to use boutiques. Creative services are also used to generate lots of creative ideas.

In addition, to these two (2) types of agencies there are media specialists, digital media and other communication agencies specializing on a specific aspect of the marketing communications industry. (Fill 2011, 166-168)

When it comes to executing a live brand experience, organizations tend to seek for several different types of agencies. Advertising agencies, PR agencies, media agencies, direct marketing agencies and sales promotion agencies are only examples of these. According to Smilansky (2009, 37), occasionally even creative shops and event-planning agencies are assigned to implement experiential marketing campaigns. Half of the time, non-specialist

agencies implement experiential marketing campaigns rather than experiential marketing experts, which has led to criticism towards the experiential marketing industry.

When an organization chooses to use a marketing agency it should have an understanding of the culture and how an agency operates. The selection process between agency candidates begins with a handout of a brief. The brief describes in detail what the organization requires. Based on the received brief, agencies produce submissions with costings. The organization compares the submissions and chooses one agency from the candidates to produce the desired marketing activity.

In some occasions organizations choose an agency based on its credentials without even providing the candidates with a brief. The selection process in these cases is based on a feeling that the agency has the required experience. (Vallo & Häyriäinen 2012, 153-155, 181)

4.2 Agency-client relationship

The marketing communications industry consists of a vast number of relationships. The nature of the relationship, for example between a client and an agency, shapes and influences both organizations' strategies and operations. The quality of an agency-client relationship is mainly based on trust and commitment. These two functions are developed through a series of interactions and exchanges, which always involve communication between the parties. Most commonly, the communications are based on face-to-face meetings and conversations on a telephone. Whereas, contact reports and briefing documents support the interaction.

Agencies provide services, which generate value for the client company; therefore the agency-client relationship is based on value creation. For this reason agencies are anxious to demonstrate as frequently as possible their willingness and potential to generate value. Most commonly this is performed in a way in which the client is serviced, which often leads to over-serving the client, for example by providing extra time. (Fill 2011, 210)

Billable services only consist of a part of the services offered to the client. Both individual consumers and client companies pay attention to the service providers' way of serving their customers, for example when it comes to handling invoices, quality problems, mistakes and service failures. Each of these factors, including the attention that employees show customers, influences the customers' perception of the value of being a customer of the service provider. The factors either make it effortless or more complicated to be a customer of a certain company, as well as often support the customer to save money. Grönroos (2001, 2-3) notes "The customer orientation of these services contributes to making

it worthwhile for customers to continue purchasing from the same firm, and prevents customers from considering alternative options."

Although, a problem within non-billable services such as invoicing, complaints handling and documentation, is that management rarely identify them as services. Instead of managed as value-enhancing services to customers, these so called hidden services are considered as administrative routines. Therefore, customers seldom perceive most of these services as support and value-creating activities. According to Grönroos (2001, 3) "Thus, the development of value-enhancing services out of such administrative routines in customer relationships is a powerful way of setting apart a firm from its competitors and of creating a sustainable competitive advantage."

5 Case example

5.1 Company introduction

Company X was established in 2003. It is classified as privately owned marketing firm and it consists of eight (8) permanent staff members. In addition to personnel in the office, the company recruits temporary staff as well as use subcontractors to perform some of the business operations. Most of the temporary staff has been working as freelancers for the company for several years and the employee-employer relationship is built on loyalty and trust. (Haapalainen 2013a)

Company X's short slogan: *We Engage*, crystallize the company's business model as a full-service marketing agency. The company provides its knowledge and experience on organizing road shows and events by using experiential marketing methods for example creating live brand experiences' around clients' new products and brands. (Haapalainen 2012)

Case example discussed in the text involves Company C which has been Company X's client since 2007. (Haapalainen 2012) Company C is globally known electronic brand and second-largest mobile phone producer. (Kotler et al. 2013, 615, 19) For the past decade, the company has aggressively invested on brand building for example from 1998 to 2009; Company C spent over seven (7) billion dollars in different marketing activities such as sponsoring, advertising and campaigns. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 343-344)

Company X is highly involved in telecommunication campaigns that Company C executes, therefore Company X can be considered as a part of Company C's embodiment among end users. Product sampling and demonstrating held in shopping malls and retailers' premises are examples of field marketing activities conducted by Company X. In addition, live brand

experience campaigns, events and private parties are organized in order to increase brand awareness and arouse attention among the end users. As result of executed projects, Company C's brand awareness increases and sales of certain products are expected to increase. (Haapalainen 2012)

In 2012, Company X conducted fifty (50) projects as a representative of Company C. The projects included nineteen (19) tours, twenty-one (21) events and ten (10) supportive marketing activities. Due to high number of projects in 2012, implementations of projects overlapped and were held at the same time. (Haapalainen 2013b)

5.2 Project A introduction

As mentioned in the previous section, Section 5.1, Company X operates as one of Company C's marketing agencies by performing marketing tasks from planning to execution. Some of the activities and concepts executed are developed and designed by Company C, but in most of the cases Company X creates concepts for a certain activity or a product according to the client's requirements and needs. (Haapalainen 2012)

Project A, was implemented in the beginning of year 2012. The project was designed and performed to support Company C's integrated marketing activities of a specific telecommunication product. Main objectives of the project were to introduce Company C's new devices to target groups as well as increase customers' knowledge of current trends in telecommunication industry. One of the main support messages of Project A was to emphasis Company C's products connectivity between different product categories for example telecommunication products and printers. (Padhaal 2013a) Due to Company C's increasing growth the company has been able to invest large amount of money on research and development. 2005 to 2010 the company's research and development budget was forty (40) billion dollars. These investments enabled Company C to introduce a wide range of electronic products to the consumers under its strong brand umbrella. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 343)

6 Stages of an event production process

The following sections will guide the reader through stages of an event production process from experiential marketing perspective. The production process is based on Helena Vallo and Eija Häyrynen's star model which illustrates success factors of an event (See Figure 2 below). The star model introduced in a book, *Tapahtuma on tilaisuus - tapahtumamarkkinointi ja tapahtuman järjestäminen*, forms of two triangles: strategic (red triangle) and operative (blue triangle). Tips of the triangles represent six (6) major questions related, providing an organization with an understanding of an event's idea and a theme. Without an idea, content

of an event becomes vacuous. Also, in order to succeed each of the tips should be in balance. If one of the tips is stronger than another an event becomes unbalanced; one-part functions whereas another struggles. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 101-106)

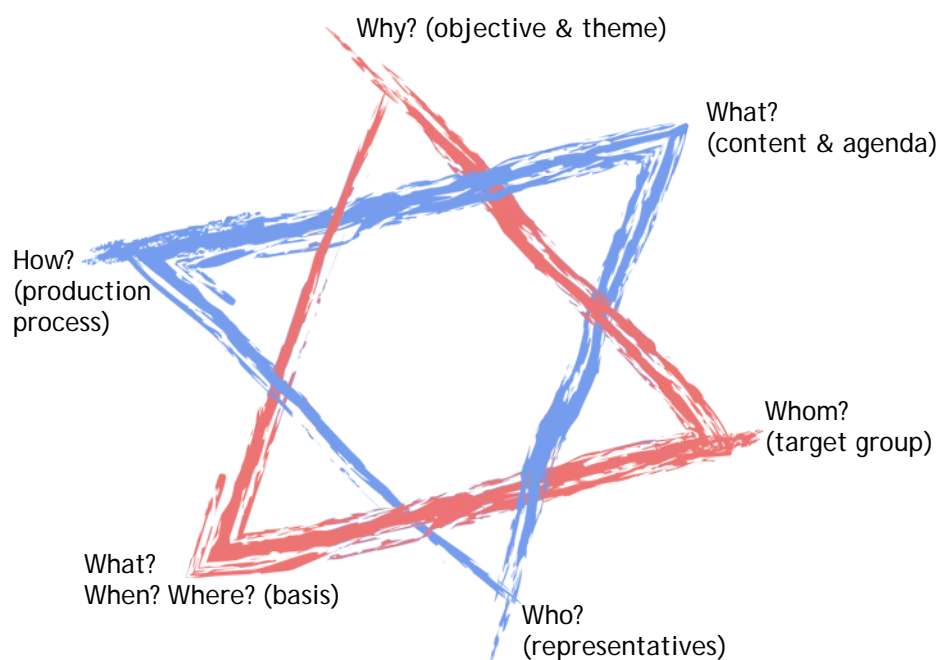


Figure 2: Success factors of an event
(Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 106)

6.1 Strategic level

Actions on a strategic level form the other triangle of the star model. On the strategic level, an organization's management, or a party that has a demand and a desire to organize an event defines an objective, a message, a target group, and basis of for the event. Three (3) questions presented in strategic triangle (See Figure 3 below) forms an answer to the question: What is the event's idea?. The idea is seen as the core of the project around which an event is created. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 102-103)

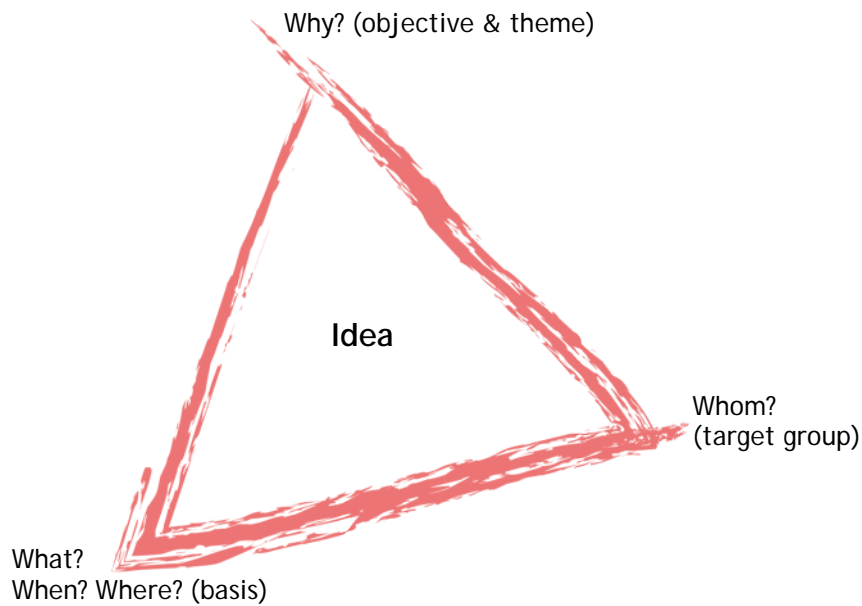


Figure 3: Strategic triangle
(Vallo & Häyriinen 2012, 101)

6.1.1 Why? (objective and message)

According to Anttonen (2003, 33), every project builds around a specific target. In order to execute a project within a given schedule and a budget, the main objective should be clearly stated. In every production process, project members should focus on the desired objective, whereas project management guides the project group's activities to reach the desired end result. Several milestones and quality inspections along the project support the project group's progress and opportunity to succeed.

Five main benefits of experiential marketing are:

1. Live brand experiences which bring a brand's personality to life, create memories of the brand in the minds of consumers. Whether it is an experience of a product trial or look and feel of the brand imagery, consumer has engaged with the brand. By a memorable understanding of complex brand values, consumer will affiliate the product with the brand's personality.
2. Interaction between a company and its consumers also create brand advocacy, which affects the level of customer loyalty. Compared to advertising, word-of-mouth increases sales more effectively, and experiential marketing drives word-of-mouth through experiences and personal recommendations.

3. Experiential marketing provide an ideal platform for companies to demonstrate product features and benefits in real life to its consumers.
4. Compared to other marketing communication approaches, experiential marketing campaigns, which bring a brand's personality to life, can easily communicate sophisticated messages. And especially effectively communicate complex brand personalities and values.
5. Emotional connection created through experiences surpasses the selling points of a related product. The selling points being features and benefits of the product.

(Smilansky, 2009 15-17)

In addition to question: Why a project is conducted?, an organization involved should specify what it is willing to message by the project. For example each event needs to have a clear main message and possibly several support messages. It is likely that event participants remember only one message from several. An event organization has to have a clear understanding of the messages in order to emphasis them on an event by different elements. (Vallo & Häyriinen 2012, 113)

Messages and key communication in a campaign may include emotional messages, rational messages or a combination of both. Emotional messages are product-focused because they convey features and benefits of a product or a service. Whereas, rational messages are customer-focused, aiming to generate moods and feelings of target audience, and also to relate to the aspirational lifestyles of these. Involvement level of a product or a service effects the decision making between emotional and rational messages.

In live brand experience the messages are encoded into two-way interaction. As a consumer takes part of an experience, the messages are decoded in both mentally and physically, affecting the consumer's feelings and thoughts through senses and the environment.

(Smilansky 2009, 114-115)

Vallo & Häyriinen (2012, 114-115) note that, along with an organization's objectives, factors affecting an event's message can be for example timing, location, agenda, idea, theme, materials, performances and hosts. Each event includes elements that communicate by themselves and control of these elements is one of the central requirements for a successfully organized event.

Three (3) main criteria for success are: time, money and result. Overrunning of given time and a budget as well as unsatisfied result are examples of failure. Several different reasons may lead the project into failure for example project members, project management and lack of these two or one of them. (Anttonen 2003, 34)

Case example:

According to EventTrack 2013 survey (Event marketing institute 2013), event and experiential marketing's two main goals and strategies are to increase brand awareness and drive sales. Survey participants rated, enhance product knowledge and understanding, as a third most important goal. Percentage distribution between the top three brand event marketing goals and strategies are presented in a figure below (Figure 4).

	2013 %
Increase / create brand awareness	79%
Increase sales	77%
Enhance product knowledge and understanding	58%

Figure 4: top three brand event marketing goals and strategies
(Event marketing institute 2013, 4)

Objectives of Project A were similar to the ones presented above. Within the past five years, Company C had become one of the leading telecommunication companies globally. Before this, the company was seen as an audiovisual product producer. By different marketing campaigns, especially by Project A, Company C was aiming to increase Finnish consumers' brand awareness within the company's other product categories. Company C launched one of the main telecommunication products marketed in Project A few months before the final execution of the experiential marketing campaign. The company was not only seeking to increase sales of this particular product but also to enhance consumers' knowledge and understanding of the development of telecommunication products. One of the main messages delivered by Project A was to emphasize how the latest telecommunication supports everyday life and how different tasks such as calling, creative messaging, photo editing, emailing, calendar notes, can be performed by using only one device. (Padhaal 2013b)

6.1.2 Whom? (target group)

As a part of marketing process a company has to evaluate a segment or several segments it is willing to serve. This stage is called market segmentation, meaning the market is divided into smaller sections based on customer needs, characteristics and behavior. After the market segmentation becomes market targeting, in which a company evaluates the number of

segments as well as which of them it can serve the best. The segments' overall attractiveness has an impact on the evaluation process of different marketing segments. Also, a company's objectives and resources affect the decision-making. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 214, 225)

Two (2) ends of possible levels of segmentation are mass market and customization. Between these are situated companies serving multiple segments and a single segment. Full market coverage means that a company offers its customers with all the possible products that they might require. The market can be covered by two (2) ways, through undifferentiated or differentiated marketing. In undifferentiated, earlier noted as mass marketing, a company disregards the differences between segments and decides to serve the whole market with only one (1) offering. As a comparison, in differentiated marketing, a company serves various different segments with several different products based on each segments' needs and wants. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 254-255)

As mentioned earlier in the text, experiential marketing reaches large numbers of people through brand engagement as well as word-of-mouth. Smilansky emphasize that it is important to reach an initial group. This group of consumers is also known as opinion leaders, due to the fact that they are used to providing information to their peers and also seen as reliable sources of information.

There are few ways of targeting ideal consumers. One of the ways is to analyze target audience through market research. Both primary and secondary researches are costly, but the received information is valuable and supports the success of the marketing campaign. Another way of determine target group is to conduct a day-in-the-life analysis of consumers. This means, creating an image of typical day-in-the-life of target audience in order to understand when, where and how to successfully engage them.

Target group can be identified also by looking at the consumers' aspirational lifestyle. By understanding who the consumers look up to, and the lifestyles of the people that they desire to be like, companies are able to conduct effective experiential marketing campaigns. (Smilansky 2009, 91-93)

Case example:

Company C's segmentation strategy includes intermarket segmentation. This means that the company divides its customers into segments based on their needs and buying behavior despite the location. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 224) For example products offered in South-Korea, Company C's headquarters, are similar to the ones offered in Nordic region. Company C provides its customers with a wide range of different telecommunication products. As a part of their business strategy the company is seeking to serve customers from several

different segments for example based on geographic, demographic and age and life-cycle segmentation.

In addition, Company C uses differentiated marketing. For example as a part of Project A, the company targeted to reach customers from several different segments, to name few: young adults, business people, creative people, people with interest on high- and latest technology as well as elder. In addition to the main product of the marketing activity, the concept included products from Company C's other product categories such as audiovisual and information technology.

Company C's local unit in Finland neither the chosen marketing communication method effected the selection of target groups during Project A. Therefore market segmentation and market targeting in Project A followed Company C's decisions on a corporate level. (Padhaal 2012)

6.1.3 What? When and where? (basis)

Starting points of an event are: what you want to arrange, when and where. An event can be carried out by an organization itself, it can be purchased from a third-party service provider as a whole, or different parts can be chained into a task-oriented event. An available budget affects the decision-making. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 139)

According to Smilansky (2009, 73), different factors effect the decision making process between top-line ideas of a campaign. Brand personality and target audience should be considered at all times when choosing an idea. Other factors such as the campaign's emotional connection, two-way interaction, exponential element and the reach of a campaign, should also be considered when preparing an idea. An available budget and timescale effect an execution and result of a campaign; therefore it is important to take into consideration these two (2) factors as well.

Smilansky (2009, 69-72) advise organizations to create a presentation that displays top-line ideas of a concept. In a first slide in the presentation should be explained where an inspiration for the concept came from. It is preferable to add illustrative pictures of the idea, to present what it will look like in real life. An agency may use its in-house graphic designer or for example outsourced graphic designer on a freelancer basis to create 3D images of the concept.

Core of the concept presentation is a details slide. Overview of the experiential concept as well as set and team of brand ambassadors are introduced in it. The details slide introducing

what elements are in place is followed by a numbered list that explains how the consumers will participate in the experience. Benefits and objectives that planned to be met by the concept idea are summarized in the final paragraph of the details slide.

Organizations investing on campaigns are anxious to know that results are gained and most importantly, that these results are explicit and measurable. Therefore, an evaluation slide is included to the concept presentation. Metrics such as opportunity to see the executed live brand experience, number of interactions and number of samples/or promotional merchandise distributed are recommended to be presented in a formatted table form. As well as, stating total estimates of each metric. It is important to inform whether the estimates are based on daily or weekly numbers. In a last column of the table should be stated total estimates of each metric throughout the entirety of the campaign.

An approximate budget is created in order to give an insight of the cost of the campaign as well as the size of it. Smilansky (2009, 72) state that: "Final confirmed budget should fall within plus or minus ten percent of the approximate budget." Therefore, costs stated in the approximate budget should be realistic and based on genuine units. The budget should be split into five or six cost categories:

Category 1: production costs of the live brand experience set

Category 2: merchandise required for the campaign

Category 3: staff costs, including anyone needed to execute the campaign for example brand ambassadors, drivers and riggers

Category 4: logistics costs, including transportation, rigging and de-rigging, storage, packaging and postage costs

Category 5: other costs such as hotel rooms, travel costs and phone bills

Category 6: location costs of the live brand experience campaign for example space rent, electricity, storage, and so forth.

Each cost should be based on the suppliers pricing and quotes. In addition to the listed costs, agencies add a management fee according to their pricing structure, which is about twenty percent of the cost of the campaign.

Before the actual production of a marketing campaign begins, an organization and an agency have to decide when and where to implement the planned field marketing activity. Williams and Mullin (2009, 163) advise companies to choose a venue where there are plenty of opportunities to meet targeted consumers. Organizations should remember that each event

and contact with target group is a significant experience which can support an organization to achieve its business objectives. (Muhonen & Heikkinen , 111)

Venues such as shopping centers and other public places require permission and a booking in advance. Several venues also require notice of an activity, in order to perceive what will be an agenda of the promotion. Methods of gaining the approval differ from one venue to another. All venues cost and their prices vary, based on the size of the venue as well as the location. Each venue has its own policies and instructions that need to be considered before, during and after the placement of the promotion. (Williams & Mullin 2009, 163)

Case example:

Company C provided Company X with a concept idea for Project A. Company X modified the given concept to suit Finnish consumer culture as well as Finnish marketing environment. Company C had profiled specific target groups in advance according to different product features. Target groups such as youngsters, business people and creative users, were introduced in a brief received from Company C.

During the concept modification the production team took into account usability of the designed experiential marketing set as well as Finnish culture. Also Company X's insights, such as expertise and knowledge were taken into account. Changes to the given concept mainly influenced the sizing of the stand. In the original concept, the size of the stand would have been too large to be implemented in Finnish retailers' facilities. Company X presented an idea of dividing one large stand into three different stand sizes: small (2mx2m), medium (4mx3m) and large (6mx3m); each of them still representing the same concept. Small stand was designed to serve retailers with only limited space in their premises for example shops located in the central area of Helsinki. Whereas medium and large sized stands were designed to serve promotions held in separate events, shopping malls and retailers with large facilities. (Padhaal 2012)

The division of the stand into three different sets enabled that the designed experiential marketing activity was executed in several different locations within a rather short period of time. Concept of Project A was implemented sixty-five (65) times in eighty-six (86) days, visiting thirty (30) different location in Finland. (Padhaal 2013b)

In addition to the sizing changes of the stand, also product activation ideas were modified. Due to the fact that the sizing of the stand was changed from the original, space used for product activation had to be minimized. Company X decided to create the marketing activity around one specific product activation and eliminate rest of the activation ideas provided by the client company. Finnish culture and known consumer habits affected the decision-making.

After the final planning of the concept, Company X provided Company C with a concept brief. The brief was in a presentation form stating top-line ideas of the concept, including illustrative pictures of finalized stands, including information about elements involved as well as benefits and objectives of the concept. An approximate budget of the project execution was placed at the end of the presentation.

In addition to the concept brief, Company X provided Company C with a tour proposal to implement Project A in different locations. The schedule proposal was based on previous experiences of practicing experiential marketing activities as well as number of daily visitors per suggested venue, focusing on the most visited. The venues availability as well as Company C's time schedule had an influence on the final execution of Project A. After the client's slight changes to the tour schedule were made and final approval received, open-bookings for the chosen venues were confirmed. (Padhaal 2013a)

Improvement idea:

Venue arrangements for field marketing activities held in shopping centers are done by telephone or through email conversations with personnel responsible of the premises. The venues availability depends on the location as well as their popularity among companies training field marketing. (Padhaal 2012)

Company X does not possess a contact list of potential venues where to organize field marketing activities. For Project A, venues' such as shopping centers' contact information had to be searched from their webpages one by one, which reduced the production team's work efficiency. One of Company X's core business processes is to organize experiential marketing activities on behalf of their clients. Therefore, the company rents shopping centers' premises on a monthly base, for this reasons an already made contact list would support each production teams' productivity by eliminating the time used for searching contact information of different venues. (Haapalainen 2012)

As an example, content of a venue list could be based on five (5) factors affecting an evaluation process of locations, presented in a book, *Experiential marketing: a practical guide to interactive brand experiences*.

1. Demographic (of the location's visitors)
2. The state of mind (of the location's visitors)
 - are they seeking to purchase/socialize/be entertained/learn?
 - how much dwell time do they have available; are they in a rush or in leisure mode?
 - and if are with others, who are they with?
3. Footfall (number of visitors).

4. Practical and logistical considerations.
5. Cost (which should be related to the spaces, footfall, ambience, attributes and positioning).

(Smilansky 2009, 140)

In addition to the factors mentioned above, information such as following could be presented in the contact list:

- venues' address, city, region and opening hours
- distance from the agency/warehouse to the venue
- contact person's phone number and email address
- information desk's phone number and opening hours
- short description of venues' policies, e.g. some require notice when arriving to premises
- details about the spot such as size and cost

Separate columns could indicate both the factors as well as the information points, whereas underlined rows would represent each venue or spot. For example one shopping center may have several different spots that it rents for promotional purposes. These spots are only rented for certain period of time and prices vary according to sizing and location of the spots.

Centralized contact list that provides all of the mentioned factors and information would support production coordinators' work as well as management when choosing a location for a live brand experience. The list would also support comparison process of different venues.

In order to successfully use this tool, one person from an agency's permanent staff should be assigned to be responsible of creation and updating of the contact list. Without a person in charge, for example the updating of details might get forgotten as time passes from the creation of the list and other, more crucial tasks occur.

6.2 Operative level

As mentioned earlier in the text, the star model of an event's success factors forms of two (2) triangles: a strategic and an operative triangle. On an operative level a planned concept is produced. Together, three (3) questions of the operative triangle define what is a theme of a specific marketing event. The three (3) essential questions are presented in a figure below (See Figure 4 on the next page). A theme creates an appearance of an event from brochures till post-production. (Vallo&Häyrynen 2012, 105)

A theme is a ground for an image created by an event. It also expresses much about an organization itself. The chosen theme of an event should be shown on each element and action throughout the event. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 195)

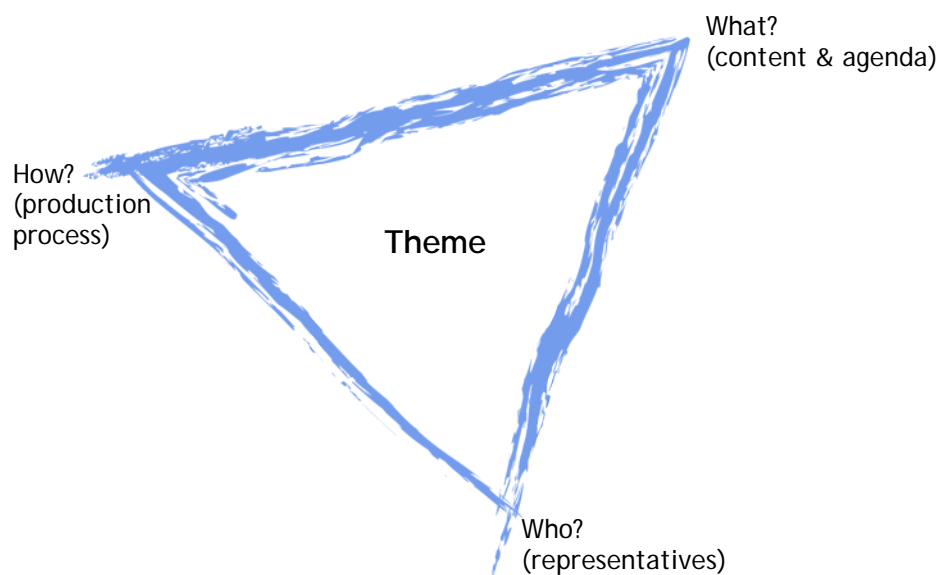


Figure 5: Operative triangle
(Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 103)

6.2.1 What? (content and agenda)

In a designing process of an event's content, an objective as well as target group should be taken into consideration. Also, a theme and messages that an event is sending should support the event's agenda. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 193)

According to Smilansky (2009, 137, 127) "service, theatre, research, adverts, televised or broadcast, entertainment, competition, interactive technology, education and set" are ten (10) experiential elements used in experiential marketing campaigns. Combination of two (2) or more of these elements creates an experiential strategy, which creates a clear direction for a plan and a structure of a campaign idea. Smilansky (2009, 128) states "By selecting elements that stay true to your brand personality, creating an emotional connection with the participants, and always keeping your customer front of mind, you can develop an experiential strategy that creates the right experience for the right people."

For example, an experiential marketing campaign, which used three (3) following experiential elements; education, interactive technology and set, generated brand advocacy and increased word-of-mouth amongst target audience. The set of the live brand experience was

built to resemble a product promoted in the campaign and through interactive technology, features and benefits of the product were educated to target audience. Also, promotional merchandise such as beach balls and fake tattoos were given out to raise brand awareness. (Smilansky 2009, 134-135)

Lived experiences create memories, and one of the methods to reinforce the memories of participants of live brand experiences, is to create external aids. These can be for example visual evidences such as photos and videos, or branded gifts. Visual evidences of participants attending an experience can be taken while they are in or on a set. The participants can receive their visual evidence of the experience for example by allowing them to download it from online or for example printing the photos onto stickers and handing them out directly after the participation. Also, branded gifts can be provided in person. Another way of distributing free gifts is to require the participant to order their gift by text, online or phone. The last method stimulates the participants' intention to remember the experience.

Both, visual evidences and branded gifts trigger memories. But in order to make the participants to pass on their experience, a campaign requires an exponential element. The element is seen as a trigger mechanism and an incentive that encourages the participant to engage further with a brand related. For example, 'forward to a friend' feature can be used as an exponential element in digital format visual evidences.

Establishing long-term customer loyalty is the ultimate aim of experiential marketing, and the key to this is ongoing positive interaction. Further interaction between a brand and the participants can be for example inviting the participants to future experiences. This type of interaction reminds the participants of the nature of the relationship, which is long-term and two-way. It also creates bonds between the invited, creating individual memories of the group.

When organizations are developing their experiential strategy, they should take into consider the long-tem view presented. Foundations for a brand advocacy and long-standing customer relationships are created by combination of an experiential strategy and a customer-experience orientation within an organization. (Smilansky 2009, 135-137)

Case example:

Project A's experiential strategy included education, interactive technology, set and entertainment. End users had an opportunity to experience product features of different products displayed in the set. Interactive technology in Project A involved live-streaming of an entertainment conducted in the set into a television. As an entertainment, an artist created caricature drawings of consumers by one of the main products displayed.

The drawings were downloaded and shared on Company C's Facebook site from where consumers were able to view and download them. Also, the participants had an opportunity to receive a photocopy of their drawing on the set. (Padhaal 2013a)

6.2.2 How? (production process)

Whereas previous sections have guided the reader through of what needs to be done in order to implement an experiential marketing campaign, following sections describe how the planned tasks are implemented.

Vallo and Häyriinen as well as a representative from Company X, Mrs. Padhaal, divide a production process into three (3) separate stages:

- I. pre-production
- II. production (implementation stage)
- III. post-production

6.2.2.1 Production level I.: pre-production

Planning can be considered as the most important part of a project. Without a proper campaign activation and an adequate project management, even the most innovative and groundbreaking marketing concepts may lead into unfavorable results. Some experiential marketing agencies are more experienced in activation rather than strategy creation. Smilansky (2009, 172) recommend organizations to focus on experiential marketing agencies that offer all of the services required: "strategy, planning, creative and activation, logistics, and staffing in-house".

Action plan for an execution of an experiential marketing campaign includes six (6) different parts: a recipe, budgets, project plans, communication and collaboration, suppliers and third parties, as well as an approvals schedule.

Recipe states from target audience's perspective what are the ingredients involved, which methods are used, and what is the desired outcome of a specific campaign. Different sections of a recipe can be presented for example in separate paragraphs in a written report or a presentation.

In experiential marketing campaigns there are two (2) budgets: an internal and an external budget. An internal budget is used for an agency's purposes only, stating the maximum

amount of money that the project in case should cost the agency. The budget may also consist information that provides added value such as staff incentives or expected increase in overheads. From the budget, project management and other relevant team members can verify how much money they can spend. An external budget is presented to a client and "should already include agency mark-ups, margins and other fees". (Smilmansky 2009, 174-175)

A project plan is one of the first tasks that a selected agency produces for its client. In a project plan each and every step of a project should be detailed, for example showing: who is responsible (e.g. client, field marketing agency, third party), time frames for steps to be completed and the exact delivery dates of them. Both parties, a client and an agency, should be satisfied with the plan and have a clear understanding of the items covered in it. Also, neither of the parties should not allow the project slip from the plan for example an overrunning deadlines could have a negative impact on the project, causing extra costs, delay or damage. Therefore it is crucial that the plan is realistic. (Williams & Mullin, 153-155)

A work breakdown structure (WBS), a Gantt chart, a path analysis, a schedule, a risk analysis checklist and an external analysis are some of the elements that should be included in a project plan. WBS is a list of categories and sub-elements used to achieve and deliver a project. Whereas Gantt chart is a table which organize the items mentioned in the WBS against a project timeline. In the Gantt chart, columns present task categories including individual small-detailed tasks as well as timelines. After all of the required tasks are placed and suitable timelines are set, the tasks are divided between project group members. The task blocks are highlighted in a color that is affiliated with the group members to complete certain tasks, also the number of hours required to complete a task is presented. This method supports management's decisions of dividing work between project members. From the Gantt chart management can examine estimated workload of each project member as well as estimate tasks' viability. (Smilansky 2009, 180-182)

In order to successfully activate an experiential marketing campaign, a communication and a collaboration plan should be drawn. The plan includes information such as when and where meeting between an agency and a client will occur, and how information will be shared. Also, the plan's purpose is to ensure that agreed issues are confirmed in writing or by e-mail. Written documents act as a reminder of what is agreed as well as assigned responsibility areas.

Ease ability to share information and documents is a part of good communication. Files can be shared within a project group and between an agency and a client by for example using open-source file-sharing applications. Communication system that enables seamless communication

between project members support the usage of current versions of plans and other documents as well as minimize chances of communication problems.

Last parts of an action plan are suppliers and third parties, and approvals schedule. Even though an organization is using fully integrated an experiential marketing agency, some of the tasks are outsourced in order to execute a campaign. Venue, props, merchandise printing and uniforms, are examples of outsourced elements and tasks. Both parties, an agency and a client, should trust outsourced suppliers. But in the end, an agency is the main responsible of an outcome of a campaign; therefore it should carefully plan which elements of a campaign are outsourced, what type of suppliers are needed, which suppliers and how many of them will be used (several or only one), and how much money from a budget can be spent on each campaign element. An agency's responsibility is also to ensure that outsourced elements are delivered on time, considering an approvals schedule (explained in the next paragraph). It is also vital that everything agreed with a supplier or several suppliers is in writing and payment schedules fit within a payment schedule agreed with a client.

An approval schedule states dates and deadlines for a client approvals. As a campaign is designed to represent a client, it is vital that they have a chance to approve anything print that has their logo on or element that represents the brand. Artwork components should be requested in correct resolution and formats at the beginning stage of the planning process in order to avoid possible delays. To support the approval process, an agency should clearly inform a client when proofs and samples are available for an approval. This way, the client has an opportunity to schedule time for the approvals and the agency feels confident that the process progress on time. The agency should reserve time for possible changes to the elements and for the client not approving something. (Smilansky 2009, 188-189)

Case example:

As mentioned earlier in the text, Company X created a concept brief in which the designed live brand experience was introduced. Additional action plan was not created; therefore project group's, including a production coordinator and field staff, actions were based on project manager's orders and the brief created for Company C. Supportive tools such as WBS or Gantt chart did not exist during the project.

In addition to management duties and other on-going projects, the project manager performed a large portion of tasks required to execute the live brand experience. Supplier sourcing, material and printing coordination as well as content production are some example tasks performed by the project manager. Other project members, mainly the production coordinator, performed tasks such as logistics management, preparation of devices, products, equipment/structures and other supportive services, as well as packing. (Padhaal 2013a)

Further information about material handling can be found under Section 6.3.2: Logistics and material handling.

Improvement ideas:

Despite the lack of supportive production tools such as an action plan, each required task was delivered on time. But the amount of working hours used for different tasks as well as workload per project member, exceeded estimations. One of the main reasons for this was new technology involved in the marketing campaign, as well as lack of project members. (Padhaal 2013)

Consequently, for example a Gantt chart would have been an effective tool to support the project management. An example of a Gantt chart is presented below (See Figure 6). As shown in the example chart, tasks are divided into different sections: production, space hire, staffing, training and logistics. Assigned tasks between project members are represented by different colors. For example, according to the example Gantt chart, Ramez is responsible of completing some of the tasks under logistics section. From the chart, management is able to view number of tasks as well as workload per project member. (Smilansky 2009, 181)

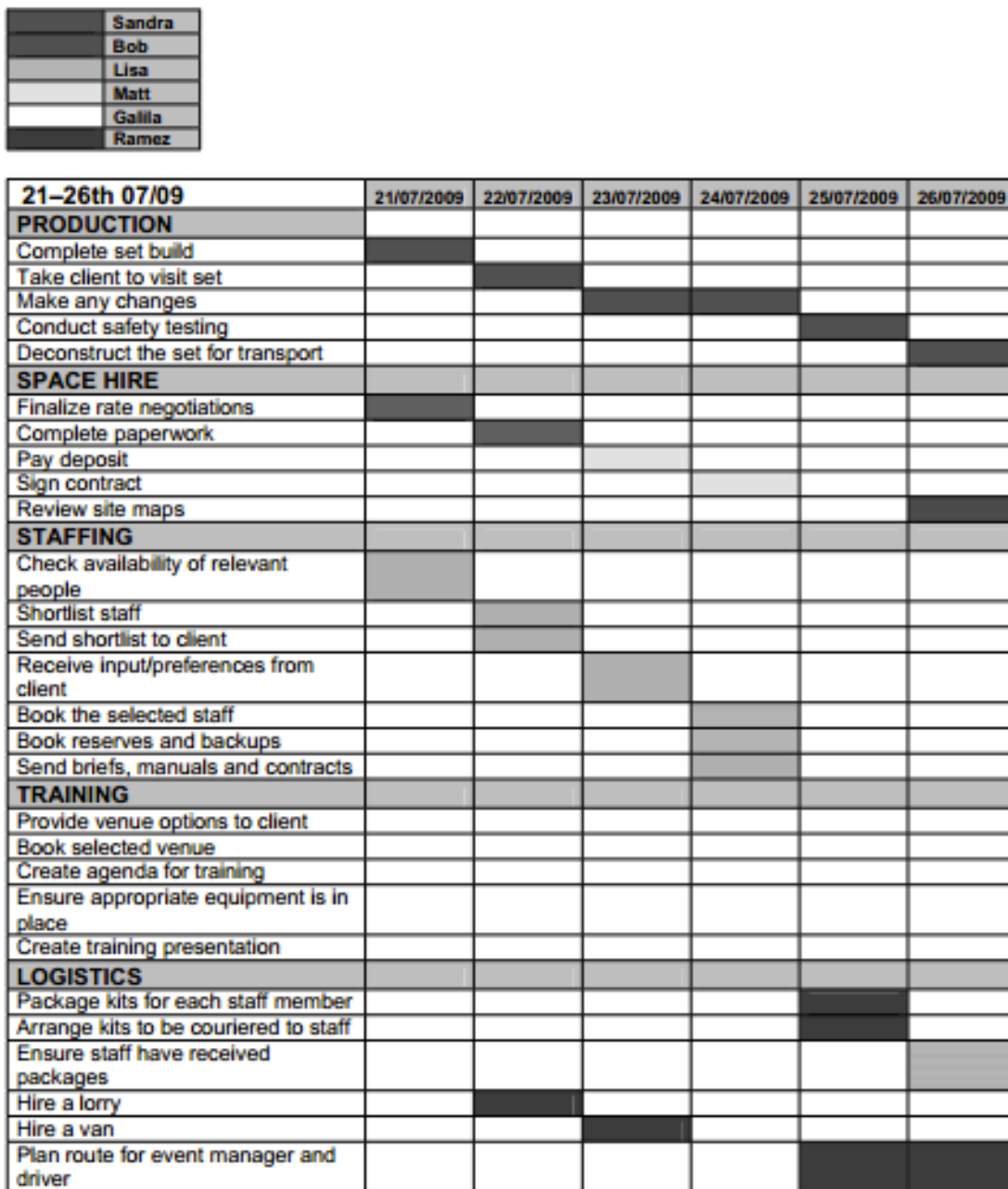


Figure 6: Example Gantt chart (Smilansky 2009, 181)

Due to Project A's project manager's previous experiences, pre-planning and required tasks were performed successfully and in a logical order. But, the lack of written action plan created pressure in the production team. For example, the project members were dependent on the project manager's orders, and without a written checklist of the tasks, some of them might have been forgotten. The project manager had a strong belief in the project members that each task was performed before the final execution of Project A.

Field marketing activities, such as live brand experiences executed by Company X follow the same pattern. As an improvement idea, Company X could create a frame of a Gantt chart which project manager's may use and modify according to different projects. This way, each production team could use the chart as a tool. It would also standardize working methods used inside the company. Currently, each production team has own working methods and tools in use. In order to create services offered more solid between different production teams, shared tools and other guidelines should be developed.

6.2.2.2 Production level I.: production (implementation stage)

On this stage, a planned concept takes place and is performed. Implementation stage can be divided into three (3) different parts:

- I. Construction
- II. The event itself
- III. Dismantle

Vallo & Häyrynen (2012, 163-164) notes that a construction stage is utmost time consuming part of an implementation stage. During the construction, a stand/set and related props are set for an actual performance of a planned event. Once an event has started, there is not much to do for example to change messages that the event is sending. Course of events are moving independently and only limited modifications can be made during an event. An event itself may last for example even as short as an hour, a noon, a day or two (2) and so forth. After an event itself becomes a dismantle part, which is often faster and more effectively performed than the construction.

Case example:

Field staff also known as brand ambassadors performed implementation stages of the production process of Project A, including construction and dismantle of the sets as well as the live brand experience itself. Before the implementation stages, the brand ambassadors received a training about Company C's products. In addition, the production coordinator provided them with document material of the concept including a brief, illustrative pictures of the stand and devices, guidelines, and so forth. The brief gives the brand ambassadors an insight of the designed concept, what is expected from them, when and where.

Due to limited amount of time before the launch of Project A, construction of the stand had not been tested before the first tour day. Therefore, construction time schedule was based on estimates. The brand ambassadors' lack of knowledge of a construction process was noticed as one of the main issues along the project implementation. Also, they were not

familiarized enough with required working steps as well as big picture of the campaign. Several times the team had to contact the project coordinator and ask advices to perform the tasks. Sometimes, even requiring the project coordinator to travel personally to the stand location and to secure the team's productivity.

As estimated, dismantle of the stand took less time than construction of it. But the brand ambassadors' exhausted attitude at the end of workdays was seen from material handling for example stand elements were carelessly packed and badly treated. These actions caused extra work for the project coordinator who was responsible of the elements as well as packing of them.

Despite occurred difficulties, Project A was performed successfully. Company C's representatives were pleased to see the designed concept in live and consumers enjoying their products in an entertaining atmosphere. (Padhaal 2013a)

Improvement ideas:

In a book, *Tapahduma on tilaisuus*, Vallo and Häyrinen encourage organizations to rehearsal an event program before an actual launch of it. In a rehearsal, the program is carried out in its entirety. All crucial factors such as lightning, connectivity, and other equipment that are affecting success of an event should be crosschecked in advance. Occasion of the rehearsal is advised to be just before the actual event takes place. It can be the same day or even hours before the event. The rehearsal is the last point to make corrections or changes to the event program as well as the stand material. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 165)

As mentioned in the case example, the brand ambassadors involved in Project A were not familiarized enough with the stand elements before the actual launch of the designed concept. A rehearsal within the production team, including all of the brand ambassadors, the project coordinator and the project manager could have decreased issues related to work efficiency. Especially construction and dismantle of the stand should have been practiced and carried out through step-by-step with the brand ambassadors. Successfully organized rehearsal could have saved working hours, work efficiency as well as monetary assets within the organization.

Another improvement idea is to introduce and instruct the brand ambassadors with a flowchart of a service process. During the first implementation of Project A, the management noticed that the brand ambassadors are lacking knowledge of a service process as well as understanding big-picture of a service flow. They were unable to function without the project coordinators instructions and did not know in which order to perform tasks. The brand ambassadors' attitude could have been lack of experience and/or lack of knowledge.

Section 6.3.1 Personnel management and training, provides further information about training of brand ambassadors and improvement ideas of Project A.

6.2.2.3 Production level III: post-production

After an implementation stage becomes post-production. It consists actions such as material handling as well as gathering feedback from an organization and event participants. From the gathered data an organization creates a summary. The organization analyzes the data as well as learns from it. Creation process of a next event is advisable to start from previous event's studies and insights. This way a production process is a continuous learning process for an organization and it creates enormous equity of know-how. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 180)

Post-production also consist a feedback meeting within parties responsible of executed event. In the meeting, issues such gathered data, how the event's objectives were fulfilled and what are the future actions for similar activities, are discussed. The meeting should be held soon after an implementation of the event, when everything related is still in good memory and there is interest left towards the event.

Vallo and Häyrinen suggest that each summary of an event's is also written, either after a feedback meeting or based on received feedback and set objectives. An idea is to create a document that an organization, which arranged the event, can use as a tool in the future operations. The summary describes what went well and which points needs to be improved. By adding planned and actual budgets to the summary, the document provides valuable information to other events' budgeting basis. Also the summary operates as a great internal marketing tool inside the organization because with it the event's benefits can be shortly introduced to others. (Vallo & Häyrinen, 188)

Case example:

Reporting is one of the major steps of a post-production process. During Project A, the brand ambassadors conducted a written report after each tour day. By reporting to Company X, the teams were able to transmit consumer comments from the field about the devices as well as provide information to improve the production process. Along with detailed questions of a tour day, the brand ambassadors were asked to inform amount of contacts, demos and visitors in the stand during the day.

Company X provided Company C with monthly reports of Project A as well as other campaigns performed for the client. From the reports Company C was able to read the most common

consumer comments as well as get a feeling of the consumers' reactions and responsiveness to new devices offered in the market.

In addition to reporting, invoicing and checking of the project member's working hours are the last tasks of the production process. At the end of the project, the project management went over the estimated budget and adjusted it to fit the actual performance. Based on this, a client invoice was created. After each month of Project A's implementation, the project coordinator went over the brand ambassadors' working hour lists. Her responsibility was to confirm each person's working hours and see if there were some differences to the agreed. She also went through all purchasing tickets of costs that occurred during the tour days for example petrol and parking tickets and other accurate costs. Whereas, the project manager filed other purchasing costs such as venue rents, structures and other material acquisitions. (Padhaal 2013a)

Improvement ideas:

Due to limited amount of time and other on-going projects, Project A's management and the project coordinator were unable to read the brand ambassadors' reports on time, which led into two (2) problems: the brand ambassadors' lack of creating reports, and loss of communication between the project members. The first problem, the brand ambassadors' lack of creating reports, was noticed when the first monthly report was due and reports were missing. After several contacts and questioning of brand ambassadors, the project team was able to gather the required information for the report. But as the information was received afterwards, instead of right after an implementation of Project A, reliability and accuracy of the information suffered. Also, the process of gathering information afterwards took time from other tasks.

Late review of daily reports delivered on time influenced communication between the project members for example between the brand ambassadors and the production coordinator. In the reports, the brand ambassadors' had an opportunity to inform material lacks such as structure failures, ending of brochures, tapes, and printing material. Because of tight working schedule, the received reports were reviewed several days after the due date and information provided in them was already out-of-date. (Padhaal 2013a)

In order to avoid similar situations, review of reports and creation of monthly reports could be assigned to a single person from a production team. She/he would also be responsible of checking that reports are delivered on time, current messages for production team would be delivered and information provided in the reports is valuable and usable. Also, importance of reporting could be emphasized in training.

6.2.3 Who? (representatives)

Managing projects is managing people. Often the question is how to get the most of people. Successfully operated project consumes less time on inconveniences and frustrating work than unsuccessfully operated. Personnel involved in a project should consist people from different backgrounds. People from different experience levels combine each other's creativity and ideas. (Anttonen 2003, 93)

An organization in a project is temporary and only exists length of the project. Therefore, a simple way of organizing passes an original hierarchical-organization map. When more than one person is accomplishing a project, responsibility areas and decision-making must be divided. In a project there are three (3) different working levels: an operative project group, an instructional project manager and a supportive project management group (Anttonen 2003, 101) Number of team members depend on the volume of work involved in a project. (Williams & Mullin, 159)

A figure below (See Figure 5), illustrates a project's organization levels. Despite size of a project, it often consists three (3) or more links; including a client, a service provider and one (1) or more subcontractors. Each link should have its own project manager and project group. Project management can be formed individually or together with other members of the project for example a service supplier and a client may form together a management group. (Anttonen 2003, 101)

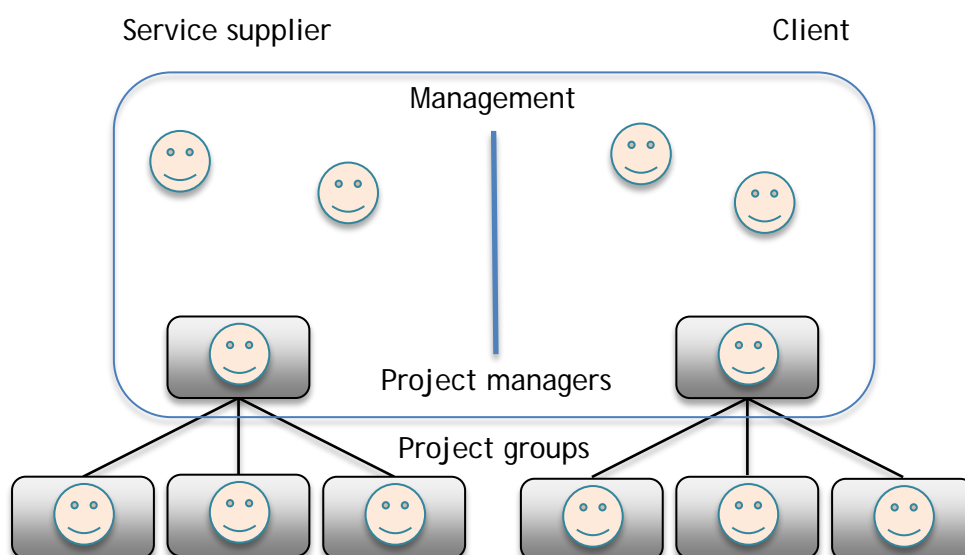


Figure 7: Project's organization levels
(Anttonen 2003, 102)

Center of a project is a project manager. She/he manages the whole project; responding creation of a project plan, budgeting, production, suppliers, final execution of a project and follow-up of it. In order to succeed in a project, the manager has to perform excellently. The manager has to possess skills such as ability to delegate, manage, report, and decide on issues and personnel related to the project. It is highly important that a project manager is able to separate personal preferences and desires from objectives of a project. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 224) Also, she/he needs to be creative but also pedant and able to follow organization rules as well as being able to improvise. A project manager's most important responsibility is to enhance that others project members proceed in a correct way. Along the way she/he needs to fill the gaps that personnel is unable to cover. (Anttonen 2003, 104)

A manager's ability to delegate is measured especially in a large project, because a single person cannot operate whole project by itself, work required has to be divided into different parts. Therefore managing projects in its simplest include regular meetings between project members (internal and external), documents, action plans, schedules and delegation of decisions based on these factors. A good manager creates a system for example meetings, documents or calendars, from which she/he is able to check the project's stage at any time. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 224)

All communication should go through project manager. An organized communication model eliminates possibility of miscommunication. Comparing following two (2) models shown in Figure 6.

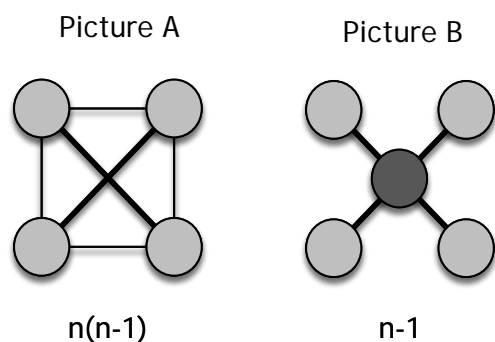


Figure 8: Communication models
(Anttonen 2003, 103)

Picture A, illustrates a communication model without a project manager in the middle. If there are n amount of people and a conversation is not centralized, a project member talks with $n-1$ people. And so does other group members as well. If an unidirectional

communication is marked with and arrow, the amount accumulates to $n(n-1)$, the number increases exponentially (1,2,4,8,16,32...). In a Picture B a conversation is centralized through a project manager and the number of conversations increases in a linear chain (1,2,3,4,5...). (Anttonen 2003, 103)

In problem situations project management needs to be supportive as well as act as 'a pusher' in a positive way for the project group and especially for a project manager. A single person from the project management can be named as a project accountant. Her/his responsibility is to report to the upper management level and support the project manager in cases where her/his authority is not enough. (Anttonen 2003, 105)

In addition to project management, a project consist of project group. Size of a project group depends on the size and objectives of a project. During a planning process of a project, number of project members may be hire than during different production stages. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 228)

Following list describes some of the main job designations in a marketing agency:

- Production-AD: an art director, a creator and a polisher of visual and copy elements
- Copywriter or copy: a designer of an advertising, responsible of texts seen on an advertising material for example brochures and posters
- Account manager: a client's representative in a production team as well as inside an agency office responsible that her/his clients are profitable and growing. Responsible to a client that what is agreed is delivered on time and according to set quality criteria and within calculated budget. A manager needs to be proactive and continuously enhance clients' issues and this way also affluence inside the office through increasing amount of work.
- Project manager: responsible that the agreed marketing process is delivered, for example ensuring that correct material moves on time from an AD to printing firms and each production process is delivered on time. A project manager's job description varies between different agencies for example in some of them a manager alone is responsible of a client and in other offices person working under same title manages deliverables such as material traffic and related practicalities.
- CEO (chief executive officer): In addition to CEO's regular responsibility areas, marketing company's CEO is also responsible that an agency has clients and work. Creating new

business as well as securing current customers' wellness are examples of the CEO's major tasks.

- Project coordinator: a group member performing practical tasks, under project manager's title. In some cases, performed tasks might be identical with tasks under a project manager's responsibility area.

(Sipilä 2008, 214-217)

Case example:

As introduced in the second paragraph of previous section, three (3) different working levels should operate project processes, each level possessing own responsibility areas. In Company X hierarchy levels are low and therefore responsibility areas are unclearly defined. Figure 9 below illustrates Project A's hierarchy model in Company X.

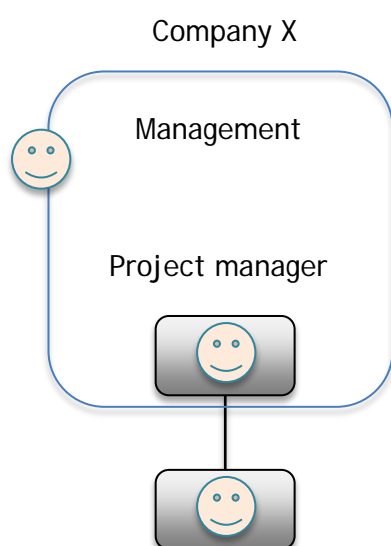


Figure 9: Company X's hierarchy in Project A

Concept idea for Project A was created in a creative team which consisted of three (3) project managers, a production coordinator and Company C's account manager. After concept creation, the production team only formed of three (3) main members: an account manager, a project manager and a production coordinator. Subcontractors and brand ambassadors were used to perform tasks that the production team was unable to fulfill.

During the project, a gap between the account manager and the project manager increased. As mentioned earlier, responsibility areas in Company X are unclearly defined, which caused conflicts between these two (2) members of the team. Most of the management duties became the project manager's responsibilities, enabling the account manager to focus on

other project and clients. This led into a situation in which the project manager had to operate as a management representative, a project manager and a support person for the production coordinator. Increased amount of work and other on-going projects affected the project manager's work welfare and relationships between management.

Despite the conflicts between the account manager and the project manager, Project A was completed successfully and received positive feedback from the client. A new project was created based on Project A only few months after the last tour day. (Padhaal 2013b)

6.3 Support processes

6.3.1 Personnel management and training

Personnel management is one of the various ancillary disciplines of field marketing activities. It covers people element of support processes, including training, management, personnel systems and recruitment. Also clothing and equipment handling are part of personnel management. (Williams & Mullin 2009, 120-126) These two (2) support processes will be discussed in the next section, Section 6.3.2 Logistics and material handling.

In addition to personnel located in a marketing office, a production team consists of field personnel who perform actions in the field, in other words brand ambassadors executing interaction with consumers in a marketing activity. Each field marketing agency has a personnel system of all their field personnel. The system consist information such as the individuals skills and abilities, training, past experience, uniform size and contact information, creating a profile of each person. Recruitment of staff is an ongoing process in any field marketing agency. As a part of the recruitment process, staff are interviewed and their experiences are logged to the personnel system.

As a new campaign is implemented, an agency contacts its staff by telephone or e-mail to offer a work. If the offer is accepted, the staff is expected to adhere to an agreement and excellently perform the work. Personnel can be booked to a job based on their previous experiences and relevant skills. The staff can either accept the offer or turn it down. (Williams & Mullin, 123-124)

Williams and Mullin divide training in field marketing into three (3) levels according to the ones to be trained. One of the levels is training client customers or customer personnel. In order to successfully promote or sell a certain organization's products, the personnel needs to be trained or retrained. Content of the training might be, for example about the organization's new product or a system, or a requirement to improve the service quality

within the organization. Usage of a field marketing company is an effective method of training large number of personnel; when an organization itself does not possess required time to conduct training. Numerous outsourced field trainers enable an organization to focus on their core business as well store managers to concentrate on their priorities. Training can be held for example in stores securing that message of the training is delivered directly and correctly to staff and managers of an organization.

Another level of training is training field staff for a specific task. Training precedes every exercise conducted in field marketing. Postal training, telephone training and face-to-face training, are example methods for executing training. In postal training, staff receive training document via post. Whereas, in telephone training a document is also sent to the staff but followed up by a telephone call to ensure that the receiver has understood all the points mentioned in the document. In face-to-face training, all of the staff members are gathered together and trained for a specific task. For the staff, this is the best opportunity to meet a client company and learn about products involved in a campaign.

In addition, personal development should be created and implemented in all areas of work in order to deliver excellence for clients. It is vital that project members understand importance of working to the highest standards, and that they are trained to achieve these. Personal development systems may include for example building a display, presentation techniques, product knowledge and better implementation of activities. (Williams & Mullin 2009, 120-122)

Case example and improvement ideas:

Company X uses a temporary worker for field staff bookings. Her responsibility is to find personnel for field marketing activities based on project managers' requirements. Due to Project A's large size and scope, Company X recruited several new field staff members in a short time notice. Company C provided all field staff members with a training of devices involved in the concept. In addition, Company X provided handout material such as product presentations and product specs via e-mail. However, Company X was unable to organize training for the field staff about the concept, the set, and role of ambassadors in general. (Haapalainen 2013a)

As mentioned in Section 6.2.2.2 Production level I.: production (implementation stage), the field staff was not familiarized enough with required tasks to execute the live brand experience. The field staff's poor performance and efficiency created pressure for the project management. Therefore, for example the project manager and the project coordinator had to overwork in order to successfully finalize Project A.

In order to avoid such situations in the future, Company X should invest on training field staff in different areas for example in following categories:

- Company X's norms, values and policies
- Role of a brand ambassador, expected attitude and appearance
- Expected work performance, specified in certain concepts
- Construction and dismantle of a set
- Material handling and logistics
- Client company's norms and values

6.3.2 Logistics and material handling

A very large part of field marketing campaigns involve logistics. Most field marketing companies offer a warehousing and a despatch service. Companies are delighted to handle their own distribution for example items can be distributed directly to field personnel as well as clients' retailers and customers as required. Field marketers know importance of sending correct volume of point of sale (POS) material as well as correct size of uniform. They are also aware of how time-consuming and costly it is to correct errors. (Williams & Mullin, 138)

Elements used to execute campaigns vary in some degree. Due to previous experiences and profession, field marketing agencies are able to advise what is required as well as able to supply required equipment. List below provides an example of typical items involved in a campaign.

- Cars: to transport items between destinations, also to store items and product stocks
 - Briefcases: to transport elements effectively and professionally
 - Presenters: to inform details of a product/products and an activity the brand is conducting
 - Uniforms: to give professional appearance and a corporate identity
 - Product samples: for product demonstrations and customer trial
- (Williams & Mullin 2008, 126-127)
- Stand material including: such as carpeting, wall-structure, backdrop canvas and lights, and counters
 - Windstand/s: to promote the activity held
 - Brochures: to provide information about products' specs
 - Alarms: to ensure that products does not get stolen during an activity
 - Technical equipment: such as router/s, a modem stick/s with dataSIM/s

- Tools: tapes (for carpets, cords and other purposes), extension cords (different lengths), cleaning products (wipes, sprays, cloths) and so forth (Padhaal 2012)

It is advisable that a field marketing agency keeps a record of items sent out to the field. The agency is also responsible of the return of the items from the field. In order to secure correct use of each element, policies should be drawn up. Sometimes training and explanation of insurances support material handling. (Williams & Mullin 2008, 126-127)

Case example and improvement ideas:

During the concept modification of Project A, the production team decided divide one large stand into three different sets: small (2mx2m), medium (4mx3m) and large (6mx3m); each of set still representing the same concept. The division of the stand as well as the chosen product activation increased the production team's workload significantly. For example, before an actual implementation of a live brand experience, a production coordinator ensures that each required item is provided and functions properly. Including set elements and structures, products and devices involved, as well as other supportive items for example Internet and tools. A production coordinator is also responsible of logistics management of these elements for example from an agency's premises into a shopping center.

Project A included three different sets; therefore the amount of work used for material handling increased, causing pressure for the production coordinator to perform required tasks successfully. One of the most time consuming part of material handling was to ensure open Wi-Fi -internet connection for each stand, and wireless connection between products from several different product categories. As mentioned earlier in the text, Company X is a marketing agency and its business model does not cover knowledge of operating with the latest telecommunication and IT equipment. Fully covered support service from Company C's side would have been helpful when completing the product activation of Project A. (Padhaal 2013a)

One considerable improvement idea that might have saved time, money and exhaustion among project members would have been to assign three or more persons to be in charge of the sets' material handling, one person representing one stand size. For example a single person could have been assigned to be responsible of the small set and tasks related to its material handling from packaging till implementation of the live brand experience. The person would have received better knowledge about the concept as a whole and evolve as a field marketing worker. Assigned roles would have enabled the production coordinator to focus better on other tasks such as reporting, communication with Company C's retailers and most importantly, focus on other on-going projects.

One of the issues that arose in the beginning of Project A was field staff's different attitude towards material handling for example set elements and tools were not handled carefully and some of them were damaged or broken because for example careless packaging. The project coordinator created written instructions with illustrative pictures to improve safety and the elements' usability age, which minimized the issue but did not fix it permanently. (Padhaal 2013a) With the help of assigned 'set representatives' or 'team leaders' this issue may have been fixed as soon as it occurred. Team leaders could have shared their knowledge about material handling as well as by an example behavior eliminate the possibility of element damages.

If the idea of team leaders would have been current during Project A, the team leaders should have been trained in order to successfully perform the tasks. In addition, the project coordinator and the project manager would have supported their actions. Training of the team leaders would have taken time from other production processes but the advantages gained by educating field staff would have surpass issues occurred during Project A.

7 Conclusion

Personal experiences in Company X have shown that operations in the company are based on a project-based working model and tacit knowledge. Key account managers and her/his working team design production concepts for case companies. The team members, including one to two producers, a project coordinator and subcontractors, perform production processes required to implement designed concepts.

At the beginning of my internship period in 2012, I faced some difficulties due to the company's lack of possessing any documents related to production processes of field marketing activities. Also, norms and policies between different production teams inside the company differed. As soon as number of projects and amount of work increased, these issues were left behind, focus was only on completing the on-going projects and preparation for the upcoming ones. But at the same time, importance of documented tools increased.

During the process of writing this thesis, I realized that issues discussed in the text such as training, management, documented tools needs to be fixed if Company X is willing to grow as an organization. As proved in the beginning of the thesis, experiential marketing is one of the fastest growing marketing fields; therefore companies currently operating in this field should have their business activities built on a solid base in order to successfully continue their business.

Based on the finalized thesis and improvement ideas of Project A, Company X should be able to answer some of the main questions of production process such as: in which order the production stages form, which stage or stages are the most time consuming, and how big influence the management and the team have in the end result. And hopefully, from the topics discussed in the thesis, Company X finds some improvement ideas that could be executed in the near future.

In order to fully influence the actions performed within Company X, the topics should be researched in more detailed manner and presented with an already created development strategy. Due to limited amount of time and number of consistent and reliable sources, the thesis exceeded into the final state.

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