

# 6 Experiential objectives

The second step in the SET MESSAGE planning methodology focuses on which Experiential objectives to choose at this stage of the plan. You will already have an idea of the type of objectives you would like to achieve, because you will have decided that as part of the broader marketing communications strategy. When you are coming up with your Experiential objectives, you can often be more creative than with traditional approaches because experiential marketing facilitates meeting many objectives that can be harder to attain otherwise. As previously discussed, there are many benefits to be gained from running successful experiential marketing campaigns and, as a result, there are many exciting objectives to choose from, but you should stick with no more than three.

It is important to include all the relevant information when presenting your experiential objectives. Try presenting in this format: To achieve objective x, for brand x, with target audience x, in location x, by date x. For example: To increase sales for Barley Bars with 20–30-year old women in France by January 2011.

Prior to embarking on the SET MESSAGE planning system, you will have already completed several BETTER brainstorming sessions, presented the top-line concepts using the IDEA format, and selected one for detailed development. At this stage you may need to adapt the top-line concept to ensure that it is appropriate and fits in with the Experiential objectives. The following are examples of some experiential marketing campaigns that were geared around specific objectives.

## Examples of experiential marketing campaigns

### *Bringing the Brand personality to life*

John is a marketing manager who is responsible for a breakfast bar with a sporty and active brand personality that targets healthy males and females aged 18–35. John wanted to bring the bar's Brand personality to life in the United States. His experiential marketing agency designed a sporty live brand experience that ran for one month in each of the eight largest parks across the North-east. The live brand experience set featured circuit-training elements, where consumers were invited to participate in a circuit challenge across several exercise stations, such as a jogging machine, a rowing machine, a push-up bench and monkey bars. They were then invited to have their pulse taken and heart rate tested. A branded wall that showed the breakfast bar, its logo and colour scheme surrounded the circuit equipment. Consumers who completed the circuit challenge in less than two minutes won a goody bag containing: a sample bar, a sales promotion voucher (to entice them to purchase in the future), a branded T-shirt, and a branded stopwatch.

After the experience, research showed that the Target audience associated this breakfast bar brand with a sporty and active lifestyle and therefore the campaign achieved this objective. It also achieved its second and third objectives of driving product trial (with the sample in the goody bag) and driving sales (with the voucher in the goody bag). The experiential marketing agency worked on the campaign in partnership with John's media agency, which is responsible for the brand's media (creative, planning and buying). The live brand experience was filmed by the media agency and clips were edited, contributing to a 30-second advert promoting both the product itself and the upcoming live brand experiences. The ads were broadcast during carefully allocated slots prior to sporting events on TV. The successful integration of the live brand experiences, sales promotion vouchers and TV adverts was a result of good communication between John's experiential marketing agency, sales promotion agency and media agency, which worked together to deliver the integrated experiential marketing campaign.

### *Drive word-of-mouth*

Mark is the brand manager for a new basketball computer game with revolutionary features. He wanted to drive word-of-mouth about the

game among 16–21-year old city-based males. His PR agency created a gaming experience held outside basketball courts in his target cities. They hired an experiential marketing agency to design branded ‘chill-out zones’ with comfy couches, large surround-sound plasma screens, gaming consoles, and fridges containing free soft drinks (branded with the video game imagery). The participants were asked to provide their contact data upon entering the chill out zone, prior to playing the video game. High scorers (around 40 per cent of participants) were offered the opportunity to receive free (branded) business cards with their own contact details printed on them. Each high-scorer had a special status as a ‘team member’ of the video game manufacturers’ ‘preview team’. The Exponential element was very strong, because the Target audience used the business cards when socializing and giving their phone number out to their peers. Every time that they gave a business card to someone, they were likely to mention the video game and their involvement with it (especially because their membership in the preview team was a cool talking point).

The PR agency invited a famous basketball player to launch the first day of the live brand experience every time it visited a new city; as a result, they succeeded in gaining a large amount of publicity and drawing large crowds. When the same video game manufacturer wanted to achieve its market research objectives, they invited the ‘preview team members’ to exclusive video gaming preview sessions and gave out demo versions of the games. Again, this activity created a talking point that drove word-of-mouth among the Target audience. As well as achieving the primary word-of-mouth objective, this experience achieved secondary objectives: gaining PR coverage, capturing data and positioning the brand as the basketball videogame with the best street credentials amongst a media-savvy young target audience, who would have been less likely to respond to traditional channels.

### *Create a memorable brand experience*

Sandy owns a travel website that sells holidays to exotic locations in the Caribbean and warm places around the world. She had spent a significant amount of money with her advertising agency and had benefited from a healthy increase in web traffic when they ran print ads, but as soon as she stopped paying for ads, her site traffic would plummet. She wanted to utilize a marketing approach that would have a longer-lasting effect. Her main objective was to create a memorable brand experience. She also hoped to convey the exotic Brand personality of the travel company through the campaign, with the aim that after participating in the

live brand experience, her Target audience would continue to think of her business when booking their next holiday. She wanted them to remember her company and the experience they had.

She designed a live brand experience that featured a touring Caribbean beach set with Brand ambassadors dressed in traditional Caribbean clothing. The live brand experience toured around the country during the summer and targeted families. Carefully positioned Brand ambassadors invited consumers to have their photos taken while visiting the ‘beaches’ (which were also artificially warmed using special lamps). The participants were handed glossy brochures that both promoted the travel website and invited consumers to visit a micro-site, where they could download their photos. Once the consumers visited the micro-site, they were prompted to enter their contact data prior to downloading their photos, after which they had the option to forward their photos to friends and family, as well as order free hard copies in branded frames. This live brand experience campaign proved to be highly memorable, and it also achieved secondary press coverage and data capture objectives.

### *Drive product trial and sign up members*

A market-leading natural skincare brand from Asia launched in the UK. They approached an experiential agency to work on their launch, as well as ongoing live brand experience activities. The agency built an experiential set that featured a counter for signing people up to the brand’s monthly beauty magazine, and sampling counters at the rear for product testing and demonstrations. The set also had display stands that featured the magazines along with highly visible branding and signage, which reflected the brand identity and Message – key communication.

The experiential set toured around brand-relevant beauty shows and events. A carefully trained team of Brand ambassadors visually reflected the brand (and had relevant experience in the beauty sector) and were the interface between the brand and the guests of the shows. The Brand ambassadors wore tailor-made uniforms that fused Japanese and English style. By engaging consumers with the offer of product consultations and free four-step skincare samples, the team were able to sign up large numbers of the Target audience to the brand’s monthly magazine. The experience also featured multimedia messages that were transmitted to guests’ phones via Bluetooth technology. The Bluetooth messages featured a product showcase and allowed consumers to respond and sign up to the magazine.



The live brand experience achieved objectives of driving product trial amongst the Target audience, as well as signing membership for the magazine. The activity also resulted in an increase in website traffic and sales, thus achieving other objectives.

### *Increase sales*

When Mary, a brand manager for a popular yoghurt brand, was assigned the task of increasing sales and engaging mums with young children, she asked her sales promotion agency to come up with a creative live brand experience concept. Her sales promotion agency worked closely with an experiential marketing agency because they knew that live brand experiences are more likely to drive purchase consideration than any other channel.<sup>1</sup> The experiential marketing agency created life-size versions of the fruit characters that were usually found on the yoghurt pot packaging. Brand ambassadors who stood outside supermarkets (where the yoghurts were sold) wore the costumes. The fruity characters engaged young children, asking them what their favourite fruit was, and provided them with a free sample of yoghurt (in the flavour of their chosen fruit). The Brand ambassadors also told the mothers about the





participant received a shot of vodka to complete the ‘purification process.’ During this experience, the consumers were informed that they were going through a ‘five-step purification process’, just like the vodka did. This live brand experience successfully communicated the complex brand message, which other marketing channels would have been less likely to convey with such ease and tangibility.

### *Position the brand*

Savio is the marketing and sales director of a sportswear company that sells comfortable, sporty clothing in Australia. He wanted to position the sportswear brand as a trendy and preferred option for comfortable streetwear with influential opinion leaders aged 16–25. He knew through market research that his Target audience enjoyed street dance, and he decided to gain credibility with his audience by holding a live brand experience tour. The campaign featured dance competitions at music festivals across Australia, where all the visitors had the opportunity to enter and compete. The competitive spirit attracted big crowds to cheer their respective dancer friends, while giveaways were thrown into the crowd. The dancers who competed wore the sportswear clothing, and danced for five minutes each while trendy music was played by popular DJs.



These dance competitions were some of the biggest talking points of the music festivals. Gaining credibility is hard with a media-savvy audience; this was a success, as were the word-of-mouth and free publicity that the campaign generated. All of this would have been much more difficult to achieve through traditional media channels or sponsorship alone.

### *Target a new audience*

When a new mobile phone offering was launched by one of the biggest mobile phone providers in the world, it wanted to attract a consumer audience to purchase a phone that had previously been targeted at the business market. Grace, who was responsible for the marketing of the phone, wanted to create personalized interactions that tailored which of the product's many features and benefits were to be demonstrated to the Target audience. She wanted to communicate that the phone was ideal for organizing consumers' busy social lives. She hired an agency to provide Brand ambassadors (who went through intensive training so as to understand the product features and benefits and learn how to demonstrate the phones). During the live brand experience activity, the Brand ambassadors wore Adscreens (17-inch plasma screens/sound system backpacks). The Adscreens were connected to the phones to demonstrate the features, as well as to show a tutorial on loop. The Brand

ambassadors were positioned outside participating stores on weekends and were tasked with attracting the new consumer to participate in a tailor-made demonstration. The Brand ambassadors asked the consumers questions such as ‘Do you go on Facebook?’ and ‘How often do you check your e-mail?’ The answers gave the Brand ambassadors an indication of which features to demonstrate. Consumers who were interested in finding out about the different packages available were directed to sales advisers in-store.

By tailoring the demonstrations, the product’s features and benefits that were showcased were specific to the needs of the consumer. The live brand experiences successfully achieved the main objective of the campaign: attracting a new consumer Target audience to purchase the phone.

### *Increase customer loyalty*

Marco is the owner of a family pizza chain and wanted to increase customer loyalty. He had previously been offering a one-off 30 per cent discount to customers who had visited the restaurant 10 times, but his margins were tight and he soon found the promotion was not worth the investment. Mario’s consumers were not overly excited by the prospect of the 30 per cent discount, and the loyalty scheme was largely unsuccessful. After hearing from a friend about the benefits of experiential marketing approaches, he concluded that he should start by implementing a live brand experience. He decided to try out the innovative approach to increase customer loyalty.

He designed an experiential incentive of a free ‘pizza-making workshop’ with his well-known pizza expert Chef Tony. The incentive was awarded to all customers who visited the restaurant 10 times (this was monitored with stamps on a card). The new experiential loyalty scheme worked out well. Not only did the prize encourage customers to complete 10 visits, but also once they had experienced a workshop, they told all their friends about it with excitement. Marco thus achieved his primary objective of increasing customer loyalty while achieving his other objectives of driving word-of-mouth and differentiating the pizza chain brand from its competitors.

### *Increase footfall in-store*

Amanda is the brand manager for a popular high-street retailer. The retail outlet sells inexpensive fashion garments and targets teenage girls. After a retail slump in 2008, she was tasked with increasing footfall

in-store. After fitting new footfall detection devices into all the outlets, Amanda's bosses were keen to see an increase, fast. She had read in recent trade press that experiential marketing was delivering both instant and long-term results when it came to driving traffic into retail outlets and decided to give it a go. She did not have a huge budget and resolved to cut funds from some of their print advertising. She decided to use her remaining print budget to run ads in a magazine that was frequently read by teenage girls. The ads featured a competition, inviting readers that wanted to become a 'window model' for the day (and win a mini shopping spree) the chance to be part of the campaign. The readers of the magazine were more than enthusiastic at the chance to become a model for the day, with thousands applying after seeing the ads. She hired an experiential marketing agency to look after the experiential marketing campaign, and had them train 100 lucky competition winners to become 'window models' (like live mannequins posing in the store windows). All the competition entrants that 'failed to win' the opportunity to be a 'window model' were invited to preview the new season's collections on the day before the campaign went live. They were excited at this privilege and the thought of previewing the collection before the public drove them to tell all their friends about their honour. As well as having the winners modelling in the windows, the agency also hired professional models to parade on mini-catwalks that they raised outside the stores, with Brand ambassadors distributing invitations for fashion consultations inside. Each store manager was invited to a weekend training session prior to the campaign in which they were taught how to spend time training their best internal store staff on giving fashion consultations. The store staff (who received good sales commissions) were attempting to consult customers on fashion advice anyway, so the training programme was well accepted. Amanda also got her PR agency involved, which sent members of the local press to flash away and add buzz to the catwalk outside.

The integrated experiential marketing campaign resulted in a consumer frenzy, with queues of teenage girls (members of the target audience) waiting to have fashion consultations, a flood of excited shoppers entering the stores, and an increase in sales because of the consultations. Everybody was happy. There was an 80 per cent increase on the newly installed footfall devices. The 'window girls' spread word-of-mouth about their experiences as models and their shopping sprees. The preview girls spread word-of-mouth. The consumers were happy to be treated like celebrities with personal stylists. And finally, the store staff were pleased with the extra commission that they earned.

## Summary

It is really important to adapt the content of your idea to match the experiential objectives. Ultimately, the experiential objectives are the reason that you are implementing experiential marketing and live brand experiences and therefore achieving them should always be the focus of your campaigns. For example, there is no point in aiming to increase sales in the short term if the campaign is located far away from the retail outlets (detailed information on selecting locations is provided later in the book).

Experiential marketing can achieve many objectives, but do not overload your plan; stick to three main aims at most, and make sure that all your objectives are measurable. As we saw, experiential marketing is especially good at achieving the following objectives:

1. Bringing the Brand personality to life.
2. Positioning or repositioning the brand.
3. Creating a memorable experience.
4. Communicating complex brand messages.
5. Gaining high long-term ROI (an LROI formula is given later in the book).
6. Increasing customer loyalty.
7. Gaining credibility with specific Target audiences.
8. Driving word-of-mouth.
9. Creating brand advocacy.
10. Increasing sales.
11. Raising brand awareness.
12. Driving website traffic or driving traffic in-store.

In fact, the measurable objectives are infinite. Later in the book you will learn how to build into the plan Systems and mechanisms for measurement that directly relate to each experiential objective.

### Note

1. Jack Morton Worldwide. An executive summary of this survey is available online at [www.JackMorton.com](http://www.JackMorton.com)