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THE ROLE OF HIGH-PROFILE FIGURES IN AMPLIFYING
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING INITIATIVES:
ANALYZING THE ROLE OF HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS IN
ENHANCING THE SUCCESS OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING
CAMPAIGNS.

Internship Report to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to
obtain a Master's Degree in Communication Studies – Media
and Entertainment

By

Tobias Høgsnes

Faculty of Human Sciences

September 2024



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Abstract

This internship report explores the role of high-profile endorsements within experiential marketing, focusing on their impact on campaign success. The study was conducted at a Norwegian event and communication agency named Kite Kommunikasjon og Event. Through qualitative, in-depth interviews across various departments in the internship organization. The research aimed to identify consumer perceptions of experiential marketing, analyze the influence of celebrity endorsements on brand value and consumer loyalty, and determine critical success factors in high-profile experiential marketing campaigns. The findings reveal that high-profile endorsements significantly enhance the reach and engagement of experiential marketing initiatives, establishing them as a crucial component of successful campaigns. However, the research also highlights the potential risks involved in selecting the wrong profile for a brand, which can undermine the campaign's effectiveness and negatively impact brand perception. The study concludes that celebrity collaborations are powerful tools in experiential marketing; their success depends heavily on the strategic alignment between the endorser's image and the brand's identity. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in experiential marketing and offer practical guidance for optimizing future campaigns.

Key-words: Experiential Marketing, High-Profile Endorsements, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Perceptions, Experiential Campaigns, Brand Value

Resumo

Este relatório de estágio explora o papel dos endossos de alto perfil no marketing experiencial, concentrando-se no seu impacto no sucesso da campanha. O estudo foi realizado em uma agência norueguesa de eventos e comunicação chamada Kite Kommunikasjon og Event. Por meio de entrevistas qualitativas e aprofundadas em vários departamentos da organização do estágio. A pesquisa teve como objetivo identificar as percepções dos consumidores sobre o marketing experiencial, analisar a influência do endosso de celebridades no valor da marca e na fidelidade do consumidor e determinar os fatores críticos de sucesso em campanhas de marketing experiencial de alto perfil. As descobertas revelam que os endossos de alto perfil aumentam significativamente o alcance e o envolvimento das iniciativas de marketing experiencial, estabelecendo-as como um componente crucial de campanhas bem-sucedidas. No entanto, a investigação também destaca os riscos potenciais envolvidos na seleção do perfil errado para uma marca, o que pode prejudicar a eficácia da campanha e impactar negativamente a percepção da marca. O estudo conclui que as colaborações de celebridades são ferramentas poderosas no marketing experiencial; O seu sucesso depende muito do alinhamento estratégico entre a imagem do endossante e a identidade da marca. Esses insights contribuem para uma compreensão mais profunda da dinâmica em jogo no marketing experiencial e oferecem orientações práticas para otimizar campanhas futuras.

Palavras-chave: Marketing Experiencial, Endossos de Alto Perfil, Marketing Influenciador, Percepções do Consumidor, Campanhas Experienciais, Valor da Marca

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Introduction

This Internship Report is carried out for a Norwegian event and communication agency named Kite Kommunikasjon og Event. As a leading player in the Norwegian events industry, the agency solely focuses on creating memorable brand experiences with the agenda to create physical meeting places and live experiences, as the company means it is the essential arena and most vital tool for building culture, creating commitment, influencing attitudes and moving decisions (Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, n.d). Ultimately, the company strengthens the essentialism of experiential communication as an integrated marketing technique.

During my internship, I witnessed firsthand how the marketing and communication landscape has been profoundly reshaped based on the evolving dynamics of consumer engagement and the need for genuine interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Pine, 2022; Dynata, 2022). This has proven the significance of immersive, two-way communication channels, which have surged, transcending the confines of social media interactions (Smilansky, 2018).

This paradigm shift has been particularly underscored in the realm of experiential marketing, including events, in-person experiences, pop-up stores, and further immersive experiences (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018). Brand experiences like this, generating interactive engagement and two-way communication, have become critical in initiating memorable experiences that drive word of mouth and transform consumers into brand evangelists and advocates (Boswijk, Thijssen, & Peelen, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smilansky, 2018).

Supplementary, brand communication and marketing today increasingly depend on society's influential individuals and organizations and their public opinion in supporting products and services (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Mitra, 2023). Consequently, it is evident that this dramatically impacts consumer behavior and patterns, and the influence of high-profile figures has emerged as a pivotal catalyst in the marketing sector (Bakker, 2018). Accordingly, leveraging the expertise and reputation of endorsers proficiently enhances companies' brand awareness, increases customer loyalty, and drives sales (McCracken, 1989; Edrogan, 1999; Bakker, 2018).

Furthermore, throughout my internship, I have been immersed in firsthand experiences elucidating the profound impact of communication strategies on the reach and efficacy of experiential marketing campaigns. As I have experienced directly, and as elucidated by Bakker (2018), companies are continuously in pursuit of reaching target groups by utilizing diverse means of communication. Hence, it will be remarkably compulsive to inquire into the combination of experiential marketing and high-profile endorsements to investigate further customer perceptions and their effect on brand value.

In a more thorough investigation into the topic, I will focus on dissecting and analyzing the tangible outcomes arising from integrating high-profile endorsements within experiential marketing initiatives, as the sphere of celebrities is "... one of the most potent sources of cultural meaning at the disposal of the individual consumer and the marketing system" (McCracken, 1989, p. 318). The topic is profoundly worth exploring as there is a lack of scientific research concerning high-profile endorsements tied directly to experience marketing, as most research primarily focuses on digital marketing and the utilization of social media. Consequently, I will dive into a new area of research that will add advanced knowledge to the scientific community and can also contribute as guiding steps for agencies to apply to their business strategies. The changing dynamics from digital to experiential marketing may open the door for future studies concerning the same topic, potentially strengthening and complementing the scientific research conducted in this report.

The report will be highly relevant to my internship at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event as it focuses solely on the experience economy. However, the research question is not directly targeted to the organization; instead, it is significantly inspired by the broad experience of operating with experience-based marketing. It is, therefore, a broader statement that can refer to various agencies focusing on experiential marketing techniques. Consequently, the paper aims to explore the relationship between the entertainment industry, culture, and the marketing system, which is a delicate and thorough interconnection (McCracken, 1989).

My research will be conducted based on Creswell's (2009) research design, and the identified research question is: "What role do high-profile endorsements and collaborations play in the reach

and success of experiential marketing campaigns?”. Accordingly, I will present the research objectives that will serve as the guidelines for my report:

1. Understand the role of experiential communication as a marketing strategy
2. Identify consumer perceptions of experiential marketing
3. Analyze the impact of high-profile endorsements on brand value and consumer loyalty
4. Identification of success factors in high-profile experiential marketing campaigns

In order for the reader to gain a comprehensible understanding of the field of experiential marketing and its techniques, it was developed a 1st chapter divided into four sub-chapters, all regarding the experience economy: (1.1) Evolution and definition, (1.2) Definitions of the relevant notions, (1.3) The experience economy market, (1.4) The future of the experience economy. Diving deeper into the topic, the 2nd chapter concerns more directly Experiential Communication and Marketing and is divided into five sub-chapters: (2.1) Evolution and Definitions, (2.2) Techniques and Strategies, (2.3) Goals and Measurements of Experiential Marketing, (2.4) The state of the Experiential Marketing Market and Future Trends. The last chapter dives deeper into the sphere of the entertainment world interconnected with marketing initiatives, specifically high-profile endorsements as a marketing technique. This 3rd chapter includes (3.1) Definitions, (3.2) Market, Trends and Techniques, and (3.3) Goals and Future Trends.

The 4th chapter concerns the descriptive memory concerning my experiences at my internship organization, Kite Kommunikasjon og Event. Here I will have a closer look at the following sub-chapters: (4.1) Internship Organization, (4.2) Mission, vision & values, (4.3) Organizational Structure, (4.4) Product & Work Process, (4.5) The Intern’s role in the organization, (4.6) Description of Internship activities, and (4.7) Main Conclusions of the Internship Experience. To further analyze the research objectives and draw relevant conclusions, I will apply a qualitative method in the 5th chapter, including sub-chapters: (5.1) study’s relevance, (5.2) Chosen methodology, (5.3) The researcher’s role, (5.4) Data Collection Procedures, (5.5) Data recording procedures, and (5.6) Data analysis and Interpretation, including the coding scheme. Then the chapter will be concluded with (5.7) Validating Findings, and (5.8) The Qualitative Write-up.

The desired result of the report is to reflect on the changing dynamics of the market and the operations of marketing and communication agencies. This will be elaborated on in the 6th chapter, referring to the presentation and discussion of results, with the following sub-chapters (6.1) Main Conclusions, with the relevant findings concerning the issue will be presented, and (6.2) Limitations and Future Directions, where the study's limitations will be identified.

Part 1 - Theoretical Framework:

Chapter 1 – The Experience economy: an overview

This chapter inquires into a full exploration of the experience economy, including its evolution, definitions, and market dynamics, all underscoring its significance in contemporary business landscapes. This chapter is pivotal in addressing the research question, as by examining the historical background, theoretical frameworks, and market trends of the experience economy, the chapter will provide a comprehensible understanding of its implications for business operations. Accordingly, the chapter will introduce the world of experiences before delving deeper into utilizing these experiences as marketing initiatives.

The experience economy has become a foundation for business development for industrial policy, firms, and local, national, and regional development activities (Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine, 2022). Accordingly, the field is considered cross-disciplinary, as underscored by Sundbo & Sørensen (2013). Further, for this paper, the theoretical framework will be targeted to comprehending the phenomenon through a business and management approach, as elucidated in various scientific articles from admissible identified scholars (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016).

Correspondingly, to justify the reasoning, according to Pine & Gilmore (2019), business operations are shifting as the experience economy has grown into a universal phenomenon, as research shows customers are becoming less willing to spend money, attention, and time on mere services and goods (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Comprehensively, today, consumers place a higher value on experiences that engage them in memorable and personal ways (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Pine & Gilmore, 2019). Such findings underscore the experience economy's impact on business dynamics (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016). Furthermore, while Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) explain that culture and entertainment are significant parts of the experience economy, they further explain the culture economy as a narrower concept, elucidating that the experience economy emphasizes a broader perspective than the culture economy. Accordingly, "The experience economy is related to more than culture, for example, nature, goods, sports activities and marketing" (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013, p. 7).

This is further strengthened by Pine & Gilmore (2019), viewing the experience economy from a business perspective, as they elucidate that today's technology-saturated and media-fragmented business landscape makes it more difficult to capture consumers' attention. Elaborated, most firms demand attention from customers by targeting them with traditional marketing methods (Schmitt, 1999; Pine, 2022); however, Pine & Gilmore (2019) believe that in today's experience economy, it is vital to captivate consumers by going beyond these methods and further supply consumers with experiences to captivate them to become willing buyers. Pine (2022), therefore, states that implementing experiences in business operations is a logical step in economic progress.

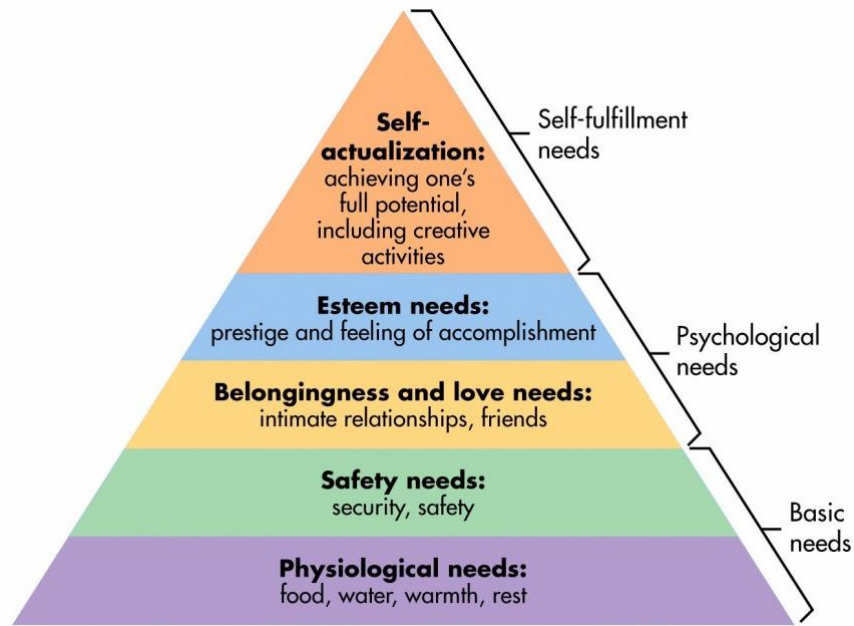
1.1 Evolution and History

Scholars (Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013) commonly agrees that experiences have always existed, evident in ancient cave paintings dating back 14000 years, as well as the historical knowledge possessed by the Greeks and the romans regarding monetization of experiences (Boswijk et al., 2007; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Accordingly, it is considered one of the world's oldest professions (Boswijk et al., 2007). However, it is only since the 2000 that the phenomenon of the experience economy has been professionally considered an independent societal sensation (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Consequently, understanding the experience economy from a more business perspective was introduced in the first edition of Pine and Gilmore's book *The Experience Economy* (1999) (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Correspondingly, as elucidated by the authors, Pine & Gilmore (2019), after manufacturing, service, and agriculture economies emerged as fields with solid possibilities for sales and profit, they truly believed in the experience economy as a new business movement.

Since then, the concept has grown and become a phenomenon under study, as Sundbø & Sørensen (2013) state that "Experience economy studies has become an independent research field and the size and economic impact of the experience economy has been measured" (p. 7). In a business sense, the emerging paradigm of experience economy studies scrutinizes the formal experiences of economic activities and how they are managed and developed (Boswijk et al. 2007; Pine, 2022). However, the area of experience economy as a study approach is still new, and not much research and theory-building exist (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013).

Further, Pine & Gilmore (2019) state that they always believed that business operations would shift from commoditized services and goods to operations that offer myriad experiences. Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) agree, stating, "Thus, the reason why the experience economy currently is interesting is not the experience phenomenon per se, but that we are witnessing a large-scale industrialization of the experience economy" (p. 9). Ultimately, the anticipated shift to the experience economy offering as part of the Progression of Economic Value has arrived (Pine & Gilmore, 2019). However, whilst Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) and Boswijk et al., (2007) states that experiences have always been around, fellow scholars (Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Pine, 2022) agrees that it has not always been considered a phenomenon in business practices. Furthermore, Pine & Gilmore (2011) argue that consumers, businesses and economist are now recognizing it, and Pine (2022) mentions it has gotten more adopted into the overall operation of business practices. Sundbø & Sørensen (2013), based on Pine & Gilmore's (2011) theory argue there are two societal explanations of this shift:

- (1) First, based on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, as seen in the Figure 1, a theory where the basic physical needs are at the bottom, while layers above consist of the intellectual, personal, emotional needs. Based on Maslow's (1954) model, Sundbø & Sørensen (2013) argue then when the basic and physical needs are met, people tend to seek fulfillment in higher levels, such as emotional and experiential satisfaction (Sundbø & Sørensen, 2013; Dynata, 2022). Accordingly, this results in an increasing demand for experiences that cater to these higher-level needs (Sundbø & Sørensen, 2013; Pine & Gilmore, 2011).



Source: Model inspired by Maslow (1954)

Fig. 1 – This figure illustrates the different levels of Maslow's (1954) theory of the hierarchy of needs.

(2) Secondly, the rise of the experience economy is seen as an attribute of the increased wealth in societies. This has led to more people being accessible to afford and invest in – often expensive, experience elements (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Consequently, this has fueled the growth of industries centered around providing experiences, in the same way that it has reshaped consumer behavior, with a greater emphasis on experiential consumption over material goods (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Eventbrite, 2014). Accordingly, the shift can be explained through the metaphor of value being derived from experiencing, not possessing (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Appropriately, for past generations, the milestone of owning a home or buying one's first car was considered an essential factor for identity creation. However, millennials and the following generations see this identity creation as investing in experiences that project emotions and memories (Eventbrite, 2014).

Hence, the combination of psychological and economic factors and a shift in the ideology has ultimately led to an increasing flow of procuring and investing in experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Eventbrite, 2014).

1.2 Definitions of the Relevant Notions

To thoroughly comprehend the topic of the experience economy, one must first establish an understanding of the phenomenon of the experience, as well as the economic aspect of it, followed by the mechanization of the combination of the idioms.

An experience can be considered a mental phenomenon, as it does not concern physical needs, such as goods, or solving intellectual or material problems, such as services (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Instead, Boswijk et al. (2007) explain, “The process of experiencing commences with the biological process of sensory perception” (p. 19). Accordingly, an experience is something happening in an individual’s mind and is determined by the external stimuli and further elaborated through mental awareness an individual has from mental needs, earlier experiences, and personal strategies (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). As defined by Sundbø & Sørensen (2013), an experience

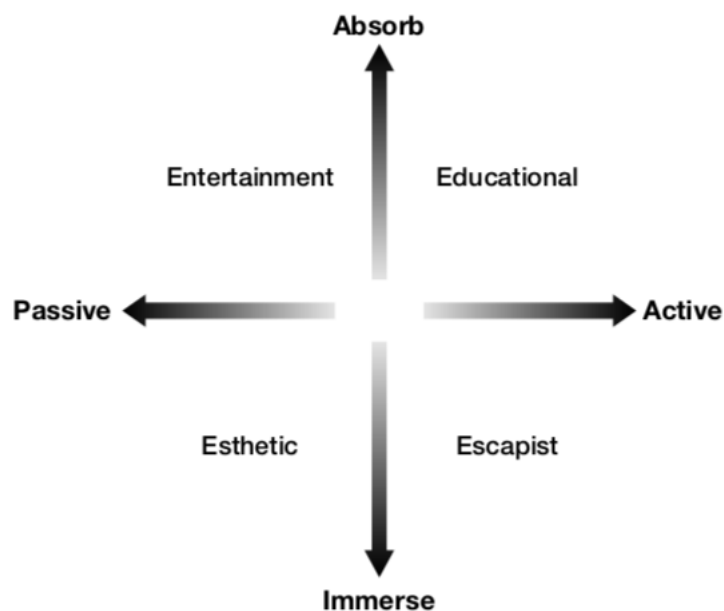
“... the mental impact felt and remembered by an individual caused by the personal perception of external stimuli. The impact might be entertaining or learning, but does not need to be so; the stimuli may be authentic, but does not have to be; and the combination of stimuli and personal perception may invoke flow but the definition includes more than optimal flow experiences” (p. 3).

Additionally, Pine and Gilmore’s (2019) highlights experiences as memorable events are supposed to be extraordinary. Accordingly, they should be outside an everyday routine (Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

Furthermore, Pine & Gilmore (2019) elucidates experiences as feelings of emotion inside an individual, as the reaction to the experience is staged outside an individual. Accordingly, this explains experiences as inherently personal, ultimately meaning most people will not share the same experience, even when in the same room at the same time (Pine & Gilmore, 2019). This is supported by Schwager & Meyer (2007), who highlight expectations as critical. Accordingly, people instinctively compare experiences, both positive and negative, with previous ones and

thereby judge them accordingly (Schwager & Meyer, 2007). This further elucidates that consumers' attention and level of engagement highly depend on who they are, their mood at the specific time, prior experiences, what they give attention to, and other essential factors (Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

Nevertheless, McCracken (1989) looks at experiences as an intersection between various factors, where specifically entertainment plays an essential role, in which Pine & Gilmore (2011) agrees, and state that experiences are the heart of entertainment offerings. However, it is essential to describe entertainment as only an aspect of an experience. “Rather, companies stage an experience whenever they engage customers, connecting with them in a personal, memorable way” (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 5). Pine & Gilmore (2011) further elucidate that there are four realms of experiences, entertainment, educational, escapist, and esthetic, in which all are “...mutually compatible domains that often commingle to form uniquely personal encounters” (p. 47).



Source: Pine & Gilmore, 2011

Fig. 2 – This figure illustrates the four realms of experiences.

(1) Entertainment:

Entertainment experiences occur when individuals absorb the experiences through their senses, commonly when listening to music, viewing a performance, or reading for pleasure. This is one of the oldest, most developed, and familiar experience forms (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

(2) Educational:

Educational experiences occur when the guest absorbs the events unfolding before him and, therefore, involves the active participation of the specific individual. Pine & Gilmore (2011) explain it, “To truly inform people and increase their knowledge or skills, educational events must actively engage the mind (for intellectual education) or the body (for physical training)” (p. 47).

(3) Escapist:

Escapist experiences involve a greater immersion than educational and entertainment. Here, guests are ultimately immersed in the experiences as actively involved participants, allowing the individuals to immerse themselves in alternate narratives (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

(4) Esthetic:

Esthetic experiences happen when individuals are immersed in an environment or an event. However, they have no or little effect on it, ultimately leaving the environment untouched. However, the events stimulate the individual's senses and evoke esthetic emotions (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

Ultimately, Pine & Gilmore (2011) suggest that companies can enhance the realness of experiences by blurring the realms' boundaries, as most of them cross boundaries. The four realms highlight how experiences cause engagement and can enrich individuals and businesses by catering to various interests, motivations, and preferences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

Further, to comprehend the concept of an economy, scholars (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Walden, 2017) explains it as an area of distribution, production, and consumption of goods and services. Appropriately, it functions as a social domain emphasizing the discourses, practices, and material

expressions that are associated with the utilization of the resources (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Walden, 2017). Thereby, when combining the notion of experiences, and the concept of an economy, one gets the phenomenon of the experience economy.

There is no authorized definition of the term the experience economy; however, as an easy explanation, Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) explain it as "... the experience economy concerns activities carried out in the public and private sectors that focus on fulfilling people's need for experiences" (p. 1). Deliberately, Pine (2022) states that in this economy, the experiences function as distinct economic offerings and are distinct from services as services are from goods. Appropriately, the goods are being used as `props` and services as `stages` in order to engage the consumers in their inherently personal ways (Pine, 2022). Boswijk et al., (2007) further explain this as "Stories are told (by the company, to the customer), attention is sought (the customer's, by the company), experiences are directed (by the company, for the customer), and so on consumers" (p. 6).

Elaboratively, the experience sector concerns "... formal economic activities that have the aim to deliver elements that can provoke experiences in people who pay directly or indirectly for them. Those people can be defined as customers or citizens, depending on whether the delivery is market or public based" (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013, p. 5). However, it is essential to mention that, in some analyses, it can also be considered a statical sector that is delimited from other economic sectors. Accordingly, with the common, it functions as a group of various industries to produce experience-provoking elements (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). From a business perspective, the experience economy can be considered:

"a generic activity that is carried out in all industries and all types of firms. Experience can be added on to goods and services besides being a product of itself. Adding experience elements is done because experiences have high value for customers and thus can be the basis for more sales and higher prices" (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013, p. 10).

Pine (2023) states this as experience offerings, which is created when companies orchestrate memorable events for their consumer to enjoy, discover, and participate in. Pine (2023) adds that to efficiently stage experiences, companies should aim for them to be cohesive, robust, personal, dramatic, and transformative. Nevertheless, according to Pine and Gilmore (2019), getting

personal with the consumers is the experience economy's DNA. Accordingly, this business model aims to efficiently serve consumers uniquely, meaning that the experience element should give each customer precisely what the person wants at an agreeable price (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

In the experience economy, customer experience drives economic growth, so it is essential to fathom the notion of customer and brand experiences (Schwager & Meyer, 2007; Walden, 2017). Walden (2017) points to companies such as Apple, Starbucks, and Amazon and their reasons for success, which include not only creating competitive differentiations by focusing on product and service delivery or efficiency alone but also creating experiences. Accordingly, these brands illustrate how companies prioritizing customer experiences can generate competitive differentiations and drive economic growth (Walden, 2017).

There are several definitions of customer experiences (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Walden, 2017). Meyer & Schwager (2007) explain it as the subjective and internal response that customers provide to direct and indirect company contact. Pine & Gilmore (2011) add that customer experience is based on memorable and personal moments and the value of time spent. Accordingly, Meyer & Schwager (2007) and Pine & Gilmore (2011) examine the concept on subjectivity as a fundament. Based on this, Walden (2017) defines customer experience as "... the experience the customer has, in other words their subjective experience. How they think, feel and behave" (Walden, 2017, p. 11). Correspondingly, customer experiences function as subjective experiences, in memory or in the moment, that influence and are influenced by individuals' drive, leading to behavioral actions (Schwager & Meyer, 2007; Walden, 2017). Thereby, customer experience encompasses companies in every aspect (Schwager & Meyer, 2007).

Ultimately, the various books, reports, and scientific research on the topic commonly relate the experience economy as either defining the core of the terms as industries that offer experiences as their primary service or product, such as broadcasting, media, music, and performing arts or as industries that offer experience provoking elements, such as business, marketing, etc. However, there are no universal definitions of the topic.

1.3 The Experience Economy Market

Pine (2023) states that “The Experience Economy, the distinct and evolving economy based on staging commercial experiences that attract and engage customers, has become an innovative feature of developed economies around the world” (p. 31).

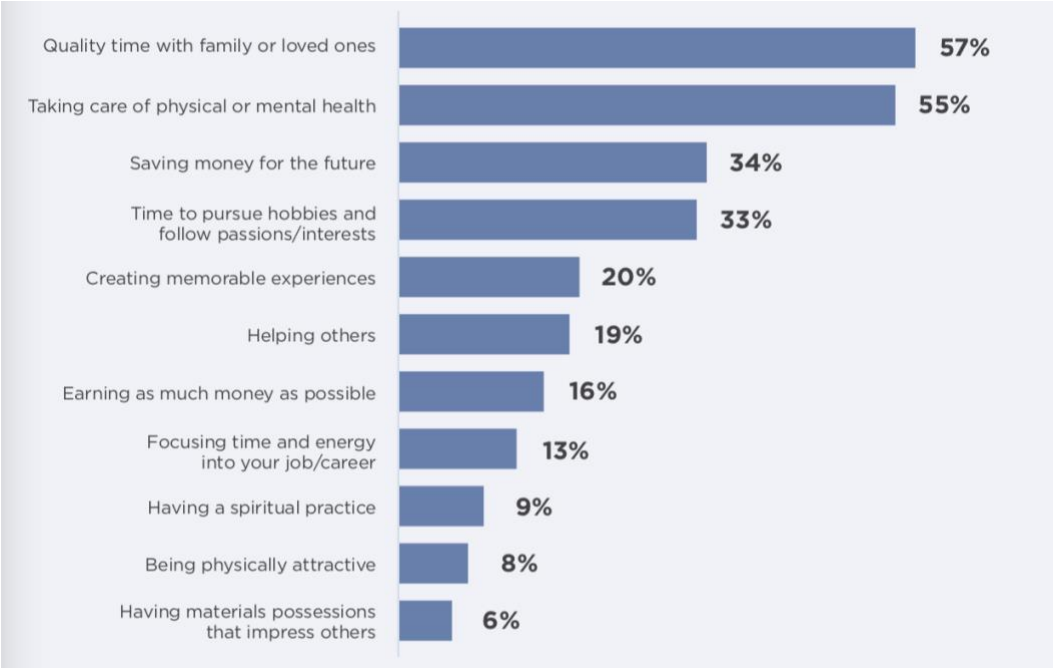
To further comprehend and grasp the concept of the experience economy from a business perspective, The Walt Disney Company is commonly used as a prime example, with no wonder, as it is the most recognized company in the world for its level of providing experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Loeffler & Church, 2015; Pine, 2022). Pine & Gilmore (2011) states the company's founder, Walt Disney, as a pioneer when it comes to experience expansion, as agreed upon by Loeffler & Church (2015), expounding that "Disney creates an Experience unlike any other in the world, and its customers love it" (p. 5), and this by creating a combination that connects people through emotions as enjoyment, happiness, joy, service and fulfillment, through theme parks, exhibitions, product extensions, Broadway musicals, and so forth (Loeffler & Church, 2015).

Consequently, the scholars (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Loeffler & Church, 2015; Pine, 2022) explain Disney as a prime example of businesses leveraging the experience economy simply because the company generates experiences through a narrated and staged form of engagement. This leads to consumers being interconnected with the brand, product interactions, and personal encounters (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Loeffler & Church, 2015). Pine and Gilmore (2011) explain all this as a total production of sounds, tastes, sights, textures, and aromas that generate a unique consumer experience. Accordingly, "Disney makes substantial revenues from selling goods as memorabilia" (Pine, 2022, p. 6).

Furthermore, according to Sundbo & Sørensen (2013), the experience economy encompasses the cultural economy and the creative industries, and it also includes the way consumption and use of goods and services can be experiential. Correspondingly, the experience economy has two sectors (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). The primary sector comprises the industry, aiming to provide experiences such as tourism, culture, and broadcasting. On the contrary, the secondary sector within the experience economy consists of companies and firms with another aim: to provide goods and services by utilizing experience-provoking elements (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013).

Scholars (Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011) note that staging experiences start with truly emphasizing an experience-directed mindset, including thinking about the design and production, as well as the design and the overall orchestration of the experience. Companies that excel in staging experiences can increase the prices of their offerings faster than the inflation rate, as research shows that consumers value experiences more highly (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Conversely, “Companies that fail to provide consistently engaging experiences, overprice their experiences relative to the value received, or overbuild their capacity to stage them will see demand or pricing pressure (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 38).

To further underscore the essentialism of companies staging experiences, it is proved in Dynata’s (2022) survey on consumer trends, we see in the picture below that 57% of respondents state that quality time with loved ones is the current most important arena in life, while 20% state creating memorable experiences. Therefore, by shifting focus to prioritizing experience-centered operations in business practices enhances the pricing power and consumer value perception, as the stated research indicate strong emphasis on memorable experiences and quality time with loved ones (Dynata, 2022).



Source: The New Experience Survey, Dynata (2022)

Graph. 1 – This graph illustrates survey respondents' most important areas of life today'. Showing which factors are most essential for consumers after the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4 The future of the experience economy

The future of the experience economy is poised for significant transformation (Pine & Gilmore, 2019). As highlighted by Boswijk et al. (2007), we universally create a new economy geared toward providing psychic gratification. As further strengthened by Pine & Gilmore (2011), who expounds it as: “The growth of both the industrial economy and the Service Economy brought with it a proliferation of offerings that did not exist before imaginative companies invented and developed them. That’s also how the Experience Economy will grow...” (p. 39).

However, the experience economy encountered a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed nearly everyone’s life and daily routine (Dynata, 2022; Pine, 2023). This paved the way for new behaviors and mindsets to emerge as one’s values got redefined with renewed priorities first. It also caused widespread digital adoption, where people were forced to work and connect with other people from their homes (Dynata, 2022).

While the Experience Economy’s physical sectors were decimated in the COVID-19 pandemic, Pine (2023) states that people increasingly missed participating in shared experiences, especially the experiences they took for granted. Further proved, Dynata (2022) states that there was also a growing demand for virtual entertainment and culture during the pandemic. Dynata (2022) states that 1 in 4 is interested in virtual experiences; however, they state that it does not give the same feeling as attending in person. Pine (2023) describes it as

“Another realization as the world has emerged from the pandemic is that people desire not only the merely memorable experiences, but the highly meaningful ones as well. We will still go to concerts, sporting events, festivals, movies, theme parks and all those immersive and instagrammable art exhibits. But more and more, people crave experiences that provide meaningful moments with others” (p. 32).

Pine (2023) further states that the isolation forced by the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted consumers, as instead of accumulating material objects, they now recognize that what gives their life meaning is shared experiences with loved ones, family, friends, and colleagues. And now when the economies have opened up after the COVID-19 pandemic, physical experiences are back, and people have returned to experiences to fulfill their needs (Pine, 2023). Boswijk et al. (2007) add that the experienced economy is gaining a solid foundation with the new generations. At the same time, as we witness a dematerialization of the economy, we also witness the rise of self-direction and co-creation. This is further proved as research shows that since 1978, the share of consumers spending money on live events and experiences relative to total U.S spending increased by 70%, in which Eventbrite (2014) describes as, “People want to experience more and to live a more experiential life, and businesses are rising to meet that demand” (p. 4).

The abundant supply of goods and services is continuously growing, ultimately causing a pattern of cost commoditization and reduction. Accordingly, there will continuously be increasing competition in pricing, forcing firms to look for new ways of highlighting goods and services for their customers (Boswijk et al., 2007). As Pine & Gilmore (2011) explains, “Just as people have cut back on goods to spend more money on services, now they also scrutinize the time and money they spend on services to make way for more memorable – and more highly valued – experiences” (p. 17). Appropriately, businesses must assess its position related to consumers time, attention and limited resources- as Pine (2023) describes it: “If a company can entice customers to give it an increasing share of their time and attention, then it will likely also get customers to spend more of their money with it rather than with other firms” (p. 31).

Rich economic processes require experiences as a form of economic output, and business offerings should operate in experiences or experiences in the way products and services are marketed (Boswijk et al., 2007; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). Accordingly, businesses are relegated to the diminishing world of services and goods that ultimately will be irrelevant, and to avoid this, businesses must stage rich, memorable, and compelling experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This is ultimately reflected in the example of Walt Disney (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Loeffler & Church, 2015). Pine & Gilmore (2011) elucidates that the company “... continually “Imagineering” new offerings to apply its experiential expertise, from TV shows on the Disney Channel to “character

worlds” at Disney.com, from Broadway shows to the Disney Cruise Line, complete with its own Caribbean island” (p. 4).

This ultimately proves that experiences are becoming paramount in today's economy, reshaping businesses operations and how they leverage and drive growth (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016). This is specifically essential for businesses to know as research proves that younger generations spend more time and money on live experiences, and companies, brands, and artists utilize more resources to create these experiences (Eventbrite, 2014). Which Pine (2022) additionally states that consumers will get more disposable income, in which they will reallocate their expenditures. Pine (2022), therefore, suggests that “They will seek to continually spend less on commoditized goods and services and more on experiences, as they become more `guests` than consumers” (p. 1). Culminating, the increased money, time, and energy spent on experiential elements by both consumers and companies are the key ingredients that generate the growth of the experience economy and will be crucial to generating value creation (Eventbrite, 2014 Walden, 2017). Therefore, “... future companies need to understand in every business they must play a role on a stage in front of customers. We need to characterize, rehearse, and then perform that role on the business stage” (Pine, 2022, p. 8).

To conclude, the chapter has explored the evolution and significance of the experience economy, shedding light on its impact on modern-day business practices, as it highlights the profound impact of experiences on contemporary business landscapes, underscoring the shift from commoditized goods and services to staged experiences as the foundation of economic progress (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Pine & Gilmore, 2019). Through scholarly insights and real-world examples, it becomes evident that businesses are increasingly leveraging experiences to engage customers in memorable and personal ways, ultimately driving growth and competitive differentiation (Boswijk et al., 2007; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Pine & Gilmore, 2019). This groundwork sets the stage for the next chapter’s examination of experiential marketing and communication strategies, as it has become clear that understanding and effectively harnessing the power of experiences will be crucial.

Chapter 2 - Experiential Communication & Marketing

Building on these insights from Chapter 1, we will delve into practical techniques for crafting immersive brand experiences and explore the landscape of experiential marketing. Here, we will look into the evolution and significance of experiential marketing in today's experience-driven economy, highlighting the shift from traditional product-centric approaches to immersive consumer experiences (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018). Appropriately, we will look into the core principles and strategies of experiential marketing and further discuss the strategic evaluation measures of these campaigns. Appropriately, the chapter aims to provide a cohesive approach that bridges theoretical understanding with actionable insights, offering a comprehensible guide for businesses navigating the experiential marketing landscape.

Traditional marketing has provided a variety of essential implementation tools, strategies, and methodologies for the industrial age (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018); however, as Schmitt (1999) states, as agreed upon by Pine (2023), businesses have entered a new area and it will be necessary to make a shift from a features-and-benefits approach to a marketing-to-consumer experience. Appropriately, agreed upon by Edrogon (1999), expounding on the vitalism of companies designing marketing communication strategies that underpin companies' competitive differential advantage for their products and services.

As elucidated in the notion of the experience economy, we have gained an opinion that experiences have emerged to generate new value (Boswijk et al., 2007; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013). As Pine & Gilmore (2011) explain it, "Such experience offerings occur whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage an individual" (p. 17). Appropriately, marketers are finding new and creative ways to engage their customers that the traditional media channels and one-way communication programs fail to do (Smith & Hanover, 2016).

Furthermore, according to Sundbo & Sørensen (2013), the experience economy thrives in marketing operations; however, as elucidated by Schmitt (1999), that is only if marketing managers expel considering new approaches, concepts, structures, and processes within their organizations to capitalize on the experiential marketing opportunities truly. If they do so, the result would lead to increases in attention to the product and brand, as well as an increase in

customer loyalty (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016). Appropriately, research conducted shows that 80% of consumers say that when engaging in branded and personalized experiences, they would be more likely to buy the service or product being promoted, demonstrating the essentialism of experience-based marketing (Epsilon, 2018),

Further, across different industries and various product and services categories, experiential marketing elements are utilized in various ways for various reasons (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Nevertheless, as expounded by Smith & Hanover (2016), "... while the premise appears simple – combine a brand message, elements of interactivity, a targeted audience, and deliver it in a live setting to create a defined outcome – successful experiences are both art and science" (p. 2). Accordingly, embracing experiential marketing requires a creative and original way of thinking about marketing and creativity and strategic implementation, and it shows the necessity of gaining an empirical understanding of how to create memorable and rich experiences (Schmitt, 1999; Smith & Hanover, 2016).

2.1 Evolution and definitions

As an effect of the experience economy, budget shifts occur from traditional advertising to experiential marketing (Smith & Hanover, 2016). Sundbo & Sørensen (2013) further explain the experience economy theory as a marketing principle, general explanation, and prescriptive theory, elucidating that experiences will replace traditional marketing elements. Adequately, "This marked a shift from a rational message to an emotional message, or a combination of both" (Smilansky, 2018, p. 33).

According to Smilansky (2018), in the early days of marketing, companies primarily focused on differentiation based on product features and benefits. However, the competition in this traditional marketing forced companies to create competitive products, ultimately leading to price wars, starting to lower the costs of products while also driving customers to make cost-based purchase decisions (Schmitt, 1999; Smith & Hanover, 2016). Smilansky (2018) further elucidates brands as innovators in the mid-20th century, as marketing was evolving and operations were revolutionized, making brands take on unique personalities. Smith & Hanover (2016) states that, globally, there are more than \$100 billion (USD) that is spent annually on experiential campaigns

by tens of thousands of brands and companies, and they explain it as the fastest-growing form of marketing (Smith & Hanover, 2016).

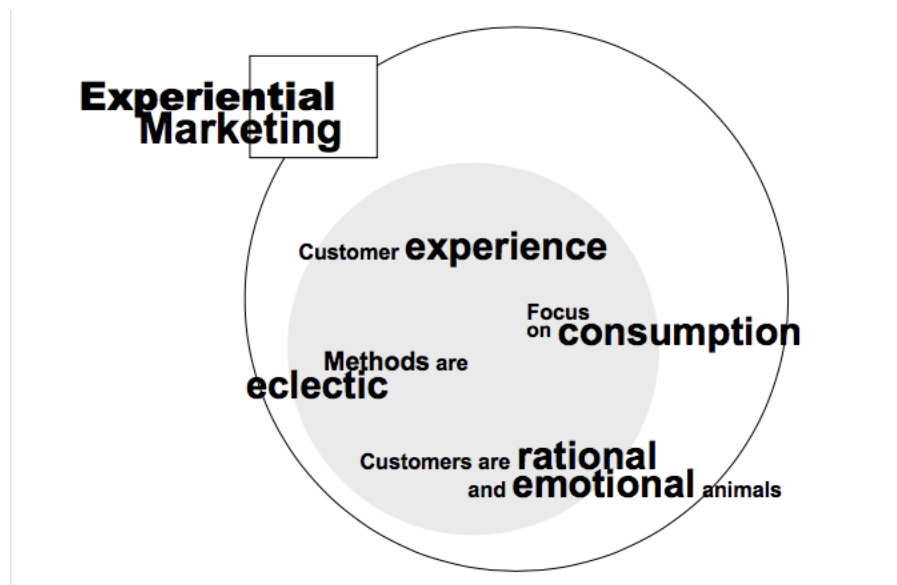
Additionally, Smilansky (2018) underscores, the evolution of marketing has shifted from a traditional approach focusing on product-centric differentiation to a more brand personality-driven approach. This supports Smith & Hanover (2016) opinion that experiential marketing is a continuously and rapidly evolving trend, as it provides fundamental strategies for companies to engage with their consumers. Further, we will delve into the definitions of experiential marketing and further explore the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that shape this dynamic marketing field. First, we will look into traditional forms of marketing to truly comprehend the differences and the multifaced nature of the experiential field of the issue.

Commencing, marketing is seen as a dynamic and creative activity, where the most essential aspect is to generate positive awareness about a service or product to potential consumers (Mitra, 2023). More specifically, according to Schmitt (1999), “Traditional marketing presents an engineering driven, rational, analytical view of customers, products and competition” (p.11). Schmitt (1999) further notes that traditional marketing consists of four key characteristics:

- (1) A focus on functional features and benefits
- (2) Product categories and competition are narrowly defined
- (3) Customers are viewed as rational decision-makers
- (4) Methods and tools are analytical, quantitative, and verbal

Nevertheless, as scholars (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore; Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016) have concluded, consumers take product quality, functional features, and benefits as a given; they want more marketing campaigns, products, and communications that dazzle with their senses and motions and stimulate their minds. Appropriately, consumers want marketing, products, and services that can be incorporated into their lifestyle and deliver an experience (Schmitt, 1999). Hence, today’s information, branding, and communications revolution requires a different approach (Smith & Hanover, 2016). This approach is experiential marketing; as Pine & Gilmore (2011) explain, applies experiences to marketing goods and services to become less

dependent on traditional media for building demand. Smith (1999) further describes the notion as differing from traditional marketing in four essential ways, where it commonly aims at a broad and holistic consumer view, as explained in the following paragraphs:



Source: Schmitt (1999)

Fig. 3 – This figure illustrates the four characteristics of experiential marketing.

(1) Customer experiences:

Experiential techniques prioritize experiences over functional features, offering a broader perspective. It encompasses emotional, cognitive, sensory, rational, and behavioral values that ultimately supplant the functional values (Schmitt, 1999).

(2) Consumption as a holistic experience:

Analyzing consumption situations and redefining category boundaries proves a shift in market opportunity thinking. This elevates the marketing perspective as it broadens category concepts, as well as explores consumption patterns in a more socio-cultural context (Schmitt, 1999).

(3) Customer as a rational and emotional animal:

Experiential marketers understand consumers as driven by rationality and emotions, where ancestral needs influence choices. Additionally, looking at customers as beings with emotional and sensory faculties helps the marketer understand their behavior (Schmitt, 1999).

(4) Methods and tools are eclectic:

Unlike traditional marketing's quantitative and analytical methodologies, experimental marketing employs more multifaceted and diverse tools (Schmitt, 1999; Smilansky, 2018). It, therefore, rejects adherence to one single methodological ideology, and therefore opting for a more eclectic approach (Schmitt, 1999).

Smilansky (2018) goes on to define experiential marketing as a “process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and aspirations profitably, engaging them through two-way communications that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the target audience” (p.482). By combining the definitions to comprehend the notion certainly, one can appropriately describe experiential marketing as a strategy that invites a targeted audience to interact with a company, usually in a real-world situation (Schmitt, 1999; Smith & Hanover, 2016). Correspondingly, this is regularly achieved through tangible and participatory branding material. In its simplest form, experiential marketing is an evolved form of corporate storytelling (Smith & Hanover, 2016). Smilansky (2018) further presents a checklist for experiential marketing containing three steps:

- (1) Experiential marketing functions as an integrated methodology that engages target groups as their will through brand-relevant and authentic communication that adds value (Smilansky, 2018).
- (2) Experiential marketing campaigns are built around one idea involving two-way interactions between the target group and the brand in real-time and therefore it, features a live brand experience as its core (Smilansky, 2018).
- (3) Other marketing channels and platforms can be known as amplification channels, with the goal of amplifying the campaign's impact, often through storytelling (Smilansky, 2018).

Moreover, Smilansky (2018) views experiential marketing as a methodology and explains it as a customer-centric approach to effectively communicating with the targeted audience. Brands that embrace the customer experience thoroughly gain significant competitive advantages by

employing two-way interaction-focused and experience-orientated strategies across the overall marketing operations, all relevant to their target audience (Smilansky, 2018).

Experiential marketing is continually evolving, and the topic encompasses various campaigns and brand experiences, making it one of the marketer’s dynamic and fluid engagement tools (Smith & Hanover, 2016). Accordingly, based on scientific articles from the identified scholars (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smith & Hanover, 2016, Smilansky, 2018), there are several types of experiential marketing activities, such as:

Types of Experiential Marketing	Description:
Events	Planned occurrences that aims to bring people together, often for a specific purpose or activity
Pop-up experiences	Temporary installations or events that offers a unique and often thematic experience to visitors.
Brand activation	Strategy designed to increase brand engagement and awareness through interactive campaigns or experiences
Product showcases	Exhibitions or presentations that highlights specific products to potential clients and consumers
Sampling campaigns	Promotional experiences where product samples are distributed to consumers
Stayable experiences	Experiences designed to keep participants involved for an extended period
Guerilla marketing	Unconventional marketing tactics that rely on creativity and surprise
Stunts	Unconventional and attention-grabbing actions or events designed to provoke a reaction or/and engagement
Workshops	Interactive sessions with participants to learn new skills, and gain knowledge about certain products and brands

Source: Table created by the author, inspired from scholars: Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018.

Tab. 1 – This table illustrates the various types of experiential marketing.

These experiential marketing campaigns, highlighted in the table above, are brought to life by various creative and analytic professionals, often drawn from diverse backgrounds, including advertising and marketing, which leverage their expertise to create immersive brand experiences (Smith & Hanover, 2016, Smilansky, 2018). These professionals can be defined as experiential marketers (Smilansky, 2018). Appropriately, an experiential marketer holds in the operations of creating and executing strategies for their client's interactive marketing campaigns. It can typically involve (1) brainstorming and creating ideas, (2) market research, (3) creating interactive elements or campaigns, (4) taking charge of all logistics, and (5) reporting and analyzing performance. Based on their research, Freeman (2017) describes experiential marketers' goal as getting closer to their consumers and building customer loyalty.

2.2 Techniques and Strategies

In the dynamic landscape of experiential marketing, companies are trying to promote and sell products or services by crafting memorable and immersive experiences. Scholars Pine & Gilmore (2011) and Schmitt (1999) have developed two relative theories that offer insights into the strategies and techniques of this realm. Both are designed to underpin what makes a successful experiential design.

Pine & Gilmore (2011) go on to explain five principles that companies should highlight in order to stage compelling experiences. “They must determine the theme of the experience as well as the impressions that will convey that theme to guests” (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 91). Accordingly, the principles, together, combine the act of THEME-ing, as presented below:

- **Theme** the experience
- **Harmonize** impressions with positive cues
- **Eliminate** negative cues
- **Mix** in memorabilia
- **Engage** the five senses

Companies that combine these five principles and create experiences that are engaging, compelling, memorable, and rich are the ones that will succeed in the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). On the contrary, Schmitt (1999) introduces the concept of SEMs, which operate as strategic experiential modules to create exceptional experiences for companies' consumers. These modules include sensory (SENSE), affective (FEEL), creative cognitive (THINK), physical and behavioral (ACT), and social-identity (RELATE) experiences. Each module has its objective, structure, and principle, as seen in the table below (Schmitt, 1999).

SEMs	Description
SENSE	appeals to individuals' senses, with the objective of generating experiences through sound, touch, sight, touch, smell, and taste
FEEL	appeals to individuals' inner feelings with the objective of generating affective experiences, from mildly positive moods linked to a company to stronger emotions of pride and joy
THINK	appeals to the intellect, with the objective of generating problem-solving and cognitive experiences making customers engage creatively
ACT	enriches customers lives by focusing on their physical experiences, proving various ways of doing things, as well as different interactions and lifestyles
RELATE	contains aspects of each module. However, the RELATE goes beyond the personal, private feelings, thus relating the individual to something outside his or her private state. It appeals to the one's desire for self-improvement.

Source: Schmitt (1999)

Tab. 2 – This table illustrates the strategic experiential modules of exceptional experiences

The strategic experiential modules are implemented through experience providers, including verbal and visual identity, communications, product presence, signage, co-branding, electronic media, spatial environments, and people (Schmitt, 1999, p. 14).

Both theories emphasize the pivotal role of a combination of sensory stimulation, thematic coherence, and emotions in creating compelling experiences that resonate with consumers. Furthermore, the theories underscore the significance of comprehending perception and cultural nuances in tailoring effective experiences (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Accordingly, by integrating elements of the proposed theories, businesses can more efficiently craft immersive experiences that engages their targeted consumer groups, opting for long-lasting connections and brand loyalty (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

2.3 Goals & Measurement of Experiential Marketing

For all businesses, it is essential to examine how their targeted marketing campaigns effects their consumers (Pine, 2022). Smilansky (2018) states that “Measurement is a high priority to justify increased investment in experiential” (p.14), and in the field of experiential marketing, the value proposition leads to shifts in the value chain (Boswijk et al., 2007), in which Boswijk et at (2007) expounds that “Value creation no longer takes place within the company`s value chain, but with the customer and in the networks centering on the customer” (p. 10). However, before finding suitable measurement methods for experiential marketing, one must consider the goal of these campaigns.

Smith & Hanover (2016) look at it once the marketer and client have established measurable and clear goals for the campaign. “Your goal should be to assemble the right group of metrics for your situation and use them to gather not only quantitative returns, but just as importantly, key insights on customer behavior that can inform future business decisions and marketing strategy” (Smith & Hanover, 2016, p. 137). Scholars (Smith & Hanover, 2016, Smilansky, 2018) commonly agree that experiential marketing aims to create immersive brand experiences that foster emotional connections with their consumers. Further, this aims to engage with their consumers in memorable ways that ultimately leave lasting impressions that potentially will increase sales, brand loyalty, and awareness (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smith & Hanover, 2016).

Moving over to measuring these campaigns, Smith & Hanover (2016) states that the overall goal of the evaluation should be to choose the essential metrics for one`s situation, as well as focus on these metrics in all general experiential marketing campaigns, as it can be used as a benchmark for

future marketing activities. However, there needs to be more consistent and suitable methods for evaluating experiential marketing campaigns towards these stated goals, which Smiliansky (2018) states have been a significant criticism of the marketing industry. Accordingly, experiential marketing is measured utilizing the same metrics as traditional marketing, which Smiliansky (2018) states need to be more suitable for measuring experiential marketing campaigns. On the contrary, Smith & Hanover (2016) do not fully agree and state that the metrics in experiential marketing campaigns will function as key performance indicators and should be a combination of both qualitative and quantitative measures. The chosen ones should be essential to these main constituencies:

- (1) To justify expenditures and create benchmarks for future activities and performance
- (2) To compare it with other marketing channels, and assess movement in business impact and brand perception
- (3) To monitor ROI

Appropriately, Smith & Hanover (2016) suggest several metrics essential in experiential campaigns; however, in the table below, the one supported by other scholars (Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smilansky, 2018) has been primarily considered the most essential.

Metrics:	Description
Attendee demographics	Analyzing characteristics and behaviors of individuals attending, e.g., age, gender, geographic location
Satisfaction	Evaluating the level of fulfillment and contentment experienced
Acquisition cost	Calculating expenses incurred in the developing the campaign
Revenue & sales growth	Tracking the increase in sales and revenue as the result from the certain campaign.
Communications	Evaluate the effectiveness of the communications channels used in the campaign

Return on Investment (ROI)	Analyzing the financial returns generated by the investments made in the campaign
Press impact	Measuring the publicity and media coverage generated by the campaign
Social Media Buzz	Measuring the level of engagement surrounding the campaign on social and digital media platforms
Advocacy	Evaluating if the attendees become advocates for the company by participating in the campaign
Sales impact	Analyzing the impact on sales and conversions caused by the campaign
Loyalty	Evaluating the level of loyalty developed by the attendees towards the company and its products or service
Time spent	Measuring the duration of interaction and engagement between the consumers and the campaign

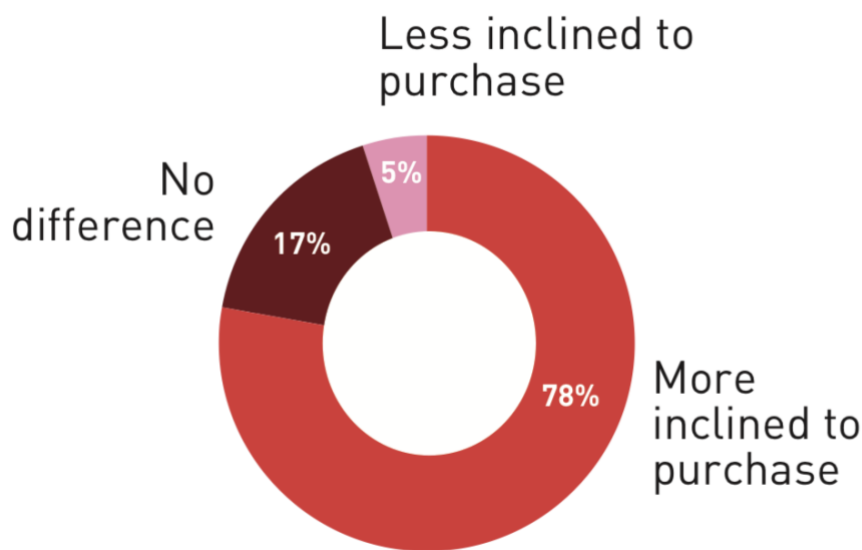
Source: Table created by the author, inspired by various scholars: Boswijk et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018.

Tab. 3 – This table illustrates essential metrics to evaluate experiential marketing campaigns.

Accordingly, the evaluation of experiential marketing campaigns should be a strategic approach with a focus that is aligned with metrics that correlate to the defined objectives and goals of the campaign (Smith & Hanover, 2016). While there is a growing recognition of the essentialism of measuring the effectiveness of experiential marketing campaigns, there needs to be more methods customized for the dynamic field of marketing, as highlighted by Smilansky (2018). However, other scholars (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smith & Hanover, 2016) advocate for an approach that is integrated prioritizing metrics, quantitative and qualitative, which gain valuable insights to justify the expenditures, which is vital for future strategies and to assess the brand impact. Therefore, experiential marketers must opt to adopt customized evaluation frameworks that reflect the campaign's objectives (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018).

2.4 The State of the Experiential Marketing Market and Future Trends

In today's modern marketing industry, the experiential marketing landscape is vibrant and dynamic, with a continuously evolving trend of consumer engagement strategies, creativity, and technology (Pine, 2022). Research proves that companies increasingly use immersive experiences to captivate their audiences and forge more profound and emotional connections with their consumers. Moreover, its impact on consumers' decisions is significant (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018; Eventmarketer, 2018). Accordingly, based on Eventmarketer's (2018) study, EventTrack, we see that consumers who participate in events and experiences have a positive inclination to purchase; in nearly eight of ten answers, they feel more inclined to purchase the product promoted in the brand experience, as seen on the graph below.



Source: Eventmarketer (2018)

Graph. 2 – This graph illustrates if ‘participating in events and experiences make consumers more inclined to purchase’. Results shows that nearly eight out of ten consumers are in the opinion of being more inclined to purchase when having participated in an event or experience.

Correspondingly, this could be from interactive pop-up installations, branded events, product launches, or advertisements through stunts and guerilla marketing (Smith & Hanover, 2016).

Appropriately, as we see from Eventmarketer's (2018) research, experiential marketing tactics clearly affects consumer decision, and when further explaining how an experiential marketing campaign work, we can utilize a modern-day example, the Barbie movie. Elaboratively, the Warner Bros and Mattel team employed experiential marketing tactics to promote Greta Gerwig's "Barbie," which ultimately sat a new standard for engaging consumers in the modern era (Hawley, 2023; Rubin, 2023). Appropriately, the marketing team helped propel the movie to become a cultural touchstone status before it arrived at the theater by implementing, in Hawley's (2023) view, a combination of immersive experiences, trendy collaborations, and employing marketing channels beyond tradition. This included a real-life Barbie Dreamhouse bookable through Airbnb, a themed boat cruise in Boston, a Barbie hotel in Malaysia, an exhibit in Los Angeles, and pop-up shops and cafés in other American cities (Hawley, 2023; Rubin, 2023).

Chakraborty & Biswal (2024) state the marketing efforts of the Barbie movie as a prime example of a well-executed marketing campaign; Hawley (2023) adds that in a world saturated with digital content, the marketing team dared to utilize the power of real-world experiences to evoke strong positive emotions leaving consumers with unforgettable moments, and a solid result with coming a box Office breakthrough. Ultimately, the Barbie brand was reinforced, expanding the target audience, creating new merchandising opportunities, and generating general excitement and buzz around the brand (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2024).

As we have seen experiential marketing continues to expand as consumers continue to crave authentic experiences and meaningful connections with brands (Pine & Gilmore; 2011, Eventbrite, 2014; Eventmarketer, 2018) Appropriately, these experiences give significant results, as experiences have a strong positive impact on consumers' feelings about brands and services, as shown in the table below. Appropriately, 52% of consumers mention their feelings about post-brand experience are very positive, and 39% say they are somewhat optimistic (Eventmarketer, 2018). In addition, research from Freeman (2017) adds that 90% of marketers worldwide believe that brand experiences deliver solid and meaningful customer interactions and compelling engagement.

	All %
Very positive	52%
Somewhat positive	39%
Opinion did not change	8%
Somewhat negative	1%
Very negative	0.2%

Source: Eventmarketer (2018)

Tab. 4 – This table illustrates the feelings about brand, product or service after attending an experience. Results prove that events and experiences have a positive impact on consumers' feelings towards a company's product and services.

Accordingly, when examining the future of experiential marketing, innovation to create memorable brand experiences will become increasingly essential and paramount for brands to make meaningful impacts. As previously stated, with Maslow's (1954) theory as a fundament, and proved in the research of ..., and further confirmed by Pine & Gilmore (2011), "... buying experiences makes people happier, with a greater sense of well-being, than purchasing goods" (p. 19). Accordingly, people greatly desire experiences as they provide value that remains long afterward (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). This resonates with the study by Eventbrite (2014), which says that 78% of the participants (millennials) would rather spend money on desirable experiences than buy something desirable (Eventbrite, 2014). Consequently, based on Eventbrite's (2014) and Dynata's (2022) research, as further agreed upon by Pine & Gilmore (2011), one comprehends that the coming generations highly value experiences and spend more time and money on experiences, such as social events, concerts, cultural experiences, athletic pursuits, and events.

The prime usage of brand experiences is in the power of evolving brands, inspiring action, and building relationships; accordingly, research from Freeman (2017) expounds brand experiences as the medium of the future. Smilansky (2018), therefore, states that in order for companies to fully reach their potential and gain maximum benefits, experiential marketing and customer experience should be central in the brand's long-term marketing strategy. Pine (2022) states that in

performance in the experience economy, companies should shift the focus from a customer satisfaction approach to a customer sacrifice approach. "Customer satisfaction is defined as the gap between what the customer expects to receive and what they perceive they actually received" (Pine, 2022, p. 2). Pine (2022), as agreed upon by fellow scholars (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Schwager & Meyer, 2007), states that it all depends on customers' expectations, often set by past interactions with the company or other companies, often in the same sector and providing the exact offers. "Customer sacrifice ignores expectations, seeking to ascertain what customers really want, and how providers can supply it. The `sacrifice` represents the gap between what customers truly need and what they have to settle for today" (Pine, 2022, p. 2).

Additionally, it is essential to mention that there has been a shift in factors that have been important for consumers. While cost and ease of use are essential factors, consumers want highly personal offerings (Pine, 2022). Pine (2022) further explains this through the example: "We are willing to pay a premium, for example, for a cup of coffee at Starbucks because of the theatre surrounding its creation, and because of the esthetic environment in which it is created – even though it is still cup of coffee" (p. 3). Accordingly, it is essential to grasp the customers' reactions, build these into their business model, and create experiences that genuinely motivate and drive consumer decisions (Walden, 2017). Correspondingly, as Walden (2017) expels: "To focus our business not on our own processes but the process that goes on in the mind of the customer" (p. 3).

Comprehensively, the chapter has illuminated the transformative power of experiential marketing in today's consumer landscape, making us understand its vital role in fostering emotional connections and driving consumer engagement (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Pine & Gilmore, 2019). Moreover, the analysis of current market trends and future prospects highlights the growing importance of experiential strategies in building brand loyalty and driving business success (Smilansky, 2018; Pine, 2022).

Chapter 3 – High-profile endorsements as a marketing technique

To further gain an understanding of effective marketing in the modern era, the study delves into the dynamic world of high-profile endorsements in marketing, where celebrities and influencers hold significant power over consumer behavior and brand perception (McCracken, 1989;

Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Mitra, 2023). We start by defining celebrities and their role in shaping cultural meanings, then proceed to analyze market trends, techniques, and risks associated with celebrity endorsements.

In today's hyper-connected society, companies are continuously searching for new means of communication and strategies for reaching their already established and new customers (Bakker, 2018). McCracken (1989) states that there is a thorough interconnection between the world of culture and entertainment and the modern marketing system. This linkage ultimately makes the celebrity world a potent source that influences consumer behavior and marketing strategies (Bakker, 2018; McCracken, 1989). In which Edrogon (1999) states that celebrities have been endorsing companies' products and services since the late nineteenth century.

Subsequently, Moraes, Gountas, Gountas, & Sharma (2019) further expel that the entertainment industry has introduced the field of celebrity marketing, in which Edrogon (1999) confirms, mentioning "Use of celebrities as part of marketing communications strategy is a fairly common practice for major firms in supporting corporate or brand imagery" (p. 291). Correspondingly, During the past three decades, celebrity marketing has increased significantly in popularity and has become remarkable in brand communication (Moraes et al., 2019). Accordingly, the essentialism of entertainment celebrities in contemporary societies is continuously surging exponentially, and Bergkvist & Zhou (2016) is of the opinion that their influence on consumer behavior should definitely be researched. As McCracken (1989) states, "The celebrity world is one of the most potent sources of cultural meaning at the disposal of the marketing system and the individual consumer" (p. 318). Further, Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) states that celebrities have the power to transform unknown products and brands into well-known, through generating positive associations via persuasion techniques via endorsements. Accordingly, one should emphasize the inevitability of cultivating the knowledge of this marketing strategy, especially given its impact on consumers' perceptions and aspirations (McCacken, 1989; Djafarova & Rushworth 2017; Moraes et al., 2019).

Bergkvist & Zhou (2016) state that the prevalence of celebrity endorsements goes in different forms of communication, beyond traditional advertising, which they mean underscores the

effectiveness of using this strategy in a brand's marketing communications. As a result, research has shown that this is true, and that the celebrity endorsement strategy has become a vital marketing component for brand's in the competitive business environment (Mukherjee, 2009). Further, Bakker (2018) adds, this field of marketing has emerged as a crucial tool for brands establishing meaningful connections with their consumers in an effective way.

Ultimately, the convergence of culture, entertainment, and marketing subsequently underscore the appeal of celebrity endorsements (Mukherjee, 2009). Accordingly, this ultimately conveys Moraes et al. (2019) thoughts on the importance of celebrity marketing becoming a more utilized and important tool of brand communication, and that is increasing at an exponential rate in modern societies. Therefore, scholars (Mukherjee, 2009; Djafarova & Rushworth 2017; Moraes et al., 2019) explains that companies should strive to navigate the marketing landscape, and truly comprehend the dynamics of the celebrity culture, and its impact on consumer behavior. Correspondingly, marketers need to ought to be more open-minded, opportunist and creative in order to utilize this marketing techniques (Mitra, 2023).

3.1 Definitions

As understood by the introduction, in the realm of brand communication and marketing initiatives, celebrity endorsements play a significant role. However, there are several definitions, from academics and practitioners, used to comprehend the notions. Nevertheless, to start, one needs to comprehend the notions involved in the area of high-profile endorsements.

Starting with the concept of celebrities, which Mitra (2023) states are continuously evolving. Mukherjee (2009) expounds celebrities as individuals who enjoy public recognition by large shares of groups. Further explained, “Whereas attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills are just examples and specific common characteristics that are observed, and celebrities generally differ from the social norm and enjoy a high degree of public awareness” (Mukherjee, 2009, p. 3). Further, Mitra (2023) describes the defining characteristics of a celebrity is expertise, fame and influence, however the most important attribute is popularity. One can therefore describe a celebrity as an entity that gains popularity due to a specific expertise in an area, in which Djafarova & Rushworth (2017), for traditional celebrities include musicians, film

stars, TV personalities, and athletes, this expertise then turn the entity into an credible figure that people are willing to follow and imitate (Mitra, 2023).

It is worth mentioning, in today`s media saturated world with advancements in digital technologies and the rise of social media, a new phenomenon has emerged, exactly, social media influencers (Mitra, 2023). According to Bakker (2018) there is no academically correct definition of the notion. However, Mitra (2023) defines an influencer as “... someone who has gained fame through the display of their talents or content over social media platforms (p. 125). Appropriately, the phenomenon can be considered as digital celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Thereby comes the notion of influencer marketing, which can be compared to celebrity marketing, defined as “... a process in digital marketing where opinion leaders (influencers) are identified and then integrated into a brand`s brand communication on social media platforms” (Bakker, 2018, p. 79). Accordingly, it is a form of digital word-of-mouth marketing, where influencers are influencing consumers purchase decision process (Bakker, 2018). However, to be considered an influencer, one`s content must be accepted and appreciated by a large number of the general public. Accordingly, Mitra (2023) states influencers display certain characteristics of a celebrity, and therefore they can be categorized as celebrities, and will be for this study. Appropriately, after looking at the stated definitions and explanations of a traditional celebrity and the modern form for a celebrity, the following can function as the working definition:

“A celebrity is an entity, e.g., a real person, an animal, Artificial Intelligence, an animated or fictional character, etc. who is known to and recognized by people outside their immediate social circle by creating a public interest or sensation. Their expertise or prolonged association in a certain field makes them reliable, trustworthy, and somewhat authoritative so much so that they are able to influence other people`s point of view or decision-making process, particularly a consumption decision” (Mitra, 2023, p. 125)

Furthermore, advertising and marketing can be viewed as a manipulative role in an emerging brandscape, with the goal to seek to transform customers into personification of brand identity. (Mukherjee, 2009). Percy & Elliot goes on to define advertising as “... an indirect way of turning a potential customer towards the advertised product or service by providing information that is designed to effect a favourable impression: what we call a positive brand attitude” (p. 4). An endorsement is a strategy of exactly this, and can be explained as an action of endorsing, either

someone or something. Combining the notions, we get celebrity endorsement. As explained by McCracken's (1989) theory:

“The term «celebrity» is also meant in this article to encompass a variety of endorsements, including those the explicit mode (“I endorse this product”), the implicit mode (“I use this product”), the imperative mode (“You should use this product”), and the copresent mode (i.e., in which the celebrity merely appears with the product)” (p. 310).

This ultimately supports Mukherjee's (2009) definition explaining it as a channel of brand communication where the celebrity functions as the brand's spokesperson, thereby certifies the brand's position and claim, by extending its popularity, personality, and stature in society to the specific brand. Accordingly, it is a marketing technique that aims to attract consumers awareness to a product or service through the use of a celebrity (Mitra, 2023).

McCracken (1989) further goes on to define a celebrity endorser as an individual who enjoys and uses the public recognition on behalf of consumers by appearing with the product or service in advertisement. However, according to Bergkvist & Zhou (2016), this definition is dated in the modern world of marketing. Accordingly, the following definition is proposed to explain the overall concept: “a celebrity endorsement is an agreement between an individual who enjoys public recognition (a celebrity) and an entity (e.g., a brand) to use the celebrity for the purpose of promoting the entity” (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016, p. 644).

Summarizing the notion, in essence, the overall agreement of the definitions is that celebrity endorsements function as a means of meaning transfer from the celebrity to the specific brand, ultimately enhancing its appeal and credibility in the consumers eyes (McCracken, 1989; Mukherjee, 2009, Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Mitra, 2023). Appropriately, Mitra (2023) simply put it as “... a company signs a contract with a celebrity to promote its product for consumption” (Mitra, 2023, p. 126). Correspondingly, it underscores the importance of driving consumer engagement and brand loyalty by leveraging personalities and status (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).

3.2 Market, Trends & Techniques

As understood, celebrity endorsements have become a significant and powerful tool for brands to compute consumer attention and move consumer decisions. As we see in research conducted by the Gitnux Marketdata Report 2024, celebrity endorsements are associated with a 20% to 40% increase in trust and sales, and when implemented correctly and effectively it improves brand sales and impact (Gitnux, 2023). Exactly this is proved in several successful and well-known examples, most which can blame its success on its proper endorsement strategy (Mukherjee, 2009). Comprehensively, Mukherjee (2009) suggest the Italian luxury brand Versace as a prime example, when they used Hollywood stars as Madonna, Halle Berry and Madonna in their campaigns between 2005 and 2006. Opting for a more modern example, we can have a look at the Barbie movie once again.

Bringing back the example of the Barbie movie from the previous chapter, Hawley (2023) detonates three components to the success: (1) experiences matter, (2) beyond tradition, and (3) collaboration counts. The latter concerning the relevant topic of both partnering with brands, but also influencers and celebrities to enhance reach and generate impact. As agreed, upon by Chakraborty & Biswal (2024), who also pays the homage to collaborations with influencers and partners as a success of the marketing tactics. Appropriately, Warner Bros, together with Mattel, truly understood the importance of promotion and branding, and collaborated with various influencers and partners, as well as utilizing the actors of the movie, such as Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling in promotional campaigns (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2024). Combining this with the experience aspect results in crafting moment where the consumers can participate in, ultimately leading to evoking strong emotions as happiness, amusement and wonder, which Hawley (2023) states as a testament to the power of exceptional marketing.

However, it is essential to mention that celebrity endorsements can have both positive and negative impacts on a firm, in terms of the overall brand image and on sales (Edrogon, 1999; Mukhrjee, 2009). Accordingly, marketers need to find a balance of the pros and cons and find the correct techniques for their endorsements in order to utilize the marketing strategy correctly (Mitra, 2023). Edrogon (1999) agrees, and adds that, whilst the potential benefits of celebrity endorsements are

significant, there are also significant risks. He further presents the table below, with advantages and hazards of utilizing this marketing strategy (Edrogan, 1999, p. 295).

Potential Advantages	Potential Hazards
Increased attention	Overshadow the brand
Image polishing	Public controversy
Brand introduction	Image change and overexposure
Brand repositioning	Image change and loss of public recognition
Underpin global campaigns	Expensive

Source: Edrogan (1999)

Tab. 5 – This table illustrates the advantages and hazards of using celebrity endorsements as a marketing technique

In addition to Edrogan`s (1999) table of potential advantages and hazards, Mukherjee (2009) additionally states that these endorsements cannot replace the complete brand building process, but it is rather an essential tool that can form significant effects on branding.

In order to prevent the scholars (Edrogan, 1999; Mukherjee, 2009) identified potential hazards of using the celebrity endorsement strategy, one can look at certain techniques and theories to better gain a comprehension on the utilization of the phenomenon. First off, the selection of the celebrity endorser is significantly important. Mitra (2023) states that when a company chooses a celebrity endorser for their marketing campaigns, great care has to be given. Bergkvist & Zhou (2016) further explains the celebrity selection process in a seven-step model, including (1) account meeting, (2) creative brief, (3) creative proposal, (4) research, (5) initial contact, (6) campaign proposal, and (7) final negotiations. Appropriately, according to Percy & Elliot (2009), it is key to determine what it is about the certain celebrity selected, which will represent the message which leads to the consumers effect how it is received. Accordingly, marketers, should consider the endorsers characteristics, in order for the best appeal to deliver the content to the targeted consumer group (Bakker, 2018).

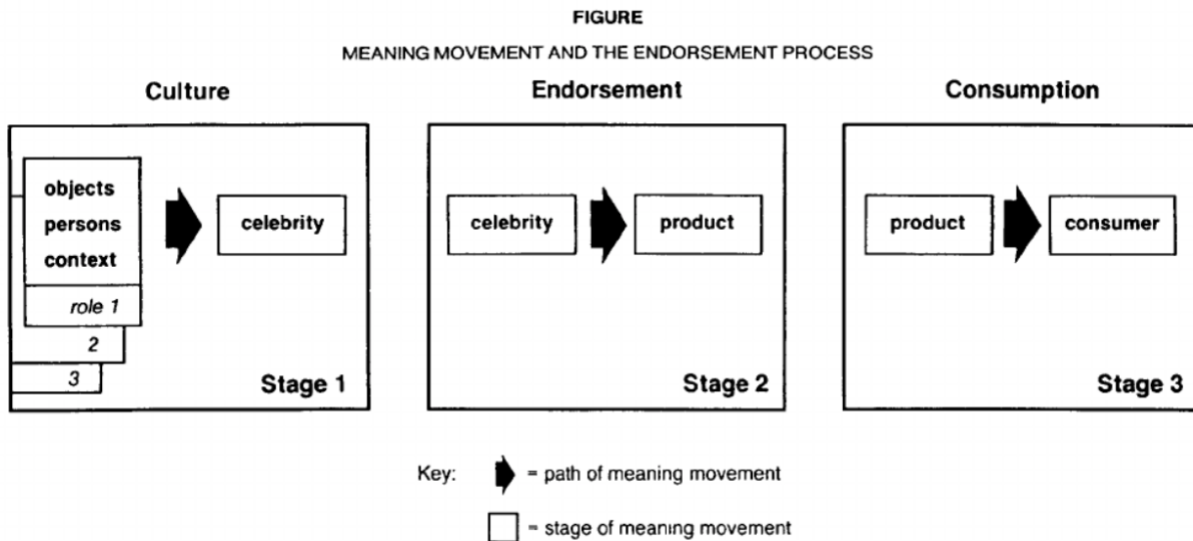
Taking fundament in Bakker's (2018) elucidation concerning characteristics of the endorser, Edrogon (1999) suggest the following factors as critical: credibility and celebrity attractiveness, message and product type, product-celebrity match, level of involvement, overall personality, values and standards. Specifically, the trustworthiness and credibility of the endorser is essential, as Mitra (2023) states that research shows that these characteristics are the most important in consumers' willingness to pay. In addition to these factors mentioned, McCracken (1989) adds that "Distinctions of status, class, gender, and age, as well as personality and lifestyle types, are represented in the pool of available celebrities, putting an extraordinarily various and subtle pallet of meanings at the disposal of the marketing system" (p. 312). In addition, Edrogon (1999) mentions regulative issues, economic visibility of endorsers, and compatibility with the overall marketing strategy as risks that must be considered in the selection of the endorser.

Correspondingly, the celebrity endorsement strategy is considered effective and a competitive weapon in order to differentiate products and services from competitors, but only as long the correct celebrity is chosen as the endorser (Edrogon, 1999).

When the correct selection has been done, it can be further proved with the Halo Effect Theory, first discovered through a social experiment conducted by the psychologist Thorndike (1920). The social experiment proved that an individual's perception can either generate a positive or negative 'halo' around oneself, which results in a blurring of the individual's characteristics (Thorndike, 1920). Appropriately, in this context, Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) states that the "Halo Effect Theory refers to a target consumer's tendency to rate a product based on a review they receive from an individual who is potentially endorsing it" (p. 3).

Appropriately, the halo effect functions as a cognitive bias where perceiving a positive trait can lead to assumptions of other positive traits (Thorndike, 1920). Especially in celebrity marketing, the halo effect functions as follows: when a high-profile figure endorses a brand or a product, their positive attributes, such as attractiveness, talent, and trustworthiness, can transfer to the product, creating a significant association in the minds of the consumers. (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This proves how high-profile figures' recognition and personal brands influence public opinion (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Smilansky, 2018)

Further, to understand the celebrity endorsement strategy, one can apply McCracken's (1989) meaning transfer model, which suggests that these endorsements operate as the process of meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989). As elucidated by McCracken (1989): "Meaning begins as something resident in the culturally constituted world, in the physical and social world constituted by the categories and principles of the prevailing culture. Meaning then moves to consumer goods and finally to the life of the consumer (p. 313). The model therefore considers how the meaning moves to the persona of the celebrity, from the celebrity to the specific product to be endorsed, and finally, from the product to the consumer (McCracken, 1989; Edrojan, 1999). In this context, the celebrities are the key players of this meaning transfer process (McCracken, 1989).



Source: McCracken (1989)

Fig. 4 – This figure illustrates the Meaning Transfer Model.

Stage 1:

In stage one, the endorsements grant the advertisement access to a specific category of individuals who holds significant and powerful meanings. Celebrities possess particular configurations of meanings derived from their roles in the world of entertainment, sports, and other professions. They own these meanings as they are ingrained through their public and repeated performances, ultimately shaping a distinct public image (McCracken, 1989; Edrojan, 1999).

Stage 2:

In stage two, the marketing team must determine a strategic selection on the symbolic properties desired for the product or service, and then choose a celebrity who represents these properties. Once the selection has been done, the campaign must effectively convey these meanings to the product or service. It is essential that the campaign is designed to emphasize the essential similarity between the product or service and the celebrity, ultimately so the consumer can continue the meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989; Edrogon, 1999).

Stage 3:

In stage 3, the focus shifts to the consumer's interpretation of the endorsed meaning into their own self-concept. The celebrities, and their public personas, in this stage serves as examples and inspirational figures for the consumers in creating their self-image. Consequently, consumers engage in the process of identity formation and constructing their self-image based on the symbolic properties of the endorsed product or service. By admiring celebrities that excels in the construction of their image, consumers seeks to copy this process by integrating these meanings into their own self-concept (McCracken, 1989) (Edrogon, 1999, p. 307).

Ultimately, the model functions as a framework for comprehending the dynamics of celebrity endorsements, as well as how they contribute to shaping consumers behaviors and perceptions in the marketplace (McCracken, 1989; Edrogon, 1999).

3.3 Goal and Future trends

Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) elucidate that the overall purpose of the celebrity endorsement strategy is to add value to a product or service offering as well as for brand image. With value, Mitra (2023) specifically says the aim of the endorsements is to influence sales positively, and the endorsements task is to influence consumers purchase decision. Comprehensively, according to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorsement truly succeeds “when an association is fashioned between the cultural meanings of the celebrity world, on the one hand, and the endorsed product, on the other” (p. 313).

These statements are further proving as research shows that consumers are more likely to buy products what has been promoted and endorsed by a known celebrity (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This is further confirmed, as Mitra (2023) adds that research shows sale being positively influenced when products are endorsed by celebrities. Accordingly, it is also an example of the work of the Halo Effect Theory (Thorndike, 1920; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Hence, the influence of celebrities on company's consumers decisions is a critical topic in effective modern-day marketing (Moraes et al., 2019).

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the intricate world of high-profile endorsements as a powerful marketing technique, elucidating their role in shaping consumer behavior and brand perception (McCracken, 1989; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). By exploring definitions, market trends, and theoretical frameworks, we have comprehensively understood the complexities and nuances involved in celebrity marketing. As we transition into the empirical methodology phase, armed with these insights, we are better equipped to investigate how high-profile endorsements amplify experiential marketing initiatives, thus addressing our research question with empirical depth.

Part 11 – Empirical Methodology

Chapter 4 - Descriptive Memory

During my internship experience at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, the theory developed in the theoretical framework met practice within the dynamic landscape of experiential marketing and its belonging strategies. Here, I engaged in various activities and projects, from conceptualization and planning to implementation of final projects, each contributing to a deeper understanding of experience-based communication. This broadened my perspective and sharpened my practical skills, generating valuable insights into the ever-evolving marketing industry. Further, in this chapter, I will present my internship organization and role as an intern, including my main areas of responsibility, and share my main conclusions of the internship experience and how it contributes to the subject under research.

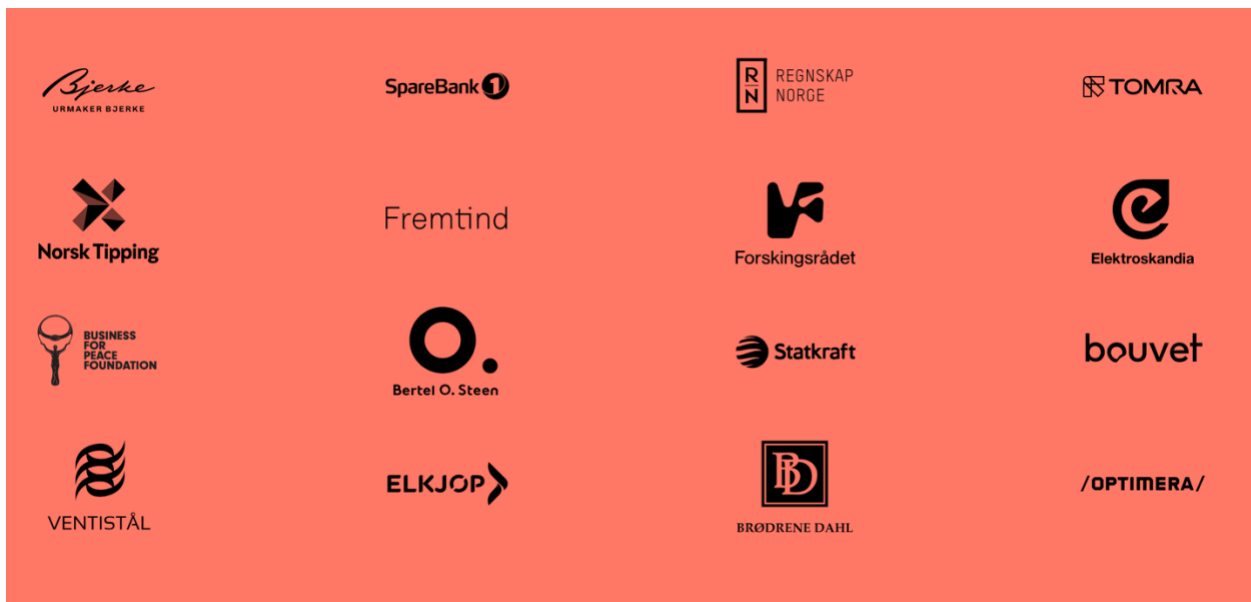
4.1 Internship organization

Kite is a full-house communication and events agency located in Oslo, Norway. The agency delivers a variety of internal and external events, including conferences, fairs, brand-building experience arenas, digital events, public events, travel, counseling, content production, and brand activation. The agency offers physical, hybrid, and digital options for projects in the private and public sectors, with medium and large clients predominantly in the Norwegian market.

Kite Kommunikasjon og Event was founded in 2017 by five entrepreneurs with varied experience in experience-based communication and events. This group brought a diverse background with different knowledge, experiences, and customer bases. Over the years, Kite has gradually grown, and the company has experienced positive development with multiple regular clients. Through these years, Kite has grown into a team of 22 employees and established itself as a trusted player in the industry. However, in April 2024, Kite Kommunikasjon og event became a part of DSD Explore and teamed up with Z Event Gruppen to further strengthen its role in the Norwegian events industry. The merged entity, now called Z Event, will continue building on shared values characterized by teamwork and passion for the profession. Customer proximity, tailored concepts, and high quality will remain focus areas of the merged entity (DSD Explore, 2024). However, the following descriptive narrative and the overall report will consider only Kite Kommunikasjon og Event as an organization.

With 22 employees across three departments: operations, client advising, and creative, the company operates as a 360-degree agency specializing in planning and organizing various events. It collaborates closely with clients in the Norwegian market to understand their needs and objectives, thereby establishing the project's ultimate purpose, target audience, and budget. Kite primarily focuses on marketing purposive and employer branding purposive projects; each project is unique and tailored to the client's objectives. Accordingly, the agency always strives to create memorable experiences, no matter the scale of the project, that resonate with the targeted audience and have, therefore, become a trusted partner in experience-based communication and events.

As illustrated in Figure 5, Kite Kommunikasjon og Event's client's range through diverse industries, from tech and consultancy firms such as Bouvet and RSM to firms in the construction sector such as Venstistål and Opimera, as well as multinational corporations, government agencies, and monopolies like Vinmonopolet for alcohol distribution. Their client portfolio reflects the agency's versatility and expertise in tailoring experiential communication strategies to various sectors.



Source: Kite Kommunikasjon og Event

Fig. 5 – This figure illustrates some of Kite Kommunikasjon og Event's clients.

At Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, client satisfaction is principal, which is how they continue to keep their same clients year after year. From brainstorming sessions and conceptualization to the final execution of the campaign or project, every aspect is carefully considered to align with the client's goals and vision. This encompasses, among other things, choosing the perfect venue, crafting entertainment offers, and orchestrating all logistics so that the execution runs seamlessly. Appropriately, the Kite Kommunikasjon og Event team is highly dedicated and committed to all elements encompassing a project, in which each detail and aspect is carefully assessed from various perspectives. This proves that the agency's team and professional culture hold a collaborative spirit, where all individuals and positions get to contribute with their expertise.

4.2 Mission, Vision & Values

Kite Kommunikasjon og Event states that physical meeting places and in-person experiences are the most critical and vital tools for building culture, creating commitment, influencing attitudes, and moving decisions. Accordingly, the agency proposes experience-based communication as something the consumers cannot scroll past, nor something they cannot skip, as opposed to digital campaigns.

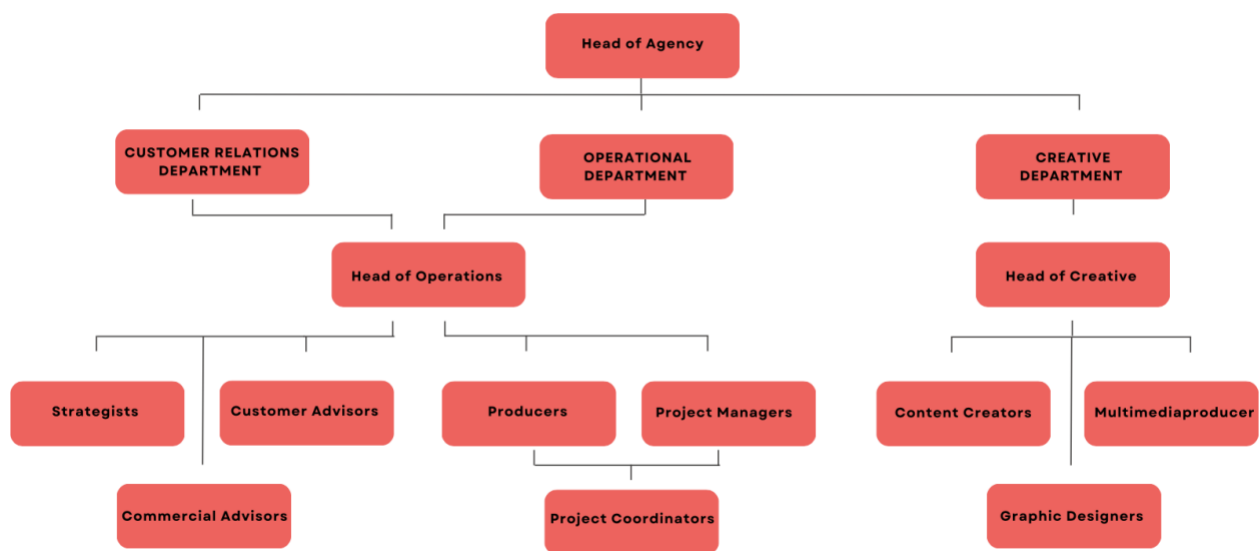
Kite's vision is "skape opplevelser som bidrar til å forandre verden" directly translated to "create experiences that help change the world". This concern develops communication arenas with a global perspective and helps influence their clients individually. Kite further mentions this as a challenging vision; however, it obliges the employees to keep sharp. The agency further describes the vision as ambitious and binding. It demands that the overall agency focus on developing innovative solutions for all their productions and live up to this in collaboration with their customers and partners.

Furthermore, for Kite Kommunikasjon og Event to reflect on its vision, the agency has developed four values that translate into active actions. The values are Competence, Inspiring, Attention, and Genuine. Correspondingly, this is how Kite creates solutions for planning and implementing events and experience arenas based on innovative and sustainable principles.

- (1) *Competent*: Knowledge of environmental consequences and sustainable solutions within their professional fields and solutions.
- (2) *Inspiring*: Ability to challenge and inspire their employees, customers, and suppliers to find new sustainable solutions.
- (3) *Attention*: Ensure that all components and actors deliver according to the company's environmental policy, including close follow-up of all subcontractors.
- (4) *Genuine*: Heartfelt desire to create value for customers and society. Ability to put their business and work in a larger context.

4.3 Organizational Structure

The agency is structured into three departments, as illustrated on the organizational structure in Figure 6. The CEO is the overall leader across all three departments. Two key positions support the CEO: The Head of Operations, responsible for overseeing the operations and customer relations department, and the Head of Creative, leading the creative department.



Source: Model created by author, drawing inspiration from Kite Kommunikasjon og Event

Fig. 6 - This figure illustrates the organizational structure of the Kite team.

This organizational setup ensures a clear structure with accountability within each department. However, it is essential to mention that certain positions are fluid, as they concern tasks across the three departments. The operations department contains project managers and technical producers who oversee the project coordinators. The customer relations department contains customer and commercial advisors and strategists who have direct contact with the clients, its objectives, and the essential work of relationship building. The creative department contains multimedia producers and content creators, including film, photography, and graphic design.

4.4 Product & Work process

To further understand how the agency works towards creating its experiential marketing initiatives, we will examine its product and work process. Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, across the agency's departments, handles all logistical aspects of the particular event; this includes venue selection, catering, entertainment and other audiovisual production, booking, transportation, invitations and registrations, and other requirements for the project. Additionally, Kite can help manage marketing and promotion efforts for specific clients by developing and utilizing specific strategies like campaigns and sponsor outreaches.

Moreover, the agency oversees all operations on the event day to ensure a smooth execution. This includes coordinating all vendors booked, including catering, production team, collaborators, ambassadors, entertainment, and presenters. Also, after the event, the agency operates with post-production work such as evaluation, both internally in the agency and externally with the spokespersons for the client for the specific project. This involves evaluation and gathering feedback to improve eventual future projects. As suggested in Table 6, they reach their final product by dividing their work process into eight steps. Each step represents a crucial stage in the event planning process, ensuring a systematic approach from inception to evaluation.

Steps:	Description:
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Identify team	Assembling the correct team specifically chosen and necessary for the project. Kite divides the teams into 3, as seen in table 2.
Start-meeting/brief	An introduction meeting to discuss client and project objectives, scope, and other requirements.
Research and insight	Conduct research, gather insights that align with the client's objectives, and understand the targeted audience and market trends.
Idea and concept development	Develop creative concepts and brainstorm ideas aligned with the project's requirements and objectives.
Project, budget and progress	Establish timelines, budgets, and weekly meetings, both internal and with clients, to track progress throughout the process.
Planning phase	Develop a detailed process plan covering critical factors such as logistics, marketing, vendors, booking, and other essential aspects.
Execution	Execution of the event, being on-site to coordinate all activities and vendors, and ensuring an overall smooth operation.
Evaluation	Evaluate the event's success and gather feedback for improvements of future events.

Source: Table created by the author, drawing inspiration from Kite Kommunikasjon og Event.

Tab. 6 – This table illustrates the work process of an already established project.

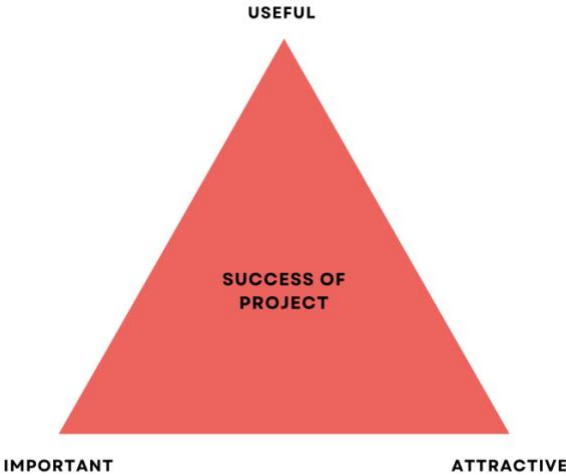
The first step of the work process, illustrated in Table 6, is assembling the team. At Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, they divide into three primary teams concerning one project: a core team, a resource team, and a content team. Each team plays a crucial role in the various aspects of the project planning and execution, all contributing to a seamless delivery. The various teams, including their positions and key responsibilities, are outlined below in Table 7.

Team:	Roles:	Description:
Core team	Customer advisor, producer, project manager	Responsible for the overall strategic planning, decision-making, and project management
Resource team	Commercial advisor, Strategy, creative	Provide support in logistics, strategy, coordinating, and help in managing event resources.
Content	Multimedia producer, graphic designer, content creator	Responsible for conceptualization and creates content for the event, including presentations, entertainment, design elements, themes.

Source: Table created by the author, drawing inspiration from Kite Kommunikasjon og Event.

Tab. 7 - This table illustrates the different teams on a specific Kite project.

Ultimately, the agency is responsible for orchestrating every aspect of an event to deliver a successful and memorable experience for its clients and consumers. Correspondingly, to understand what a successful project is, Kite divides its ultimate goal into three categories: useful, attractive, and important, as illustrated in Figure 7.



Source: Figure created by author, drawing inspiration from Kite Kommunikasjon og Event

Fig. 7 – This figure illustrates the success of projects for the Kite organization.

(1) Useful:

The agency wants to promote inspiration, knowledge, and skills that the consumers of the event can establish in their everyday lives and work situations. This includes promoting new formats and perspectives that attendees would not expect. The project should also create new and strengthened relationships with brands from which the consumer should benefit and bring pleasure as either an employee through employer branding or as a consumer through brand activation.

(2) Attractive:

Kite wants to promote good experiences that will be strengthened by the ability to share them with others. The project should be made with high quality and precision on all terms from the invitation, registration, and departure, with experiences, memories, and perceptions that will last a long time.

(3) Important:

Kite wants to create events where the attendees feel that they could take advantage of this. The attendees should also feel the importance of the project and that it is decisive for the consumer to be present in an area where brand relationships are formed and strengthened.

Appropriately, in assessing the agency's projects' effectiveness, they use a structured approach that each aspect should portray a mix of inspiration, memorable engagements, and improving brand connections. Following these principles through every project's work process, Kite Kommunikasjon og Event can consistently deliver events and brand experiences that impact its stakeholders, consumers, and participants.

4.5 The Intern`s role in the organization

Over to how I contributed to Kite Kommunikasjon og Event's projects. Reflecting on the team's need for versatile assistance and coordination in projects and searching for an individual willing to learn more about the events industry, my role was initially tasked with supporting various departments to get the most out of my internship. This included assessing projects and elements

in the operations, creative, and customer relations departments. However, as my role evolved, I became more established in specific projects, helping out the project managers as a project coordinator. This included a variety of administrative and practical tasks in the pre-planning process, as well as on-site during the final execution. Accordingly, during the internship, I was primarily situated within the operation department, participating in weekly meetings with the department's project managers and producers. My role was reporting directly to the Head of Operations, Mark Olman.

4.6 Description of Internship Activities

The internship was carried out in Kite Kommunikasjon & Event, with the duration of four months – from 15 August 2023 to 15 December 2023 – and the schedule was between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., including some evening and weekend work. The internship enabled me to practice the knowledge acquired during the master's degree and apply it to actual work contexts. My main job was as an events coordinator in the operations department; however, I also contributed to tasks related to the other departments. Additionally, I worked as a crew under our events to get hands-on experience in the events industry.

My work was based on various administrative and practical tasks throughout my internship. This has gained insights into the dynamics of working within a marketing and communication agency. During the first month of my internship, I received complete guidance across all departments, providing me with an understanding of the agency's overall operations and collaborative efforts across teams and departments. With a steep learning curve, I was already thrown into a specific project within the first week, where I was assigned various tasks and responsibilities. This was a marketing stunt for VY, The Norwegian train system. Here, I had full crew responsibility and responsibility for the on-site execution. The stunt included a pop-up stand offering free coffee sampling at train stations across the Oslo region, as seen in the Figure 8. This was the first time during my internship period that I witnessed the positive and tangible impact of experience-based marketing initiatives. This hands-on experience showcased the essentialism of real-life interactions in engaging consumers and fostering positive brand associations.



Source: Author

Fig. 8 – This figure illustrates the agency’s marketing stunt done for VY.

Furthermore, during the first month of my internship, the agency was to hold a large-scale event set to host around 500 participants for an entire weekend. As I started in August, and the event was planned for months as it demands significant attention to planning and logistics, I was not a significant part of the pre-planning. However, I was actively involved as a crew member in the on-site execution. This was the first time during my internship that I observed firsthand the role of high-profile figures, mainly in this context through entertainment, and how it is evident in the participation engagement levels. This exposure sparked my interest in the topic, as I understood its relevance within the field of experiential communication initiatives.

Following the initial projects at the beginning of my internship, I was assigned various strategic tasks, including researching to support the customer advisors in pitching potential new clients. Contributing to pitching processes for new clients is a significant part of multiple positions in an agency, and it is a highly detailed procedure, as you are supposed to conceptualize a whole project, including all elements considered. The most memorable task involved conducting research for a prospective client, Vinmonopolet, which is the Norwegian monopoly on alcohol sales. This resulted in Kite Kommunikasjon og Event winning the pitch and securing a four-year

contract with the company. While I did not directly participate in the pitch with any clients, I participated in several conceptualization presentations, and the experience provided me with valuable insights into how agencies acquire new customers and how much attention to detail is considered in securing new business opportunities.

Furthermore, I engaged in meetings across different projects, from client interactions to internal brainstorming sessions and evaluations. I specifically enjoyed my involvement in creative meetings, where the foundations for each project's features and campaigns were established, aiming to develop innovative brand experiences. I especially found the discussions regarding selecting high-profile individuals as brand ambassadors for marketing efforts and entertainment fascinating. Here, I witnessed the strategic importance of selecting the correct profiles and personalities that reflect the overall theme of the project as well as align with the client's objectives. To provide an example, a campaign that captivated my attention was participating in a marketing stunt for Netflix Nordic, to promote a new season of *The Crown*. I was especially intrigued by the significant impact the marketing stunt had on social media, as high-profile figures, including some of the show's stars, attended the premiere event at the Norwegian Opera House in Oslo.

Ultimately, the internship contained administrative, strategic, practical, and creative tasks. My primary responsibilities included assisting in planning, various administrative tasks, client communication, commercial tasks, crew management, on-site support, invitation and registration, organization and systematization of online platforms, research of potential clients, research and presentation development for pitches for new clients, contact with vendors and partners and being part of the creative meetings for idea development across all stages of the event.

Based on these experiences, during the last week of my Internship at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, I conducted a final presentation for the team. Here, I shared my opinions and insights into the overall experience working for the agency, highlighted vital moments, and discussed the specific abilities and skills I have developed. The opinions shared are further developed in the next sub-chapter, which contains the main conclusions of the internship experience

4.7 Main Conclusions of the Internship Experience

My internship journey at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event has been prominent. Over four months, I have had a steep learning curve, being introduced to the dynamic landscape of experience-based communication and the world of events. I, therefore, reflect upon various learnings, experiences, and memorable moments that shaped my time at the agency.

Throughout my internship, I have developed a broad range of skills and abilities that have increased my professional work structure and prepared me for future possibilities in the world of experience-based communication and marketing. Based on my role as a coordinator and from assisting in the planning and execution of middle-to-large-scale experiential projects, I have learned to navigate logistical challenges with adaptability and precision. Based on this, I have learned to thrive in fast-paced environments. Additionally, my internship provided me with multiple opportunities to enhance my communication skills, both externally with clients and internally within the departments. From articulating ideas and objectives during client interactions to brainstorming ideas with my colleagues, I have learned to word myself more cohesively. Additionally, strategic and detailed thinking skills have been developed, especially in pitching and conceptualizing projects. Overall, the internship equipped me with relevant abilities that I think will be necessary to excel in experiential communication and marketing.

Several moments stand out as specifically memorable when reflecting on my period at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event. One of the most exciting parts was comprehending all aspects commonly resulting in the final result. I was fascinated by seeing all the different teams work together and collaborate toward a common goal and the interplay across the departments. Additionally, contributing to successful sales pitches stands out as a significant achievement, as it challenged my strategic thinking and allowed me to collaborate across teams in the agency. These experiences also fueled my passion for experiential marketing initiatives. However, the most exciting moment during my time at the agency was to participate in all the projects held by the agency during my time there.

Another part I found explicitly interesting was how the agency adapted particular communication and marketing strategies to their projects to ensure further success and create engagement among

the participants and consumers. Accordingly, I have learned to understand the critical role that strategic adjustments play in generating impactful experiences and campaigns. Appropriately, this is also the reason for the subject under scrutiny in this internship report, as the strategy of utilizing high-profile figures in marketing initiatives intrigued me. By exploring this strategy further, I aim to uncover a deeper understanding of these high-profile figures' role in enhancing this brand connection and how they promote consumer engagement.

As I have been immersed in several projects and collaborated with various professionals in different positions, I have tried to comprehend the connection between academic concepts adapted through my master's degree and real-world practical challenges in an experiential marketing agency. These shared experiences are valuable as they serve as a foundation as we now transition into the study's methodology.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

The following chapter will outline the research methodology employed in this study and detail the methodological procedures used to investigate the role of high-profile endorsements in experiential marketing campaigns. Accordingly, the following sub-chapters will describe the methodology, participant selection, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques.

5.1 Study's Relevance

This study aims to illuminate the influential power of high-profile figures in driving successful experiential marketing initiatives. This topic is not only interesting but crucial for understanding the role of strategic partnerships in the experiential marketing market. By examining the dynamics of high-profile endorsements, we aim to uncover their potential to increase the efficiency and visibility of experiential marketing campaigns.

Drawing from my internship experience at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, this research subject resonates profoundly as it mirrors the agency's communication strategies. More specifically, the internship provided me with firsthand involvement in the area of event planning and execution, including a variety of communication and marketing strategies to promote brands in the form of marketing and employer branding. Especially, I observed the significant role of high-profile endorsements and collaborations through entertainment, promotional reasons, lectures, hosts, and marketing, aiming to enhance specific experiential initiatives' success. I have witnessed how events featuring high-profile appearances and partnerships have increased attention and attendance and generated offline and online buzz. This ultimately sparked my curiosity concerning the mechanisms and role of these endorsements within experiential marketing.

By investigating this topic, I aim to understand how leveraging high-profile figures strategically elevates experiential marketing initiatives, with a perspective from my own practical experiences and observations during my internship experience, and I hope to contribute with valuable insights to the field.

5.2 Chosen Methodology:

To further investigate how high-profile endorsements function within experiential marketing campaigns, this study will employ a qualitative methodology. This approach allows for deeper exploring within the topic and can provide more detailed insight, and careful description of situations, people, events, interactions and observed behaviors (Patton, 1987; Creswell, 2009). Additionally, as previously mentioned, not much scientific work is conducted on the research topic, therefore a qualitative approach is important to develop new concepts and shed light on unknown mechanisms, making it ideal for an exploratory analysis (Gerring, 2017).

To achieve this, semi-structured open-ended interviews will be conducted, as the discussions will pertain to various aspects of the descriptive research question (Gerring, 2017). Additionally, this format allows participants to freely express their thoughts and opinions, contributing to a richer understanding of the research objectives (Creswell, 2009). By embracing semi-structured interviews, I anticipate more nuanced insights that align with the goals of this paper (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Further, these interviews will be conducted digitally via Teams Video Chat, given that the selected participants are based in Oslo, Norway. Despite the digital format, creating a neutral and comfortable environment is paramount, as it fosters authenticity, as highlighted by Creswell (2009). A relaxed atmosphere encourages interviewees to express both positive and negative perspectives, essential for comprehensive exploration (Creswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Specifically, the interviews will be conducted with nine individuals from Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, spanning across the three departments. This allows me to, as proposed by Gerring (2017) "... incorporate a wide variety of clues drawn from different sources and addressing different aspects of a problem" (p. 19). This diverse sample includes employees from operations, customer relations, and the creative department. The positions represented within the sample encompass a range of roles, including Head of Operations, Head of Creative, producers, project managers, strategists, and client advisors. This diversity ensures a comprehensive exploration of perspectives within the agency, as illustrated in the Table 8.

Department	Participant	Position
Operations Department	Participant #1 Sofie Persson	Project Manager – my primary responsibility is overseeing the events I manage. This involves setting up and managing the budget, handling customer interactions, and overseeing our internal processes for planning, executing, and invoicing events. Additionally, I am primarily responsible for participant management, including registration and payment processes.
	Participant #2 Martine Linge	Project Coordinator – My role is mostly related to helping the project managers, as well as the other departments. This includes research, crew and participant management, as well as booking vendors, artists and other components to the project.
Clients Relations Department	Participant #3 Mark Olman	Head of Operations – My role functions as the leader for producers, project managers, the project coordinator, and the customer advisors. I therefore act as the manager of the entire production department, and have the overall responsibility for all our projects.
	Participant #4 Torunn Vigmostad Steinhaus	Senior Client Advisor – I play a central role in safeguarding and developing relationships with existing and new customers. My job involves a combination of consulting and sales, where I focus on understanding the customers'

		needs and offering tailored solutions according to their special requirements.
Creative Department	Participant #5 Bjarne Berger	Strategic Commercial Advisor– I am a hired as a strategic commercial advisor with tasks related to business development and larger tender projects.
	Participant #6 Eirik Andersen	Head of Creative – My role encompasses being a creator, creative concept developer, content developer, and copywriter. I also have overall responsibility for managing our websites and social media, including decisions about what content will be published and when.

Source: Table created by the author

Tab. 8 - This table illustrates the departments that were interviewed, including the interviewee’s name, date of the interview, and their job role description.

These interviewees were chosen based on purposive sampling, where the following criteria were taken into consideration:

- (1) *Project Manager:* As the project managers are responsible for the overall coordination of the elements in an experiential marketing campaign, their input is valuable for comprehending how high-profile endorsements are integrated into the overall project plan and can shed light on how these campaigns impacts various essential factors.
- (2) *Project Coordinator:* With supporting the project managers and being an extended resource across all departments, the project coordinator help with ensuring a seamless collaboration and integration across all aspects of a project. Their perspective is therefore crucial as they can offer views and opinions of how high-profile endorsements influence the overall project execution.

- (3) *Client Advisors*: Client Advisors act as liaisons between the agency and its clients, and therefore can provide valuable input for comprehending how high-profile endorsements and collaborations are perceived by clients, their expectations and preferences, and how they influence client decision-making processes.
- (4) *Head of Operations*: With overseeing the overall agency's projects, across the project and customer relations departments, their perspective is essential in understanding how high-profile endorsements impact the overall operational aspects of the experiential marketing campaigns.
- (5) *Commercial Strategist*: By developing strategies that guide the planning and execution of marketing campaigns reaching their objectives, this will provide insights in how high-profile endorsements align with the agencies and clients marketing strategies, offering insights into the strategic rationale behind selecting specific high-profile figures and how these collaborations contribute to campaign objectives.
- (6) *Head of Creative*: With Overseeing the conceptualization of creative elements within marketing campaigns, it can provide insights into how high-profile endorsements and collaborations are integrated into the creative process, offering perspectives within engagement, storytelling, and provoking emotions.

Despite the small sample, the interviewees cover diverse tasks that collectively work toward a common goal. Therefore, I considered it necessary to capture the various perspectives and viewpoint of the subject under investigation.

5.3 The Researcher's Role

As the primary researcher for this study, my role encompasses a variety of responsibilities. Firstly, concerning the study's design, my role involved conceptualizing and designing the overall study, including outlining the research question, objectives, and scope and choosing the most suitable methodological approach. Appropriately, a qualitative methodology was chosen; more

specifically, in-depth interviews with structured and open-ended questions were selected as the most suitable approach for gaining the most insightful opinions and perspectives on the subject matter (Creswell, 2009). Concerning participant selection, in collaboration with the most relevant stakeholders within the organization, we identified and selected the most suitable participants across positions in the agency. The selection criteria included individuals who are directly involved in experiential marketing campaigns; however, those who work in different positions in order to get a broad comprehension of the topic, as illustrated in Table 8.

Concerning data collection, I functioned as the interviewer, conducting in-depth interviews with the identified participants. These interviews were all structured to explore various and detailed opinions, narratives, and experiences related to the research objective and the overall utilization of high-profile figures in experiential marketing campaigns. Additionally, I utilized an open-ended approach to the questions as it encouraged the informants to express their views of the subject matter more freely and provided more nuanced insights (Creswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Following the data collection, I analyzed the interview transcripts in depth. By utilizing a thematic analysis, I worked to identify recurring themes, patterns, and connections with the data collected. Appropriately, my role during the data analysis primarily involved categorizing, coding, and interpreting the data to culminate meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, based on these drawn conclusions, I interpreted the findings concerning my identified research objectives and the developed theory on experiential marketing and high-profile endorsements as proposed in the theoretical framework. Appropriately, through a detailed and careful consideration of my informant's perspectives and the contextual factors identified, I developed insights into the role of high-profile endorsements in amplifying the reach and success of experiential marketing campaigns.

Nevertheless, throughout the research process, I have been aware of potential biases and preconceptions. The research explores the role of high-profile endorsements in amplifying the reach and success of experiential marketing campaigns. However, it disregards the identified limitations such as (1) potential biases due to the researcher's internship position, as I may

influence participants' responses by providing favorable or expected answers, (2) overlooking potential perspectives from external stakeholders such as partners, clients and other industry professionals, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings, and (3) the participant selection process may introduce biases based on factors such as accessibility and availability, potentially skewing the representation of certain viewpoints within the organization. However, the following steps were taken to manage these biases: (1) adopting a neutral stance throughout the overall research process, refraining from imposing my own viewpoints and leading questions, (2) developing tailored questions that aimed at looking at clients and consumers perspectives regarding their perceptions concerning the subject matter, and (3) worked together with my supervisor on accessibility of participants and employing a purposive sampling technique to ensure a full representation within the organization.

Ethical guidelines were considered throughout the complete research process to ensure transparency and fairness. This encompassed conducting my interviews with honesty and integrity, treating all information shared in confidence with strict confidentiality, and adhering to any research activities regulations. Accordingly, by implementing these strategies, I aimed to minimize potential biases and promote the reliability and validity of my research findings, ultimately ensuring that my research remained unbiased and thorough.

5.4 Data Collection Procedures

As Creswell (2009) proposes, qualitative research is chosen as it allows for a thorough exploration of individuals' perspectives, experiences, and behaviors, ultimately offering a holistic understanding of the subject matter. Accordingly, this resonates well with my topic under research as I am investigating perspectives and opinions across different departments and positions of my internship organization, as illustrated in Figure 8.

The interview was one-on-one and was held remotely on Teams as the interviewee lives and works in Oslo, Norway. Accordingly, the interviews were held in Norwegian, as the spoken languages of the informants are Norwegian and Swedish, and the respondents were interviewed in either their office or their home. To make the respondents feel more comfortable, a conversational and friendly approach was used to foster a more relaxed atmosphere, which allowed for a more candid and open

dialogue (Creswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The interviews were recorded, then transcribed, and later translated from Norwegian and Swedish to English.

To further explain the methodological approach and ensure a comprehensive coverage of the four identified research objectives, I have developed a structured table concerning each objective alongside with the theoretical insights gathered through the three chapters of the theoretical framework. Based on this, a set of targeted questions have been formulated to the informants, generating a more detailed understanding of the objective's topics under scrutiny. Nevertheless, five questions are identified to provide a consistent framework for exploring diverse perspectives and strategies across the agency, and will be asked to all informants:

1. Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?
2. How would you explain the term "Experience economy" in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?
3. What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today's market?
4. What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?
5. What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

These questions are identified as they serve as a foundational framework for the interview discussions, providing opinions and insights into the various roles, perceptions, and strategies employed by the various informants, all immersed in experiential marketing. Through these questions, I aim to explore diverse perspectives and best practices in consumer engagement and brand experiences. These questions will be asked to all informants as it is general and broad questions, however reasonably relevant to the identified research objectives, and each informant brings a unique perspective shaped by their position in the agency, their experiences, and expertise within experiential marketing, enriching the understanding of the interplay between marketing, communication, and consumer behavior.

Further, to address each research objective effectively, questions have been detailed and tailored to gather relevant insights. Accordingly, the table below outlines the four objectives, accompanied by the key takeaways from the theoretical framework and corresponding questions designed for specific departments to explore the informant's viewpoints. This will help the study to generate a well-rounded comprehension of the subject, as it enriches the depth of the study and provides a multifaceted perspective (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Objective	Takeaways from Theoretical Framework	Questions	Department
<p>Understand the role of experiential communication as a marketing strategy</p>	<p>Traditional marketing strategies are no longer sufficient in the modern market, necessitating a shift towards marketing-to-consumer experiences (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018).</p>	<p>What do you think are the main advantages of using experiential communication compared to more traditional marketing methods?</p>	<p>Operations Department</p>
	<p>Experiences have emerged as valuable tools in generating new value in marketing operations, engaging individuals in memorable ways (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Pine & Gilmore, 2019).</p>	<p>How do you identify and align the client's goals with experiential communication strategies to ensure mutual success?</p> <p>How do you ensure that experience-based communication projects effectively reach their intended target audience?</p>	<p>Client Relations Department</p>
	<p>Creating successful experiences requires a combination of creativity, strategic implementation, and understanding of consumer behavior (Schmitt, 1999; Smith & Hanover, 2016; Pine, 2022).</p>	<p>How do you balance creativity with a practical approach in the conceptualization of experience-based communication projects?</p> <p>Can you provide any examples of successful projects where creativity played a decisive role in capturing the attention and commitment of participants?</p> <p>How do you think experiential communication will develop in the</p>	<p>Creative Department</p>

		future, and which trends do you see as most influential?	
Identify consumer perceptions of experiential marketing	Consumers are increasingly seeking meaningful and memorable experiences from brands rather than just information about product features and benefits (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Smilansky, 2018; Eventmarketer, 2018).	What feelings or experiences do you think are most common among participants who take part in experience-based projects, and why do you think these feelings arise?	Operations Department
	Experiential marketing allows consumers to interact with brands in ways that feel personal and immersive, capturing their attention and fostering a sense of loyalty (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2013; Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018; Pine 2022).	How can negative experiences or failed experience-based projects affect consumers' perception of a brand? How do you measure the effectiveness and success of experiential communication initiatives?	
	By focusing on creating enjoyable and memorable experiences, brands can	How do you experience the participants' perceptions of experience-based communication? How do you think consumers generally respond to experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing?	Client Relations Department

	<p>enhance their relationship with consumers and stand out in a crowded marketplace (Smith & Hanover, 2016; Smilansky, 2018; Chakraborty & Biswal, 2024).</p>	<p>What strategies do you employ to ensure that experiential marketing experiences evoke emotions and create lasting memories for participants?</p> <p>How do you think consumers rate the value of experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing, such as television advertising or online advertising?</p>	<p>Creative Department</p>
<p>Analyze the impact of high-profile endorsements on brand value and consumer loyalty</p>	<p>Celebrity endorsements significantly influence consumer behavior and marketing strategies, contributing to the enhancement of brand value and consumer loyalty (Edrogan, 1999; Mitra, 2023).</p>	<p>What strategies do you use to utilize the influence of high-profile people to create memorable experiences for the participants?</p> <p>How can negative events involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand equity and consumer loyalty of a brand?</p>	<p>Operations Department</p>

	<p>The rising prominence of celebrity marketing underscores its importance as a key tool for brands to establish meaningful connections with consumers, highlighting its impact on brand value and consumer loyalty (McCracken, 1987, Mukherjee, 2009, Bakker, 2018).</p>	<p>How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it becomes associated with a famous personality?</p> <p>How do you guide your clients in choosing high-profile profiles for projects, so that it matches their brand values and target group?</p> <p>How can negative events or controversies involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand value and consumer loyalty of a brand?</p>	<p>Client Relations Department</p>
	<p>Celebrity endorsements are highly effective in brand communication, extending beyond traditional advertising and encompassing various forms of communication, thereby enhancing brand visibility and consumer engagement (Mukherjee, 2009; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Mitra, 2023).</p>	<p>How does the relevance between the profile's personal brand and the project's concept affect the effect of the finished product?</p> <p>How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it is associated with a well-known personality through experiential communication initiatives?</p>	<p>Creative Department</p>

Identification of success factors in high-profile experiential marketing campaigns	<p>To capitalize on the potential benefits of celebrity endorsements and mitigate risks, companies must navigate the dynamics of celebrity culture and consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for strategic selection and creative utilization of celebrity endorsements (Edrogan, 1999; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).</p> <p>Limited scientific research has been conducted on the topic of endorsements within experiential marketing campaigns, indicating a gap in scholarly literature in this area.</p>	<p>What do you think is the most important factor influencing the success of a high-profile collaboration, and how can brands optimize this factor in their strategies?</p> <p>How can brands evaluate and analyze feedback and insights from participants to continuously improve and optimize high-profile collaborations?</p>	<p>Operations Department</p>
		<p>How can brands ensure that a high-profile collaboration fits into the overall brand strategy and tone of the company's communications?</p> <p>Can you give examples of situations where a high-profile collaboration has failed to deliver the desired effect, and what can we learn from these experiences?</p>	<p>Client Relations Department</p>
		<p>How do you handle the risks associated with the implementation of experience-based projects, especially with regard to potential negative reactions?</p>	<p>Creative Department</p>

Source: Table created by the author

Tab. 9 – This table illustrates the objective-specific structure of the data collection, including each research objective, key takeaways from the theoretical framework, aligning with questions to each of the three departments.

Accordingly, by using this structured table as a data collection instrument, the researcher will systematically align the research objective and theoretical framework, which enhances the coherence and depth of the data collection process. This will enable the researcher to capture diverse insights and perspectives from various stakeholders, enriching the analytical framework. Ultimately, this holistic approach enhances the credibility and reliability of the research findings, empowering the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and contribute valuable insights to the field of study.

5.5 Data Recording Procedures

The nine interviews that were specifically tailored to the three different departments: operations, creative, and customer advisor. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed. Additionally, as Creswell (2009) suggested, notes were taken during the interview in case the recording equipment failed. Further, the interviews followed a specific protocol, as proposed by Creswell (2009). The suggested protocol relevant to my research included the following regulations (Creswell, 2009):

- A heading, including the date and place, and well as the names of the interviewer and the interviewee
- Instructions for the interviewer to reassure standard procedures for each interview
- Have space between each question in order to record responses
- A final thank-you statement to acknowledge the interviewees time spent

Further, regarding the questions, the interview is separated into two parts—the first is a broader approach to the experience economy and experiential marketing. The second part concerns the topic of high-profile endorsements and their use in experiential marketing initiatives. The questions are formulated so that the informants can share their experiences and opinions and point to real-life examples to further strengthen their answers.

However, as certain positions within the agency intersect with multiple departments, their roles fluidly align with the tasks and responsibilities of other departments. Accordingly, I have provided the interview sample that aligns most closely with each informant’s primary responsibilities, prioritizing relevance over the department organization. To illustrate this interconnectivity within the interview sample, the table below outlines each informant’s position and the relevant interview sample associated with their role.

Informant	Position	Given Interview Sample
#Informant 1 – Sofie Persson	Project Manager	Operations Department
#Informant 2 – Martine Linge	Project Coordinator	Operations Department
#Informant 3 – Mark Olman	Senior Customer Advisor	Customer Advisor Department
#Informant 4 – Torunn Vigmostad Steinhaus	Senior Customer Advisor	Customer Advisor Department
#Informant 5 – Eirik Moldal Andersen	Head of Creative	Creative Department
#Informant 5 – Bjarne Berger	Commercial Strategy Advisor	Creative Department

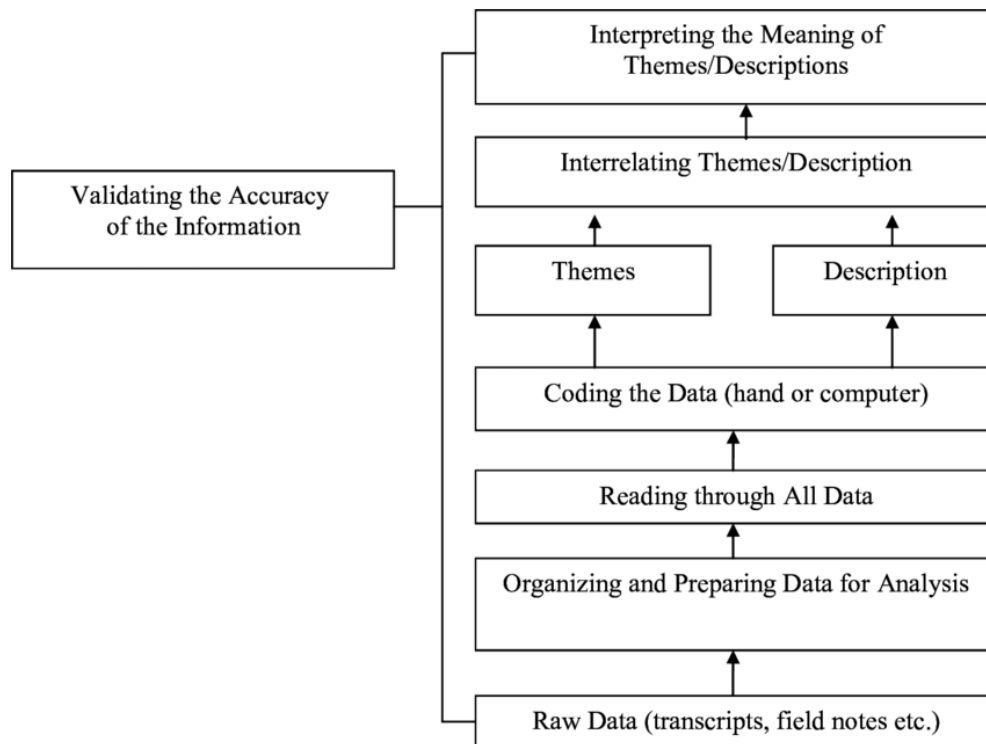
Source: Table created by the author

Tab. 10 – This table illustrates the informants, including its position, and which interview guide concerns to each.

5.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Qualitative data begins as raw and descriptive information, and data analysis process involves understanding and interpreting the data collected (Patton, 1987; Creswell, 2009). Appropriately,

“It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (...), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 184). To further comprehend how to fathom the data analysis process, I took advantage of the Data Analysis in Qualitative Research model, as illustrated in Figure 9, proposed by Creswell (2009). The Figure illustrates the data analysis in qualitative research, suggesting a hierarchical and linear approach with a bottom-to-the-top perspective (Creswell, 2009).



Source: Creswell, 2009

Fig. 9 – This figure illustrates the Data Analysis in Qualitative Research, suggesting a hierarchical and linear approach with a bottom-to-the-top perspective.

To provide a more structured explanation of the steps, I have organized the information proposed by Creswell (2009), in Table 11.

Steps:	Task:	Includes:
Step 1	Organize and prepare data	Transcribing interviews, scanning material, and arranging data
Step 2	Read through data	Obtain a general sense, and reflect on the information's overall meaning
Step 3	Begin coding process	Organize the information into segments of text before making meaning out of the material.
Step 4	Generate descriptions and categories	Utilize the coding to create a description of the setting, as well as themes or categories for analysis
Step 5	Advance representation	Advance how the themes, description and categories will be represented in the qualitative narrative
Step 6	Make interpretations	Make meaning and interpretation based on the data and its results

Source: Table created by author, inspired by Creswell, 2009

Tab. 11 – This table illustrates the six steps of data analysis in qualitative research as proposed by Creswell (2009).

Qualitative analysis requires considerably attention to detail and generating credible and useful evaluations through interviews requires discipline and structure (Patton, 1987). Ultimately, based on Table 11, inspired by Creswell (2009), the data analysis process will begin with organizing and preparing the data, including translating and transcribing the interviews and structuring all the information into a table. Next, a comprehensive data review is conducted to understand the overall meaning and assess the depth and tone of the information. This is followed by a detailed coding process, where the data collected are segmented into various categories, such as the informant's strategies, viewpoints, and opinions. The codes are then used to describe the context, forming a comprehensive analysis. The results are then presented in a qualitative narrative based on the

discussions, examples, and quotations. Finally, the analysis concludes with an interpretation of the material, reflecting on the insights gained from the research.

Furthermore, I have decided to divide the coding into four main themes, all aligning with the objectives, including (1) Role of Experiential Communication, (2) Impact of High-Profile Endorsements, (3) Consumer Perceptions and (4) Success Factors.

5.6.1 Theme 1 – Role of Experiential Communication

“In a complex world where access to information and facts and fake news is endless and easily accessible, we become more concerned with the stories, experiences and associations linked to the company, place or products”

- Informant #5

By exploring the theme and the role of experiential communication, the research delves deeper into the mechanisms of the topic, especially the influences on the marketing field and brand perceptions on how it drives engagement in ways other than traditional communication methods. These insights are all essential to identifying an effective marketing and communication strategy

Accordingly, based on the interviews, experiential communication refers to using experiences to promote a brand's message, product, or service. Unlike traditional marketing methods, experiential communication actively involves the audience, allowing them to engage with the brand more meaningful. According to the Operations Department, this approach aims to enhance customer interactions by providing physical, immersive experiences that offer a fresh perspective on a brand's products or services. The goal is, therefore, to create memorable, emotion-driven experiences that foster a stronger connection between the brand and its customers.

The term "Experience Economy," defined by the interviewees, refers to the growing importance of experiences as a force in business development. It emphasizes that consumers increasingly make decisions based on a product or brand's experiences and emotional impressions rather than just factual information. The customer department highlights that this shift in decision-making reflects

a broader change in how people interact with and perceive brands, in which Informant 3 specifically highlights that consumers are craving more. Experiences now play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior and brand perception, moving beyond traditional factors like product quality or price.

The impact of experiential communication in today's market is profound. As Informant 5 points out, consumers are inundated with digital content and traditional advertising, making it harder for brands to capture attention through conventional means. Experiential communication offers a solution by providing hands-on, sensory-rich experiences that create lasting impressions. In a world of digital distractions, experiential communication cuts through the noise by offering tangible and memorable brand interactions.

Informant 3 highlights that the traditional marketing landscape is declining, with advertising agencies facing layoffs. This shift is caused by conventional marketing often failing to leave a lasting impression. We see the ads, but they don't stay with us. Informant 4 proposed an example illustrating exactly this shift in market dynamics. When looking at the coffee industry and coffee shops in Norway, the consumer interactions has fully transformed. Rather than simply receiving a cup of coffee, customers now have the opportunity to fully engage their senses by observing, smelling, and experiencing the coffee-making process. This contrasts with the past when coffee was often served in a basic paper cup with minimal variety and little engagement. Today, the emphasis is on crafting an immersive, sensory-rich experience around the brand. Consequently, this emphasizes the power that lies in creating immersive experiences and emotional consequences.

In conclusion, the data collected suggests that experiential communication help reshapes the marketing landscape by prioritizing immersive, emotionally engaging experiences over traditional advertising methods. In which informant 2 mentions, as supported by several of the other informants, the main advantage with experiential marketing is that it taps more into the personal interests of the consumers. As brands navigate a complex market filled with information overload, experiential communication offers a powerful tool for creating meaningful connections and lasting impressions.

5.6.2 Theme 2 – Impact of High-Profile Endorsements

“People are always more interesting than brands. More people get involved with Petter Stordalen than they do with Strawberry. More people follow Tim Cook rather than Apple. People seek people. And you should never underestimate a starstruck moment»

- Informant #6

High-profile endorsements have become more central in experiential communication projects, leveraging the star power of well-known individuals to elevate brand experiences. Integrating well-known figures into these projects can significantly amplify their impact, creating memorable and emotionally charged experiences for participants. This theme is crucial to explore within the broader context of experiential communication research because it sheds light on how leveraging celebrity influence can shape brand perception, drive consumer engagement, and affect brand equity.

The use of famous personalities serves multiple strategic purposes. According to the Project Manager, incorporating high-profile individuals can support an event with a sense of prestige and recognition, making participants feel valued. This is particularly evident when celebrities bring their star power to events, enhancing the overall specialness of the experience. For instance, the presence of a well-known figure can transform an ordinary event into a notable occasion, thereby increasing its importance and attractiveness.

The effectiveness of a celebrity endorsement hinges on the alignment between the celebrity's profile and the project's goals. As Informant 4 points out, the choice of a profile should be tailored to fit the specific context of the event. Similarly, Informant 5 emphasizes the need for the profile to possess characteristics that align with the event's message and target audience. This alignment ensures that the celebrity's involvement contributes positively to the project's goals.

While high-profile endorsements can enhance an event's appeal, they also carry risks. Negative events involving celebrities can lead to mistrust and damage to brand equity. Informant 1

highlights that when a celebrity's association with a brand becomes problematic, it can significantly alter consumer perceptions and create uncertainty. Thus, careful consideration must be given to the potential impact of any associated negative publicity.

The alignment between a celebrity's brand and the project's concept plays a crucial role in determining the overall effect of the endorsement. Informant 6 notes that the strength of the impression left by a celebrity is often tied to how well their persona reflects the event's theme and message. When a celebrity's personal brand is harmonious with the project's objectives, it enhances the overall effectiveness of the experience. Conversely, misalignment can weaken the impact and harm the brand's reputation.

As noted by several informants, including well-known personalities can make campaigns feel memorable and giving a sense of value among participants. The interviews show that these endorsements are most effective when the celebrity's persona aligns with the brand's values and the specific project objectives. For example, Informant 4 shared a successful case involving Norwegian comedian Else Kåss Furuseth. Following her well-publicized wedding, Furuseth's participation in a client's event resonated strongly due to her recent media exposure and ability to adapt and use stories from the wedding and tailor them to the specific brand being promoted. This illustrates how a celebrity's current relevance and tailoring their involvement to fit the event can significantly amplify its impact.

The impact of high-profile endorsements in experiential communication is multifaceted. Celebrities can significantly elevate brand experiences by adding prestige and emotional engagement. However, the success of such endorsements relies on careful selection and alignment with the project's goals, as well as the management of potential risks associated with celebrity involvement. For example, Informant 5 highlights that celebrities could boost brand image by transferring their positive attributes to the brand. However, this effect can be harmful if the celebrity and the brand do not match. Understanding these dynamics is essential for optimizing the effectiveness of experiential communication strategies and ensuring that they contribute positively to brand perception and consumer loyalty.

5.6.3 Theme 3 - Consumer Perceptions

“I think that by leveraging one’s power and influence to create authentic and genuine connections between consumers and brands is valuable, as it makes it more trustworthy, and easier for the consumers to form emotional attachments to the brand or product”

- Informant #3

All interviews highlight the feeling of evoking emotions and the emotional connection participants can feel when engaging in an experience-based project. Informants 1 and 2 in the operations department emphasized the feelings of excitement and cohesion among participants. These emotions are often triggered by shared experiences that provide an escape from the daily routine. As informant 1 noted, a sense of belonging is developed during these projects as participants engage in collective experiences that make them feel part of a group.

We see that consumers often feel happiness or surprise when introduced to something new and unfamiliar. This aligns with the idea that experience-based projects are created to evoke strong emotions, functioning as key drivers in forming a deeper relationship between the consumer and the brand promoted.

The informants further suggested that emotions play a crucial role in shaping how consumers perceive the brand after participating in an experience-based event. When participants have a positive emotional response, they are more likely to feel connected to the brand and develop a sense of loyalty, which again can lead to long-term brand relationships.

Another aspect, highlighted especially by Informant 3, is that, unlike traditional forms of marketing, experiential communication allows participants to engage actively with the brand, making the message more memorable. The involvement of multiple senses during these experiences enhances the depth of emotional engagement and creates a stronger bond between the consumer and the brand.

The physical and sensory aspects of these projects are not just elements, but powerful tools that contribute to the building of long-term brand loyalty. They create experiences that consumers

remember more vividly than passive interactions such as viewing an advertisement, sparking their intrigue and engagement. Moreover, the word-of-mouth effect, as mentioned by Informant 3, is stronger in experiential marketing due to the emotional involvement of the participants. When consumers have a positive and memorable experience, they are more likely to share it with others, further amplifying the brand's reach.

When looking at how brands utilize the influence of well-known figures to create memorable experiences, informant 3 emphasizes that the chosen personality's reputation and image can directly influence the brand's perception. If the profile has positive traits, such as credibility and likability, these qualities can be transferred to the brand. However, if the chosen personality has negative associations, the consumer's perception of the brand can be adversely affected.

Famous endorsements often create a strong emotional link, helping consumers feel more connected to the product or company. As Informant 6 points out, having a well-known figure associated with a brand can quickly make it more familiar and interesting to potential customers. When consumers admire a personality, they are more likely to trust their choices, which can lead to more interest in the product.

Additionally, as informant 5 mentioned, high-profile endorsements change how consumers see the brand, often in a more credible and exciting way, as people associate it with the profile's positive qualities. Ultimately, this forms a connection that boosts the brand image and makes it stand out more.

One of the most significant risks in experience-based marketing is the possibility of negative outcomes, which can strongly affect consumer perceptions. All interview participants stressed the importance of successful execution, and the potential damage caused by failed projects. Informant 4 and Informant 5 particularly noted that high-profile collaborations can be especially risky. Negative events or controversies involving a celebrity partner can significantly harm the brand's image and consumer loyalty. Informant 4 warned that if the partner's actions do not align with the brand's values, it can result in a loss of consumer trust and credibility. Informant 5 added that negative attention toward a high-profile figure could extend to the brand, resulting in a tarnished

image and reduced loyalty. Additionally, informant 3 adds that the most damaging effect of a campaign including a high-profile person is when the collaboration seems forced.

When discussing the importance of feedback. Informant 1, 2 and 4, Line, all highlighted the role of consumer feedback in optimizing future projects. Social media monitoring, participant surveys, and questionnaires are valuable tools for brands to evaluate the success of an event and understand the participants' perceptions of the high-profile endorsement. By analyzing this feedback and tracking engagement, brands can identify areas for improvement and ensure that their collaborations and events resonate positively with the audience.

These interviews show that consumer perceptions of experience-based marketing and high-profile endorsements in these projects are shaped by emotional engagement and the ability to deliver successful, memorable experiences. While positive experiences can lead to lasting impressions and stronger brand loyalty, all informants agree that these endorsements' effectiveness depends on how well the celebrity and brand fit together, which will be further assessed in the next coding theme: success factors.

5.6.4 Theme 4 - Success Factors

“While some clients may be drawn to profiles for their perceived coolness and following, we believe this approach lacks substance and is not the way to a successful project. Instead, we approve of a professional and personalized approach, integrating it seamlessly into our projects and concept development”

- Informant #4

This coding theme was chosen to uncover the key factors contributing to successful endorsements, providing insights into how brands can effectively leverage high-profile collaborations in their experiential marketing initiatives.

The alignment between the profile's personal brand and the campaign's objectives is cited multiple times as a success factor. As mentioned by informant 3, the profile's relevance to the brand's values is significant. Informant 3 further suggests that selecting a famous person who strongly aligns with

the brand's identity will help enhance the campaign's authenticity. Similarly, informant 4 highlights the importance of choosing profiles that reflect the company's vision and are popular amongst the target group. In Informants 4's opinion, this approach ensures that the endorsement functions as a strategic partnership that can efficiently communicate the campaign's message. Additionally, as several informants mentioned, brands must consider the profile's past behaviors, public image, and overall persona to ensure that the collaboration will enhance, rather than detract from, the brand's reputation.

Authenticity is mentioned as another critical factor. The interviewees repeatedly mentioned the importance of genuine interactions between the profile and the audience. According to informant 2, genuinely engaging with the audience is essential, and profiles that can create authentic connections with their audience are more likely to generate buzz and promote word-of-mouth.

Informant 1 also mentions the need for close collaboration between the brand and the profile. By working together to create a brief that aligns with both the brand's objectives and the profile's unique style, the campaign will achieve more authenticity, making it more credible and appealing. Moreover, Informant 5 believes that the profile must be capable of creating a lasting emotional impact, often achieved through relatable storytelling. This approach enhances the participant's experience and thickens the brand's presence in the consumer's mind, leading to stronger brand loyalty.

The strategic collaboration between the brand and the high-profile individual plays a significant role in the success of experiential projects. A collaboration like this ensures that all parties are aligned in their goals and that the campaign's execution is seamless and impactful. In addition to this, Informant 6 suggests that successful campaigns often involve a collaborative approach where the profiles contribute creatively to the concept development. This involvement increases authenticity, and by focusing on the strengths and insights of the profile, the results will be more of an engaging experience.

High-profile endorsements also come with certain risks. Negative events or controversies involving the profile can significantly impact the brand's reputation and consumer loyalty. The interviewees agree that risk management is crucial to successful high-profile collaborations.

Informant 3 and Informant 4 both highlight the importance of thoroughly assessing the risk factors associated with a potential profile before entering into a partnership. Informant 3 and Informant 5 suggest that this assessment includes evaluating the profile's past behaviors, public image, and any potential for controversy. Moreover, the informants also outlined the need for clear contractual agreements, as they provide an easier understanding of the partnership's expectations and responsibilities. Informant 5 believes this helps protect the brand's reputation and ensures that the partnership remains aligned with its values and objectives.

Further, measuring these campaigns' effectiveness is essential for brands to understand what works and what does not. As noted by Informant 1 and Informant 4, brands can evaluate the success of their collaborations by analyzing participant feedback and monitoring social media platforms for real-time reactions. The informants suggest that these insights provide valuable data on how the audience perceives the campaign and can help identify areas for improvement. Additionally, the interviews show that conducting surveys for the participants post-project works well in assessing the campaign's impact on brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty. Additionally, consumer and market trends are always involving, and Informant 4 mentions it is important to always be flexible and stay up to date, so brands can adapt their strategies to align with evolving consumer preferences and expectations

5.7 Validating Findings

Multiple strategies were used to enhance the credibility and reliability of the data gathered from the in-depth interviews. This included member checking, where participants reviewed the findings to ensure their perspectives were accurately represented, and peer examination, where the informants could provide critical feedback on the interpretations (Creswell, 2009).

5.8 The Qualitative Write-up

My interpretation from the Role of Experiential Communication theme was the following: This approach represents a significant shift in marketing strategy, prioritizing immersive and emotionally engaging experiences over traditional methods. By actively involving consumers and offering them hands-on and sensory interactions with a brand, experiential communication fosters deeper and more memorable impressions. In a market saturated with digital advertising,

experiential communication provides a fresh alternative that helps brands stand out and resonate with their audience on a more personal level.

My interpretation from of the Impact of High-Profile Endorsements theme was the following: By integrating well-known figures into experiential projects, brands can amplify their impact and create emotional moments that resonate deeply with participants. However, the effectiveness of such endorsements depends on the alignment between the celebrity's persona and the event's objectives. A well-matched endorsement can elevate an event, making it more memorable and impactful, while misalignment or negative publicity can undermine brand perception and equity. Therefore, careful selection and strategic alignment of high-profile personalities are crucial to maximizing the benefits of celebrity endorsements and ensuring they contribute positively to brand reputation and consumer loyalty.

My interpretation of the Consumer Perceptions theme was the following: Emotional engagement are highly significant and central to how consumers perceive high-profile collaborations in experiential marketing activities. We understand that participants often feel cohesion, excitement and connection during experience-based activities, and high-profile endorsements helps in amplify these emotions. A well-chosen celebrity helps enhance brand credibility and make experiences more memorable, however there are risks and pitfalls which also could potentially harm brand image.

My interpretation from the Success Factors theme was the following: The success of high-profile collaborations in experiential marketing campaigns depends on strategic alignment, authenticity, and risk management. Informants highlight the importance of selecting influencers whose values and image align with the brand's identity to promote credibility and ensure a genuine endorsement. Authenticity is key, with genuine interactions between the influencer and the audience creating a lasting emotional impact. Close collaboration between the brand and the influencer is essential for developing a campaign that reflects the brand's objectives, resulting in a more engaging experience. However, these partnerships have some pitfalls, so risk assessment and contractual agreements are crucial to protect the brand's reputation. Finally, measuring campaign effectiveness

through feedback, social media monitoring, and post-campaign evaluations is essential for continuous improvement and adapting to evolving consumer trends.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Main Conclusions

By exploring the intersection of experiential marketing and high-profile endorsements, the study has gathered valuable insights that are essential to reflect on. During my internship at Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, I was able to witness how these strategies play out in real-world marketing campaigns. The continuously evolving marketing landscape, shaped by a fast-paced and digital environment, demands strategies targeting consumers beyond traditional advertising. As we have seen, brands are increasingly starting to utilize experiential marketing as a strategy to engage their consumers on a more emotional and personal level. This strategy leaves lasting impressions and differentiates brands in a competitive market space.

The key component in this study, the use of high-profile endorsements, where the influence of well-known personalities is used to cause impactful marketing campaigns, has been under research. We have examined the components and desires for attaching a famous name to a product and brand. We also investigated how these collaborations operate from an experiential marketing perspective and their pros and cons to see if high-profile endorsements can amplify these marketing initiatives fully. This conclusion will directly address the report's objectives by analyzing the data in relation to the literature framework, providing a comprehensive answer to the research question.

The role of experiential marketing is explained throughout the report and study. The research illustrated how brands and businesses approach marketing in the competitive landscape, shifting from traditional marketing to experiential communication within the context of the experience economy. Traditional marketing strategies are losing effectiveness as the marketplace becomes increasingly saturated with information and digital content. Consumers are no longer only seeking products or services; instead, they crave meaningful and memorable experiences that resonate on a more personal and emotional level.

As explained in the interviews, this transition is rooted in a change in consumer needs, as first articulated by Maslow (1954). As societies grow wealthier and basic needs are easily met,

consumers prioritize higher-level needs, such as emotional and experiential fulfillment. This shift in priorities has given rise to the experience economy, where value is derived not from the ownership of goods but from experiences. As agreed upon by Pine and Gilmore (2011), the informants have elaborated that in this new economy, consumers seek out experiences that are not just practical, but also emotionally engaging and memorable. These experiences are seen as more valuable because they fulfill deeper psychological and emotional needs, aligning with Maslow's (1954) higher levels of self-actualization.

Experiential marketing plays a crucial role in engaging consumers. Unlike traditional advertising, this approach aligns with Schmitt's (1999) Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) concept, which highlights the importance of engaging multiple sensory, emotional, and cognitive dimensions to create a holistic brand experience. In this way, brands promote stronger connections with their audiences, resulting in more stable brand loyalty (Schmit, 1999).

The data conducted reinforces these theoretical frameworks. The Informants consistently highlighted the downfall of traditional marketing and the rise of experiential communication as a more effective way of engaging with consumers. As noted in the interviews, the traditional marketing landscape stagnates because it fails to leave lasting impressions, meaning consumers see ads online but do not remember them. On the contrary, experiential communication offers sensory-rich and emotionally charged experiences. Informant 4's example of the coffee industry in Norway perfectly describes this shift; what was once a simple transaction has evolved into an immersive experience where consumers engage all their senses.

The rise of the experience economy and the shift towards experiential marketing represent a fundamental change in how brands interact with consumers. As traditional marketing methods decline in effectiveness, emotionally engaging experiences become necessary. A strategy for creating successful experiential marketing campaigns is to utilize high-profile endorsements, as research shows that this significantly influences brand perception and consumer engagement. The interview data underscore celebrities' essential role in marketing strategies. To some extent, the interviews shows that consumers gravitate towards personalities over products. This is reinforced in Thorndike's (1920) Halo Effect, explaining how consumers' perceptions of a celebrity can influence their opinions of the products they endorse. As outlined by Djafarova & Rushworth

(2017), the Halo Effect refers to a cognitive bias where a consumer's positive impression of a celebrity can create an assumption of positive attributes for the promoted brand. If a well-liked celebrity promotes a product, consumers may perceive the product as having similar positive qualities based only on their opinions of the celebrity.

The data highlights that celebrity endorsements significantly influence brand perception. Informants expressed that integrating well-known personalities into experiential marketing initiatives elevates brand experiences, creating memorable interactions that resonate with consumers. This aligns with Bakker (2018), who notes that integrating celebrities into marketing strategies in today's hyper-connected society can be crucial for establishing connections with consumers. As McCracken (1989) points out, the interconnection between culture, entertainment, and marketing highlights the significance of high-profile endorsements as a source of influence over consumer behavior.

High-profile endorsements have multiple purposes in experiential marketing, such as adding prestige, making it feel special, and increasing engagement. Data notes that when a well-known profile's characteristics resonate with the audience, their involvement can strengthen the project's overall success. This is consistent with the findings of Djafarova & Rushworth (2017), who highlight that celebrities can transform unknown products into recognized brands through positive associations. However, while high-profile endorsements have many benefits, the interviews revealed certain pitfalls associated with celebrity involvement. The alignment between a celebrity's brand and the project's concept is critical. The interviews suggested that the impression the profile leaves often depends on how well their image reflects the campaign.

Appropriately, high-profile endorsements play a significant role in experiential marketing, boosting consumer engagement and brand loyalty. However, the success of these endorsements relies heavily on the alignment between the profile's image, the campaign objectives, and the brand's messaging. The interviews reveal that brands must navigate the intricacies of celebrity culture thoughtfully to ensure that the collaborations promote positive associations.

Further, when assessing consumer perceptions, the conducted data and the theoretical frameworks prove that high-profile endorsements play various roles in enhancing consumer experiences and driving brand loyalty. A central theme from the data is the importance of emotional engagement

in shaping consumer perceptions, which aligns with Dynata's (2022) survey indicating that memorable experiences significantly impact consumer perceptions and behaviors. As highlighted in the interviews, utilizing the influence of celebrities to promote authentic connections is priceless for building trust in brands. This view was shared by multiple informants, who emphasized that experiential marketing is designed to evoke strong emotions and make participants feel a sense of belonging, reinforcing the idea that shared experiences can significantly enhance consumer-brand relationships.

The interviews show that by strategically using the emotional power of celebrity endorsements, brands can create memorable experiences that resonate deeply with consumers, ultimately enhancing brand perception and loyalty. As Pine and Gilmore (2011) stated, businesses must embrace their roles as performers on the stage of consumer experiences. By understanding the dynamics of consumer perceptions, emotional engagement, and the strategic use of high-profile endorsements, brands can create impactful experiences that captivate loyalty in the hearts of their consumers.

Exploring success factors in high-profile collaborations within experiential marketing reveals a broad approach where strategic alignment, authenticity, risk management, and evaluation play key roles. Drawing from the interviews and supported by the literature, we will examine the key elements contributing to successful endorsements and provide insights into optimizing high-profile collaborations for brand impact.

One of the most highlighted success factors across the interviews is aligning the profile's personal brand and the campaign's objectives. This ensures that the profile's identity resonates with the brand's values, enhancing the campaign's authenticity and impact. The data underscore the importance of selecting a profile that aligns with the brand's identity, reflects the company's vision, and appeals to the target audience. This agrees with the literature, where the selection process of celebrity endorsers is highlighted as critical (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Mitra, 2023). The concept of brand-profile harmony is further reinforced by McCracken's (1989) statement that successful endorsements rely on the cultural meanings shared between the profile and the product.

Authenticity is another critical factor mentioned by the interviewees. Genuine engagement between the profile and the audience is essential for generating buzz and promoting word-of-mouth. The data highlights the importance of genuine interactions, which are more likely to resonate with the audience and create lasting impressions. This notion aligns with Pine & Gilmore's (2011) concept of creating immersive brand experiences that foster emotional connections with consumers. Smilansky (2018) further supports the importance of authenticity and argues that experiential marketing should prioritize genuine, relatable storytelling to enhance brand loyalty. The interviews suggest that close collaboration between the brand and the profile is key to achieving this authenticity. By co-creating the campaign's narrative, both parties can ensure that the message is not only aligned with the brand's objectives but also reflects the profile's unique style and voice. This collaborative approach contributes to a more engaging and authentic experience, increasing the campaign's credibility and appeal.

While high-profile endorsements offer significant benefits, they also come with certain risks. The interviews highlight the need for risk assessment and clear contractual agreements to prevent potential hazards. The data elucidates the importance of evaluating the profile's past behaviors, public image, and potential for controversy before entering into a partnership. Additionally, evaluating the campaign's effectiveness is important for understanding its impact and ensuring success in future projects. The data reveals that brands can measure the success of their collaborations by analyzing participant feedback and monitoring social media reactions. This aligns with the literature, where scholars like Smith & Hanover (2016) advocate using qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the campaign's impact on brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty. Integrating these metrics, as suggested by Smilansky (2018), ensures that the campaign's success is accurately measured and informs future marketing efforts.

Concluding, high-profile endorsements and collaborations play a key role in the reach and success of experiential marketing campaigns by significantly amplifying brand visibility, emotional engagement, and consumer loyalty. This research is valuable for agencies like Kite Kommunikasjon og Event, as it highlights the importance of leveraging these elements in creating impactful events and marketing initiatives. The research reveals that leveraging the influence of well-known personalities in experiential marketing can create powerful, memorable experiences

that resonate deeply with consumers. Celebrities serve as motivations, enhancing the prestige of events, drawing attention, and nurturing emotional connections between the brand and the audience. This is largely due to cognitive biases, where positive perceptions of a celebrity are transferred to the brand, thereby elevating consumer trust and brand equity. However, the effectiveness of such endorsement's hinges on strategic alignment—both in terms of the celebrity's persona and the brand's values—as well as careful risk management to ensure authenticity and avoid potential backlash. When executed thoughtfully, these collaborations not only boost the immediate impact of marketing initiatives but also contribute to long-term brand loyalty by ingraining the brand into the emotional fabric of consumers' lives.

6.2 Limitations and Future Directions

As this was an internship report, the interviews were conducted exclusively within the organization, which could constrain the generalizability of the findings. However, the methods utilized were chosen to also apply to other organizations or industries in the field of marketing and communications. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the topics researched are dynamic, and the findings are based on current trends and practices. As marketing strategies evolve, some insights may become less relevant over time.

Another notable limitation in this study was scheduling issues with participants, which occasionally led to delays and difficulties in obtaining consistent feedback. The interviews revealed a variation in participants' engagement levels and availability, with some individuals demonstrating a deeper interest and more time to explore the topic thoroughly.

To address these limitations, I think future research should aim to broaden the sample base by including a diverse range of organizations and industries. This approach has the potential to significantly advance our understanding of high-profile endorsements and their effects.

Exploring emerging trends in marketing and celebrity influence is also crucial. Future studies could investigate how new technologies and shifting consumer preferences affect experiential marketing. Understanding these developments more will offer valuable insights into the evolving role of high-profile endorsements. Furthermore, examining the long-term effects of high-profile

endorsements on brand perception and consumer behavior could provide a deeper understanding of their value, particularly in terms of brand loyalty and engagement.

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Annex A

Transcript of the interview with Sofie Persson (participant #1), Project Manager.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING.

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

As a Project Manager, my primary responsibility is overseeing the events I manage. This involves setting up and managing the budget, handling customer interactions, and overseeing our internal processes for planning, executing, and invoicing events. Additionally, I am primarily responsible for participant management, including registration and payment processes. This entails setting up the registration system, managing communication with participants, providing support, and handling invoicing and crediting. My role encompasses all aspects of registration before, during, and after the event.

How would you explain the term "Experience economy" in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

For example, consumers who attend a branded event gain more value from the shared experience with others than from simply receiving a physical gift. The goal is to create memorable experiences and emotions that participants can share, which can lead to a stronger connection to the brand. It's not just about the quality of the food; it's also about the atmosphere of the venue, the performance of the artist, the table decorations, and other elements that enhance the overall experience.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today's market?

For example, it can bring a brand or company closer to its customers. By providing physical, immersive experiences, customers can gain a fresh perspective on the products. In today's market, where consumers are overwhelmed with digital content and traditional advertising, experiential communication stands out by offering a hands-on way for customers to interact with a brand.

What do you think are the main advantages of using experiential communication compared to more traditional marketing methods?

I would say the overall main advantage of using experiential communication and events are that the contact between customer and branding is becoming closer and more intimate.

What feelings or experiences do you think are most common among participants who take part in experience-based projects, and why do you think these feelings arise?

When people take part in experience-based projects, they often feel a strong sense of cohesion and belonging. I believe this happens because these activities and events create opportunities for people to connect on a deeper level. When everyone is involved in shared experiences, it builds a sense of togetherness and makes each person feel valued.

How can negative experiences or failed experience-based projects affect consumers' perception of a brand?

Negative experiences of our projects can really impact how consumers view the brand brands we work with. For example, when things go wrong, it can make people feel mistrustful and uncertain about the brand. This often leads them to think twice before buying more products or services. Plus, it can damage the brand's reputation, making it tougher to win over new customers and keep the ones you already have. This could be damaging as in today's competitive market, those negative impressions can stick around and have a lasting effect.

How do you measure the effectiveness and success of experiential communication initiatives?

When it comes to our events and activations, we always ask our customers to send out evaluation forms to all participants. Additionally, we conduct internal evaluations and review feedback with the customer.

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

I believe using well-known people in experiential communication projects can make participants feel valued and recognized. When a well-known individual takes the time to attend or when a company invests in bringing in a high-profile personality, it can make the event or activation feel more special. This can also add a sense of seriousness and prestige to the event.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

This varies depending on the event's goals, as we handle a wide range of activities. What we believe is most important in that process is that the person is relevant and competent for the specific event, theme or task.

What strategies do you use to utilize the influence of high-profile people to create memorable experiences for the participants?

I believe that the profile knows their audience and know what works best for their audience in terms of marketing and promotion. Therefore, I will say the best strategy is to cooperate closely with the profile, hear out their angles and perspective, and write a brief that fits both the profile and the brand. In that way it will also be more genuine to the famous person's and the brand's audience.

How can negative events involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand equity and consumer loyalty of a brand?

As I mentioned before, this could also lead to mistrust and uncertainty among consumers. When people have a negative experience or feel something's not genuine, it can really change their opinions in the brand.

What do you think is the most important factor influencing the success of a high-profile collaboration, and how can brands optimize this factor in their strategies?

A well-known person can contribute to brands being in a way approved and accepted. Fans who look up to their idols are happy to imitate and own the same products. They can create a feeling that you are closer to your idol and that you live according to the same ideal.

How can brands evaluate and analyze participant feedback and insights to continuously improve and optimize high-profile collaborations?

Brands can evaluate and analyze participant feedback and insights by tracking their target audience and monitoring social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and X. I believe this is one of the best ways because it allows for gathering real-time reactions and feel the overall impact of their collaborations.

Annex B

Transcript of the interview with Martine Linge (participant 2), Project Coordinator.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING.

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

My role is as a Project coordinator. My role is mostly related to helping the project managers, as well as the other departments. This includes research, crew and participant management, as well as booking vendors, artists and other components to the project.

How would you explain the term "Experience economy" in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

I would explain it as economy driven by pleasure and experience-based activities. In an economy like this, the focus will be to provide meaningful and unique experiences that consumers are willing to attend. It is therefore important to provide some benefits that are expected by the consumers to receive.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today's market?

I find it to be engaging, entertaining and creative, and often tailored to create personal connections with the brand or product in focus. I would also actually describe experiential communication as somewhat manipulative, as it plays heavily on perceptions and emotions to influence consumer behavior. I do think more and more brands are starting to understand this, and therefore experience based projects will be implemented more in brands marketing efforts.

What do you think are the main advantages of using experiential communication compared to more traditional marketing methods?

The main advantage I would say it that it taps more into consumers personal interests, and that it kind off creates a stronger sense of attraction as it actively and physically engages, which is harder to achieve with traditional media.

What feelings or experiences do you think are most common among participants who take part in experience-based projects, and why do you think these feelings arise?

The main feelings would be happiness, surprise and the sense of commitment. Mainly because the projects we produce often introduces something new and unfamiliar to the attendees. I would also mention that these projects can give the consumers a break from their everyday life, which makes them eager to participate in a new environment.

How can negative experiences or failed experience-based projects affect consumers' perception of a brand?

It affects consumers perception of a brand. Since this type of communication is often more personal it can lead to stronger emotional reactions, which potentially will lead to negative associations to the brand. But if course, there are various outcomes of this depending on the mistake made.

How do you measure the effectiveness and success of experiential communication initiatives?

I think the best way to see if an event was successful is if the get more offers from the same organization. But we can also measure this through questionnaires sent out to both the client and the participants. In this way we learn what worked well, what could be done better, and what potential changes that needs to be done for future projects.

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

I think that it absolutely boosts engagement, and especially in turning up and participating at the event. However, it can also make some people participate for the wrong reason, rather coming to

see that person than the message the brand wants to promote. I will also add if the person fits the brand and the overall project, it can give some good PR for the brand and make them get a good reputation and a more long-lasting brand loyalty amongst the consumers.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

The most important qualities to look for is someone who is outgoing, willing to take our briefs and tailor them to their content so that it fits the project. I think it is also important that the profile has a good reputation amongst the industry and in general, as it makes it more trustworthy. Lastly, I would say we often go for people that are charismatic and also often with a bit of humor.

What strategies do you use to utilize the influence of high-profile people to create memorable experiences for the participants?

Most important part is to ensure a clear and effective communication between the brand and the profile, and what I mean by this is that all parts should clearly know what the expectations is. I think it is also important to choose a profile that have a genuine interest in the brand or in the field the brand operates in. I think this makes it much more authentic, rather than just choosing for example a big influencer with a huge following but know nothing about the brand or product promoted.

How can negative events involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand equity and consumer loyalty of a brand?

extremely negative, or in some cases positive. If the incident is negative in the sense that something happens with the communication between the brand and the profile that is the brand's fault, it loses loyalty. But if a high-profile person has opinions or statements that are of bad morals or unpopular, it can also have a negative effect on the brand they are associated with. On the other hand, if a personality has a bad attitude or publicly chooses to speak out in a negative way and the brand chooses to break the collaboration, it can reflect positively on the brand.

What do you think is the most important factor influencing the success of a high-profile collaboration, and how can brands optimize this factor in their strategies?

The power to genuinely talk to and engage the audience. I think this should be the goal of every brand, to choose a profile or brand ambassador that are able to create genuine buzz and word-of-mouth. And brand are able to do this by us selecting the perfect candidate for each project.

How can brands evaluate and analyze participant feedback and insights to continuously improve and optimize high-profile collaborations?

Looking at the public perception, both at the event and afterwards on social media, I would say is the best way to evaluate if people liked the collaboration or not. We can also do this trough the participant questionnaires, surveys and monitoring. This is especially important as we will identify areas of improvement, meaning we will continuously become better at our job, producing high-level projects.

Annex C

Transcript of the interview with Mark Olman (participant #3), Head of Operations.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING.

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

My role functions as the leader for producers, project managers, the project coordinator, and the customer advisors. I therefore act as the manager of the entire production department and have the overall responsibility for all our projects. Head of Operations was my official job title.

How would you explain the term "Experience economy" in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

I look at the experience economy as a shift in how brand and businesses communicate to their consumer and their employees. We are starting to look behind only delivering product and services and consumers are craving more, in which a lot has to do with experiences. The goal of the this within marketing I would say is to build relationships and evoke emotions.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today's market?

I absolutely think it has a very big impact in today's market. We see that the advertising industry is going down and that the need for direct communication between people, the physical, is increasing. We need it because there are so many different things happening around us all the time, all on different channels and social media. This is communication that does not occur to us, meaning we see it, but we do not remember it. An experience you remember. It is a more valuable means of communication, so I think this will become more important in the future.

How do you identify and align the client's goals with experiential communication strategies to ensure mutual success?

We usually start by understanding the client's goals, whether this is brand awareness, engagement, or loyalty. From there, we work in teams to craft and conceptualize projects that will align with these objectives. It is also important to have in mind and make sure that the project or campaign fully reflects the brand, as well that it resonates with the targeted consumers.

How do you ensure that experience-based communication projects effectively reach their intended target audience?

Here I think the most important thing is to fully understand who the audience is, which includes looking into the demographics, preferences and behaviors. This would make it easier for the concept developers to tailor projects that they resonate with. Also, I think all the choices we do, such as the different elements on the event, food and catering, entertainment, location and so on, are chosen based on what we think these types of consumers would like, and what would engage them the most. Therefore, I would say research prior to the concept development phase is extremely important to most effectively reach and engage the participants.

How do you experience the participants' perceptions of experience-based communication?

Instead of reading a newspaper, watching TV or scrolling through social media, you receive a message through a kind of 'scene' reinforced with various elements, such as light, artists, branding, films and several others that evoke different emotions in people. The sensory impressions are more stimulated, unlike when you just read or see something on social media.

How do you think consumers generally respond to experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing?

I think they respond in another way than traditional marketing methods, as experiences-based communication are more likely to create lasting impressions, which I believe also leads to stronger connections and brand loyalty. Instead of passive information, the consumers here actively participate, and naturally they must use their senses and emotions which I believe is one of the strongest advantages for this type of communication. Also, I think people are more likely to talk

about the experiences and brands to others, a type of word-of-mouth you will not get with traditional advertising.

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

It is important! This is something I consider a very important part of creating experience-based communication. I think that by leveraging one's power and influence to create authentic and genuine connections between consumers and brands is valuable, as it makes it more trustworthy, and easier for the consumers to form emotional attachments to the brand or product. But here there is also some pitfalls, so you must be very careful that the profile chosen fits the brand and its values.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

I would say we mainly look for three things. Firstly, we need a person who aligns well with the overall brand and its values, and potentially has some expertise in the area the brand operates in. This is about authenticity. Secondly, we look for a profile that has a strong influence. This does not necessarily mean a huge following, more that the profile has the ability to effectively engage the targeted audience. Lastly, I would say we look for someone who is charismatic, meaning someone who could be somewhat relatable, engaging and allows people to connect emotionally with the consumers.

How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it becomes associated with a famous personality?

"'Changed' is perhaps too strong a word here. I don't think it's going to change right away, but we are being affected. For example, if a brand uses humor in its messaging, partnering with a well-known stand-up comedian can help reinforce the fun image. What I mean by this is that by partnering up with the correctly selected profile, they can act as an extension to the overall brand

image. Also, I think the overall appeal to the brand can be changed, depending on the traits and likeability of the selected profile. For example, the brand will become more credible if the involved profile have strong credibility in that certain field.

How do you guide your clients in choosing high-profile profiles for projects, so that it matches their brand values and target group?

As I mentioned previously, this is a process that involved a lot of research to fully get to know the target audience. And is also important for the project to feel authentic. I would say we look for profiles that embodies the brand and what the brand wants to promote, therefore it is crucial to choose someone who resonates with the target group, whether through demographics, interests and lifestyle. Also, the public image and the profile's past behaviors are components we look into before suggesting options to the client.

How can negative events or controversies involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand value and consumer loyalty of a brand?

I think that controversies and negative attention of the profile can often extend to the brand itself. For example, if the profile has been involved with public backlash, the consumers may question the brand's judgement and values which again can lead to a loss of credibility and trust. Yet again showing the importance of the selection process.

How can brands ensure that a high-profile collaboration fits into the overall brand strategy and tone of the company's communications?

First, we have to understand, and the brand has to communicate to us their values, messaging, target audience and the preferable outcome of the campaign. In this way we have more information on what we will search for when selecting a profile, and it is easier to us to effectively choose someone who aligns with the brand strategy.

Can you give examples of situations where a high-profile collaboration has failed to deliver the desired effect, and what can we learn from these experiences?

I would say in general, a project including a high-profile endorsement fails when the audience perceive it as forced. It feels inauthentic and fails to deliver the wished effect. This just shows the importance of alignment between brand, profile and project.

Annex D

Transcript of the interview with Torunn Vigmostad Steinhaug (participant #4), Senior Client Advisor.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING.

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

My position is as a Senior Client Advisor. Here, I play a central role in safeguarding and developing relationships with existing and new customers. My job involves a combination of consulting and sales, where I focus on understanding the customers' needs and offering tailored solutions according to their special requirements, whether it is for marketing purposes or employer branding.

How would you explain the term "Experience economy" in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

I look at the experience economy as a part of the development of communication and how we humans make our decisions. We make our choices based on how we experience things, and not necessarily just on facts. This involves a more holistic assessment than in the past, as we now see that experiences and emotional impressions play an increasingly important role in our decision-making processes.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today's market?

I believe that as a supplier or brand, it's essential to recognize that experiences influence the choices of the target group, and how the brand is perceived is crucial. An example illustrating this shift in market dynamics is the evolution of the coffee industry. In recent years, the emergence of coffee shops in Norway has changed how consumers interact with the product. Now, customers can engage their senses by smelling, experiencing, and observing the coffee preparation process. This contrasts with the past, where coffee was often self-served or provided in a simple paper cup with limited variety. Today, the focus has shifted towards creating an immersive

experience around the brand. I, therefore, believe the power lies in establishing emotional connections and fostering positive real-life associations with the brand.

How do you identify and align the client's goals with experiential communication strategies to ensure mutual success?

I believe it's important to construct an event or project grounded in receiving valuable insights from the client with the target audience, what they want, and what they need. Engaging with the target groups and understanding their past experiences, preferences, and desired perceptions of the company is essential. Additionally, it is critical to prepare both the argument and the project to reflect the company's vision and values and ensure that this alignment is consistent throughout the project. Therefore, establishing a robust methodology is a fundamental cornerstone of this process.

How do you ensure that experience-based communication projects effectively reach their intended target audience?

We need to develop a methodology that ensures we make lasting impressions. What I mean by this is, what lasting impact should the target group carry home or retain after encountering our produced material? Communicating this is crucial as it enables the identification of effective strategies. Emphasizing the lasting impression involves engaging artists, decorators, venues, speakers, and all elements encompassed within the concept and campaign.

How do you experience the participants' perceptions of experience-based communication?

They should feel a deepened connection with the brand, whether it is their employer, or the company or product being promoted. This is not only about direct sales but crafting an immersive experience. Take, for instance, our recent internal kick-off event, where we felt genuine care from the employer and engaged with measures that resonated on multiple levels. Some aspects focused on the intellect, fostering learning opportunities. Others sparked inspiration, while it was equally crucial to foster connections among colleagues. This is how a cohesive culture is nurtured, and is as important when it comes to marketing and promotional initiatives.

How do you think consumers generally respond to experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing?

They develop a stronger relationship with the product or brand, making it easier for them to engage with the company. Additionally, emphasizing learning and personal development within the products promoted will heighten the consumer's sense of fulfillment and achievement. It is very important to ensure that the experience is enjoyable and serves as a source of inspiration and energy, driving continued engagement and loyalty.

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

There are advantages and disadvantages to using high-profile figures in these campaigns. While leveraging celebrities can be impactful, there are occasions when utilizing internal individuals from a company or organization is more effective and natural. The decision to incorporate celebrities depends on the context. For instance, I recently heard about the comedian Else Kåss Furuseth's wedding at Oslo Spektrum. Following that, we organized an event for a client in which she participated, which was a success due to her recent media exposure and her adaptability to the specific brand promoted. Celebrities must tailor their approach to each client and avoid a one-size-fits-all performance. This necessitates preparation, making it a crucial aspect of the process.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

I believe it is important to ensure that the individual you're working with is committed to investing time in preparation and adaptability to captivate the target audience, making each consumer feel valued and significant. Moreover, offering something unique that separates the experience is crucial, ensuring attendees will not find or see the same elsewhere. The individual's qualities and contributions are crucial in achieving this distinction.

How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it becomes associated with a famous personality?

This completely depends on the brand and the profile involved. It is very important here that these two complement each other. For instance, in our work with a watch company, the consumers may develop a strong bond with a watch worn by someone they admire. Conversely, it could have the opposite effect if the product and profile are not appropriately matched. It all boils down to making the right product selection and profile to reach the desired outcome

How do you guide your clients in choosing high-profile profiles for projects, so that it matches their brand values and target group?

Initially, we consider the desired outcomes, the purpose of leveraging a profile, and who can represent the target audience. This is a detailed process that contains much consideration. Even after this initial review, it's essential to analyze potential options, narrowing it down to five possible candidates and looking at their suitability. While some clients may be drawn to profiles for their perceived coolness and following, we believe this approach lacks substance and is not the way to a successful project. Instead, we approve of a professional and personalized approach, integrating it seamlessly into our projects and concept development.

How can negative events or controversies involving a high-profile collaboration affect the brand value and consumer loyalty of a brand?

I think that negative events involving high-profile collaborations can harm the brand and its consumer loyalty. They can lead to losing consumer trust and credibility, resulting in reduced willingness to buy and customer loyalty. An incident like this can lead to a negative brand perception among consumers. For example, this can happen if the partner is involved in controversial or harmful activities that do not align with the brand's values or image. I believe it can be really damaging, which shows again how important it is to select the right partners.

How can brands ensure that a high-profile collaboration fits into the overall brand strategy and tone of the company's communications?

I believe that the most critical factor here is conducting thorough research and analysis to really understand the client, what they want to achieve, and who their target audience is. This also involves assessing the compatibility of the profile with the brand's values, target audience, and communication objectives. Additionally, I will say it is necessary to establish clear

guidelines and expectations for the collaboration to help ensure coherence and consistency with the brand's identity. Also, being in regular contact with the client is important for the specific project to have a consistent mutual understanding and ensure future projects with the same brand.

Can you give examples of situations where a high-profile collaboration has failed to deliver the desired effect, and what can we learn from these experiences?

The challenge with high-profile individuals is that some may become too self-assured, failing to invest effort or engage fully in the project. However, I will say, such occurrences are rare. The most noteworthy risk lies in not engaging in the campaign, from understanding the product and company to learning the target audience. It is easy to rely on old habits. For profiles, it is crucial to reinvent themselves, as exemplified by Harald Rønneberg continually. He constantly adapts to brands and tailors his approach to the target audience, enhancing the overall experience.

Annex E

Transcript of the interview with Bjarne Berger (participant #5), Strategic Commercial Advisor.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

I have been a strategic advisor and chairman of Kite kommunikation event AS until the company was bought by DSD Explore AS and merged with Z Event AS. As of today, I am a hired as a strategic commercial advisor with tasks related to business development and larger tender projects.

How would you explain the term “Experience Economy” in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

Experience economy is a term for the importance of experiences as a force and driver in business development within several industries and especially within communication and marketing.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today`s market?

People experience more than they understand, yet it is the experiences more than knowledge and understanding that influence our actions. In a complex world where access to information and facts and fake news is endless and easily accessible, we become more concerned with the stories, experiences and associations linked to the company, place or products. Digitalization, social media and major changes in shopping patterns and meeting places probably reinforce the effect of experience-based communication. In particular, we believe that real physical experiences linked to the brand increase in importance, preferably in combination with digital channels.

How do you balance creativity with a practical approach in the conceptualization of experience-based communication projects?

The methodology for developing experience-based communication projects is very similar to the methodology for developing traditional communication and advertising.

It is about insight into the client's history, operations, vision, values and goals as well as competitive conditions and other framework conditions. We also seek in-depth insight into the

target group, which is not always defined as customers, but as guests. We also define a targeted single impression, i.e. a target formulation that describes how the guests describe their impressions/experiences of the events and/or the campaign.

What strategies do you employ to ensure that experiential marketing experiences evoke emotions and create lasting memories for participants?

We use a working model with constantly focus on the guest experience. By focusing on the fact that there are guests rather than customers, the experience is put at the center. In-depth insight into the target group and impact measurements on impressions left are important parameters.

Can you provide any examples of successful projects where creativity played a decisive role in capturing the attention and commitment of participants?

In connection with the consultancy company Bouvet's 20th anniversary, we developed a concept we called the Bouvet Bucket List. The company, which is very concerned with building culture and developing its employees, has previously carried out spectacular employee events that contributed to boundary-breaking activities, new skills and attractive relationship arenas. Now we wanted to challenge each individual employee to tell about their dreams or very special wishes. The dreams and stories that were told became a significant part of the anniversary marking before, during and after the anniversary festival itself. The concept has won several international awards.

How do you think consumers rate the value of experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing, such as television advertising or online advertising?

I believe that the value of real physical experiences where people, companies and brands meet increases in line with increased digitization and the use of digital/social media. The amount of information, more fake news and online crime also weakens trust in digital and social media. When AI increases, real personal meetings and experiences will probably become even more important. In a complicated media society where we are available for influence and noise 24/7, there is a need for communication arenas where the transmitter and receiver conditions are optimal. The use of traditional media channels such as print and traditional TV advertising is decreasing both due to changes in media habits and challenges in reaching younger target groups.

How do you think experiential communication will develop in the future, and which trends do you see as most influential?

The most important question for tomorrow's marketers is how to communicate with people who are always available but never present. Trend surveys indicate that we are increasingly seeking and demanding genuine, authentic experiences. In addition, research has been carried out showing that messages communicated through physical channels and experiences are far more effective than traditional communication through digital channels

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

Famous people primarily contribute to creating awareness around experience-based communication projects. If the person also has a profile and characteristics that suit the project, this can contribute to positive profile contagion. Current person profiles can be actors, comedians, TV personalities and sports profiles. The famous people help to get people to participate in the various communication arenas, whether it concerns internal events, product launches or other types of channels where people meet companies and brands.

Famous people and artists naturally also contribute to increasing the impact of communication activities in several ways, as attention boosters, as role models, as ambassadors.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

The ability to create attention around the project, characteristics as a role model, profile that fits the profile of the project/company/event, low risk factor for unfortunate events, credibility and impact in the target group, and communication skills are the most important qualities I would say.

How does the relevance between the profile's personal brand and the project's concept affect the effect of the finished product?

To a large extent, as the profiles often form a significant part of the communication. In our opinion, relevance in relation to the profile and characteristics between person and company/brand and the main message of the event/project is important. If you want to communicate values such as credibility, quality and achievements, the personal profile must not be associated with scandals, failing results, unfortunate media reports etc. There are several studies that document profile contagion between organizations sponsors and sponsored objects.

How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it is associated with a well-known personality through experiential communication initiatives?

It can really change how consumers see the brand. It often makes the brand seem more credible and exciting because people associate it with the positive qualities of the profile. This connection can boost the brand's image and make it stand out more in people's minds. However, it can also go the opposite way if the wrong spokesperson or ambassador are selected.

How do you handle the risks associated with the implementation of experience-based projects, especially with regard to potential negative reactions?

The most important thing is to assess the profile and risk even before entering a partnership. Risk factors such as unfortunate actions, criminal matters etc, and consequences should be regulated in the contract. In terms of experience, it is difficult to avoid negative effects even with extensive contractual regulations, especially when it comes to long-term cooperation agreements. In particular, sponsorship agreements with individuals are associated with great risk.

Annex G

Transcript of the interview with Eirik Moldal (participant #6), Head of Creative.

PART 1 – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Can you describe your role in the agency and your primary areas of responsibility?

As the Head of Creative, my role encompasses being a creator, creative concept developer, content developer, and copywriter. I also have overall responsibility for managing our websites and social media, including decisions about what content will be published and when.

How would you explain the term “Experience Economy” in the context of marketing, and what do you see as its primary goal?

Experience economy for me simply means everything that has to do with physical presence, in most cases together with others. Travels, events and activations. Where you physically move from A to B in an experience.

What is your perception of experiential communication, and what impact do you think it has on today`s market?

Today's market in marketing and advertising is challenging for many Norwegian players. Many advertising agencies are having a hard time, and several have had to close down their business due to bad times. Experience-based communication is experiencing a completely different everyday life, where a clear rise in investments among companies in events of various kinds is predicted. We now see that large investment companies are buying up tourism agencies and event agencies in order to become large and heavy players in a market where customers have higher expectations for agencies to be able to respond in terms of sustainability and nationwide capacity, as well as deliver in many service areas. So a variety of skills is essential, more so now than before.

How do you balance creativity with a practical approach in the conceptualization of experience-based communication projects?

When you work creatively in an event agency, you must also have a strong sense of what is actually possible to achieve. So creative and practical sense must work together to a great extent. As a

creator, you must have an expertise for different types of target groups, and know what works for all these different real, living people. Ergo, I think it is an advantage to be quite so popular myself. You rarely create concepts that do not strike you as the creator yourself. At least not me. One must think objectively, of course. But the creative result of a solution is always subjectively correct and good for a creator himself. The creator himself would have been a part of this. Otherwise, the idea would not have been created and presented. A creative experience concept must also meet many parameters. It costs a lot of money to organize an event, so it is a big investment for companies. Therefore, the event must be able to provide value beyond, for example, just being "fun". You have to think about branding and identity. You have to think about all the details experienced during an event - and there are many. You have to create experiences that the participants will be able to remember forever. Work out the x-factors for the event. What will the participants be left with? The most important thing for an event is the "feeling" of it. It is the feeling of the event that you remember - not what is said from the speeches on stage.

What strategies do you employ to ensure that experiential marketing experiences evoke emotions and create lasting memories for participants?

Good, creative ideas and surprising content that the participants had not seen coming. It can be big or small. The very best strategy for creating an event that evokes emotions and creates lasting memories is to have enough time to do all the research well and to have enough time and enough resources to spar with the creative process. You have to work with insights and evaluations from previous events to improve mistakes and understand the success factors from the company and the target group. It is often the case that the events we create have been held before, in one form or another. So for us it is then about either an evolution or a revolution of previous productions. It is also very important that the whole team plays as a team, sets aside time and has the same ambition. The brief is super important to ensure that everyone in the team who will create the experience has the same goal in mind. So the brief must be well written and taken seriously by whoever is writing it/developing it.

Can you provide any examples of successful projects where creativity played a decisive role in capturing the attention and commitment of participants?

The Bouvet Bucket List is, for me, a clear example of creativity. The case has won many awards internationally and is based on something completely elementary and deeply human – the dreams we all have about everything we want to experience. Big and small. Rare and fine. Spectacular, tasty and educational. We created memories for many employees that will last for the rest of their lives, where the company itself fulfilled the dreams of its employees throughout an entire anniversary year. 20 dreams for 20 years. We had the employees send us their own Bucket List of 10 dreams they wanted to experience before they die. From big to small, categorized by adjectives. In the lists that were sent in, we got a lot of stories and insight into the employees' dreams, a total of 4,500 dreams. Where the employees told us why they wanted exactly this, in many cases. This resulted in Bouvet himself getting to know his employees in a deeper and more personal way than they could have dreamed of. The dreams that were submitted also became the creative basis for a 3-day event where we took everyone on a trip to Lillehammer.

How do you think consumers rate the value of experiential marketing compared to other forms of marketing, such as television advertising or online advertising?

Experiences in which you yourself are a part are always stronger and always have a greater shareability than all other communication. It is a fact that if you experience something physically and love the experience, the chance that you will share it on your social channels is 95%. No other communication can compare to this. Not close. When we experience something real, we as humans have an incredibly strong urge to tell others what we experience - and not least we want to share our wonderful experience with others. When it comes to online and TV, there has been talk for many years about the blinders we humans have developed, because we get so many impressions every day all the time. Hundreds of messages from all sides and we are unable to care in the end. You are forced to watch advertisements. And that's the problem with advertising. But, when the advertisement is in an experience, then the tone is different. An experience you cannot scroll past or skip. You are there physically. And you feel it with your whole body. You feel like you are getting something special.

How do you think experiential communication will develop in the future, and which trends do you see as most influential?

Experience-based communication, I hope, will develop strongly. It's just a matter of getting more talented minds into the experience industry - an industry that has fewer highly educated creative people than, for example, the advertising industry. I think that will happen, although perhaps it will happen little by little. The event industry has long struggled with its reputation, but I think this will also turn around - little by little. In many ways and by several people, the event industry has been seen as party fixers and not much else. The trend is that the event industry is sneaking in on more strategic and creative assignments than before. And that the industry is getting stronger when it comes to these two important areas of expertise.

PART 2 – HIGH-PROFILE ENDORSEMENTS

What is your view on using famous people in experiential communication projects, and can you share examples of one project where this has been done and what results it achieved?

Famous people in experience-based projects will probably always be an important part of it. At the same time, many of the strongest impressions come from lectures by people you may never have heard of before. Famous people create wow effects for employees in companies. He/she is here for me and for my company. Both conference and entertainment. It is often what people really look forward to, when this is teased ahead of the event. Influencer-generated attention ahead of experiences works very well, if the target group fits the brand. People are always more interesting than brands. More people get involved with Petter Stordalen than they do with Strawberry. More people follow Tim Cook rather than Apple. People seek people. And you should never underestimate a starstruck moment.

What qualities or characteristics do you look for when considering connecting a high-profile person to a project?

That the person must reflect the message and work for the target group of the event. That the profiled person delivers beyond just being a wow factor.

How does the relevance between the profile's personal brand and the project's concept affect the effect of the finished product?

The effect of the finished product is strongly influenced by the common thread in the production. It is often a whole - a feeling - that is remembered by the participant in the end. A theme and a message that should be felt throughout the event. That you are on one journey. This requires a strong team who all understand what the goal is for production. The brand is always the starting point for a concept. But not all events have a concept, and not all need one either.

How do you think the consumer perception of a brand changes when it is associated with a well-known personality through experiential communication initiatives?

Influencers are a very common move to use for all brands. Also during events. Profiles will always help brands, for better or for worse. And it helps at least with familiarity very effectively. If your hero likes this, then it's likely that you will also gain some interest in trying this.

How do you handle the risks associated with the implementation of experience-based projects, especially with regard to potential negative reactions?

Good contracts, good research into the profile's past and personality apply here. And good campaigns that both play the profile and the brand well. Should have good relevance. Like a skier to a ski brand.