11 Systems and mechanisms for measurement

As detailed in Chapter 1, live brand experiences are seen as a relatively new marketing discipline and have been the subject of heavy criticism regarding the metrics used to measure their success. Marketing channels all tend to have metrics, which can be applied to benchmark and cross-reference campaigns against each other. Because these industry-wide metrics are generic, they provide a standard way to gather and compare results.

The instinctive approach of many traditional marketers, when venturing into live brand experiences and attempting to measure their success, is to try to apply the same metrics that are used to evaluate other channels. In fact, live brand experiences lend themselves perfectly to cost-effective, qualitative and quantitative measurement of success in regard to their capacity to meet their Experiential objectives. This is because of the interactive nature of the discipline. While a brand is interacting with consumers during an experience, the consumer is usually benefiting and receiving to one degree or another, and is therefore very likely and willing to give back. This can take the form of answering questions, on-the-spot reactions, or agreeing to future communication.

This chapter is about how to build Systems and mechanisms that facilitate measuring how successfully a campaign has achieved, or is achieving, its Experiential objectives into your experiential marketing

plan. Because each live brand experience can differ greatly from the next, it is important to tailor these systems to the activity itself (the location, the time, the people) and ensure that from a practical perspective it is feasible to implement these systems with the resources allocated to the live brand experience.

In Chapter 6 we looked at different options for Experiential objectives. At this stage in SET MESSAGE you will be building into the plan several Systems and mechanisms that are specific to the Experiential objectives as defined earlier in your plan. This stage of your plan is not to be confused with the Evaluation stage, which will look at every aspect of your live brand experience, focusing on what will happen after the campaign. This chapter and part of your plan purely concerns the measurement of your live brand experience's objectives, and the results will contribute to the overall evaluation of the experiential marketing campaign as a whole (which will consist of the live brand experience channel and possibly other amplification channels). The amplification channels should still be measured using the standard metrics of each channel respectively.

In addition, different live brand experiences require different degrees of research. Some situations require an in-depth level of insight and analysis, such as cases when a live brand experience is a pilot that has the possibility of a large-scale roll out. In this instance, anything that can be learnt from the successes and failures of the live brand experience will be valuable when planning the larger-scale strategy.

This in-depth analysis looks at why each specific element worked or did not, and creates insights into what can be changed or expanded. In this case, it is worth investing more significantly in good Systems and mechanisms for measurement. When a multi-million budget is being invested in the larger-scale activity there is little margin for error. Therefore, the pilot should serve as a learning experience that helps perfect the broader plan.

How much to spend on measurement

There are varying degrees of resources that can be applied to the Systems and mechanisms for measurement, and depending on how high evaluation is on your list of priorities, you will spend a relative amount. The good thing about the nature of live brand experiences is that successful and valuable Systems and mechanisms can be implemented without any significant or additional investment to your existing budget. Many of the Systems and mechanisms detailed in this chapter can be built into the SET MESSAGE plan without any financial implications.

Table 11.1 Experiential objectives and KPIs

Code	Experiential objective	System or mechanism for measurement
A	Conduct market research (eg, gain understanding of consumer opinions about the brand and product, and competitive brands and products)	1. Note relevant consumer feedback, questions, etc) 2. Administer surveys with participants, with relevant questions (qualitative and quantitative)
B	Drive word-of-mouth	Number of interactions (Y)
C	Raise awareness	1. OTS 2. Distribution data
D	Drive product trial	Number of product trials
E	Demonstrate a product's features and benefits	Number of product demonstrations
F	Capture data	Number of data entries captured
G	Drive word-of-mouth	1. Word-of-mouth reach $(Y \times 17) + Y$ 2. Monitor number of referrals from any 'Refer-a-friend' schemes initiated by the experiential live brand experience
H	Drive traffic to website	1. Number of hits to website (compare to previous hits) 2. Number of hits to micro-site, and from micro-site to main site
I	Drive word-of-web	Number of people forwarding the online experiential element to a friend
J	Increase sales	1. Number of items sold (compare to control groups)

Table 11.1 *(Continued)*

Code	Experiential objective	System or mechanism for measurement
		2. Number of sales promotion vouchers/codes redeemed
K	Increase footfall into store	Compare activity with footfall into store during and after activity
L	Increase customer loyalty/strengthen brand relationships with target audience	1. Monitor consumer behaviour long-term through loyalty schemes 2. Contact participants subsequently
M	Create a long-lasting, memorable experience	1. Monitor consumer behaviour long-term through loyalty schemes 2. Contact participants subsequently
N	Bring the brand personality to life	Survey non-participants and compare results with participants
O	Communicate complex brand messages	Survey non-participants and compare results with participants
P	Gain credibility with target audience x	1. Survey non-participants and compare results with participants 2. Analyse customer demographics prior to live brand experiences activity and then at specific intervals during and after ongoing activity, and note a shift in customer demographic long term
Q	Position the brand as x	Survey non-participants and compare results with participants

Qualitative data can be gathered by Brand ambassadors easily while they are engaging with and talking to participating members of the target audience, and quantitative data can be a combination of survey results, numbers, and the quantification of qualitative responses. Quantitative data gives hard facts and numbers, which are always valuable and appreciated because they enable easy comparison. Qualitative data can help to analyse why you got the results that you did, as well as achieving market research objectives during the live brand experience.

Quantitative data can include hard numbers that are figures-based and can be calculated. It can also include the number of specific and similar responses to a qualitative survey question. You need to have a combination of both quantitative 'counting' mechanisms (eg how long people stayed in a shop, how many items were sold, how many products were trialled, and how many people interacted with the experience) and qualitative open question-type mechanisms (eg what does brand x represent to you?). Then, by grouping and analysing qualitative 'open question' responses, and correlating answers for similarities, you can extract hard numbers and data from apparently 'woolly/fluffy' questions, therefore enabling factual measurement of 'fluffy' objectives, and the conversion of qualitative data into quantitative data.

Table 11.1 lists many common Experiential objectives and then aligns Systems or mechanisms that measure if these objectives have been achieved. Each System or mechanism for measurement should be tailored to the live brand experience, and its available resources and technology, to enable them to be built in seamlessly without interrupting the natural flow of the live brand experience.

When you arrive at this stage in the planning, you can cross-reference your Experiential objectives against those in Table 11.1, and then assign the most relevant systems. Once you have allocated the Systems and mechanisms, you can create your own table that demonstrates in more detail exactly which questions you will ask, or exactly what data you will capture. For example, if your Experiential objectives for a live brand experience (promoting a drink outside 50 of the stores that sell it) are to increase sales, drive footfall into store and bring the energetic brand personality to life, your objectives and measurements could look similar to Table 11.2.

Whichever Experiential objectives you have chosen from Table 11.1, you will be able to measure them by thinking carefully about how you will go about building the Systems and mechanisms for measurement that are recommended for your objectives into your live brand experience. The example in Table 11.3 demonstrates that this approach works with any combination of Experiential objectives. If your live brand experience promotes a retail website at shopping centres, and your

Table 11.2 Objectives and measurements

Experiential objective	System or mechanism for measurement
Increase sales across the 50 main stores during experiential live brand experience	We will ask the store managers to provide data that show the sales of this product in each of the 50 participating stores for one month prior to the experiential live brand experience. We will then ask the store managers to provide the same data and monitor sales volumes of the product in the same participating stores during the experiential live brand experience. By comparing these results, we will measure any direct increase in sales that the experiential live brand experience made while it was live. *Note:* If sales-tracking technology is not built into a store's cashier system, then the above data will also be collected by the Brand ambassadors. They will count stock at the beginning and end of every day, noting the percentage of stock that was sold.
We will also want to gauge whether the increase in sales volume is temporary or has longevity	To do this, we will monitor the product sales at the stores that participated, for one month after the live brand experience is finished. We will then compare these sales volumes with those of the same stores in the one month prior to the live brand experience going live.
Drive footfall into store	We will note the data on the stores' electronic footfall tracker prior to the live brand experience. These data will be compared to the data on the electronic footfall tracker during the live brand experience. Any increase in footfall will be noted as a percentage (when comparing, ensure that factors such as days of the week are kept consistent between control data and live brand experience data).

Table 11.2 *(Continued)*

Experiential objective	System or mechanism for measurement
Bring the energetic brand personality to life	We will create a brief survey application to be loaded onto the Brand ambassadors' PDAs. At the beginning of each live brand experience, they will come in 30 minutes early, and without wearing their uniform or being in close proximity of the set, they will ask passers by a brief question about the brand. The question will be: What do you think of when you think of brand x? a) being energized; b) being relaxed; c) being happy; d) being trendy. The Brand ambassadors will ask the same question of consumers during their participation in the brand experience. An increase in the target audience choosing the correct answer (a) will be measured as a percentage increase in recognition and understanding of the brand personality.

Experiential objectives are to drive traffic to the website, spread word-of-web and capture data for future marketing purposes, your table could look similar to Table 11.3.

Summary

The level of investment you wish to put into understanding how the experiential marketing campaign, and specifically the live brand experience channel, are impacting the Target audience's behaviour and opinions is a decision that you will need to make in advance. Experiential marketing can include simple, cost-effective Systems and mechanisms for measurement which when built into the live brand experience channel

Table 11.3 Objectives and measurements – website

Experiential objective	System or mechanism for measurement
Drive traffic to website	We will compare the number of hits we are getting to the website (and their geographic location) prior to the live brand experience against the number of hits (and their geographic location) we are getting during and after the live brand experience. The increase will be noted as a percentage, which will allow us to benchmark the success the live brand experience's channel had in achieving this objective against the percentage increase we had in web traffic from previously implemented forms of marketing communications.
Spread word-of-web	When (as per the Experiential strategy) consumers download the photos (which are loaded into a gallery on the site) of themselves participating in the live brand experience, they have the opportunity to forward their photo (which arrives in a branded e-mail) to 10 friends and receive a free T-shirt. To measure word-of-mouth driven as a direct result of this strategy, we will monitor the number of times this offer form is completed, and with each time counting for 10 recipients of the key communication message, we will easily be able to quantify the word-of-web.
Capture data for future marketing purposes	Prior to entering the photo gallery on the website to download their photos, consumers will be required to fill in a quick form that captures their contact data. The form will feature an opt-in tick-box stating that they are willing to receive future brand communications.

during the planning stages will enable you to evaluate the success of the live brand experience (as well as the amplification channels) and gauge whether it has achieved its predefined objectives.

In many instances, marketers and agencies overlook this crucial stage of experiential marketing planning. As a result, live brand experiences have been subject to the criticism that it is 'difficult to measure whether a live brand experience has done the job it set out to do'. Many people will argue that when you know how to achieve something, it is no longer difficult (like a dish that appears hard to cook, but which is easy once the recipe is followed step by step). It is not a particularly time-consuming process to build in Systems and mechanisms for measurement, compared to the value of doing so. By integrating the guidelines in this chapter into your SET MESSAGE plan and implementation, your live brand experiences can be fully accounted for, and you will be able to evaluate their long-term return on investment (LROI) and make it easier to demonstrate to stakeholders the results of your overall experiential marketing programme.