

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY WITH STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH EVENTS

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ABSTRACT

One of the key elements of marketing is represented by communication with its stakeholders, through a diversity of methods and channels of communication, one of these being represented by the communication through events. In the past years, in our country, there has also been developed this way to communicate through events, both with customers and with other partners, where we may also include the company's employees. Either it is an activity organized regularly or sporadically, events have the role and purpose to bring together people who have a common interest, no matter if this meeting is held in a real place or a virtual one. Bearing in mind the novelty of the method used, there are not yet researches to highlight its importance and the modality by which this helps the organization that adheres to it. Starting from the point that in many countries the communication strategies through events is more developed in practice than in theory, a more detailed description can lead to further developing theories. Thus a research is still being conducted regarding the communication steps through events, of the companies that are active on the market, to see the importance given by the above-mentioned organizations to this method.

KEYWORDS: *marketing communication through events, research methodology, organizations, participants*

In what concerns communicating with the public we have as historical reference points ever since the time of Greece and Ancient Rome when sports and cultural events were used for political purposes, where more than 50000 people were participating at the Colosseum and 250000 at the Circus Maximus, the product being offering entertainment to the masses of people, but the objective was to attract votes and the sympathy of the people.

The ancient Olympic Games were initially a part of a religious festival in the honour of Zeus, the father of all the Greek gods and goddesses. The festival and the games were held in Olympia, a rural sanctuary in the western part of the Peloponnese. They have begun in the year 776 B.C., when Coroebus, a cook in a town next to the city of Elis, won the stadium race, in a 600 feet long run. According to the literary sources of that time, this was the only athletic competition in the first 13 Olympic Games, until the year 724 B.C. For Greek citizens scattered throughout the city-states, the celebrating the Olympic Games was an occasion to get reunited. At the Games they discussed important political matters, celebrated common military victories and even formed political and military alliances. But the Games were not only an occasion to discuss political events; they were also the cause of some political conflicts.

A key element of marketing is represented by the communication with the stakeholders, through a diversity of methods and communication channels, among them

being the communication through event. In the last years, in our country it was also developed the communication through the help of events, with clients and other business partners, as well as with their employees. Whether it is a regularly or sporadic activity, events have the role and purpose of bringing together people who have common interests, regardless whether the meeting is held in a real place or virtual one. Taking into account the novelty of the used method, research hasn't yet been done in our country to underline and prove the importance and the way in which events help the organization.

Starting from the fact that in many countries communication strategies through events are more developed in practice than theory, a more detailed description can lead to subsequent developments of the theory. Thus conducting a research regarding the communication with the help of events that activates on the market is tried, in order to see the importance of the mentioned method.

Therefore the conducting of two researches to see from two perspectives, from the point of view of the organizations to measure the efficiency, profitability, productivity and importance they place on events was pursued; and from the point of view of the participants if they see their usefulness, meaning if they reach their proposed goal and what improvements should organizations make in order to motivate the participants to take part in this kind of events, when participating at the event is not a work task and attendance is not compulsory. The methodology of the two researches will be described:

Methodology for the Questionnaire which will be applied to the Organizations

The decisional problem

One of the basic elements of marketing is represented by the communication with the stakeholders, through a diversity of methods and communication channels, among them being the communication through event. In the last years, in our country it was also developed the communication through the help of events, with clients and other business partners, as well as with their employees. Whether it is a regularly or sporadic activity, events have the role and purpose of bringing together people who have common interests, regardless whether the meeting is held in a real place or virtual one.

Taken into account the novelty of the used method, research hasn't been done yet in our country to underline its importance and the way in which organizations implement it. Starting from the fact that in Romania communication strategies through events are more developed in practice than in theory, a more detailed description of the practice can lead to future developments of the theory.

The purpose of the research

Starting from the problem which was presented in the previous stage, this research has the purpose of studying the process of implementation of the communication activities through events within organizations, for profit or not for profit, especially in order to determine if this process is seen as a way of efficient communication with the stakeholders.

Establishing objectives, and some of the most important objectives of the research for the organizations are:

- A) identifying the for profit and not for profit organizations that have organized events which were addressed to clients as well as employees, except the organizations that have as their main object of activity organizing events;
- B) establishing the reasons why the organizations did not organize events;

- C) the intention to organize events and whom it addresses, and finding out the reasons behind the lack of organizing events;
- D) identifying types of companies an organization goes to when it wants to communicate through an event addressed to clients or other business partners;
- E) determining the degree of control of the organization, when it hires a firm which specializes in organizing events;
- F) establishing the main types of events, organized by the organization which are addressed to the public in the external environment;
- G) determining the domains which are sponsored by the organization and the main reasons which are at the basis of the decision to support an action, as a sponsor;

The next step after establishing the objectives of the research is the formulation of the hypotheses according to the previously established objectives.

Defining the researched collectivity, the observation unit and the survey unit

The researched collectivity is represented by the companies which function on the territory of Romania, from the urban environment (cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants), national or foreign, from any domain of activity, except for those that organize events, others than the ones which have as main object of activity organizing events.

The observation unit is represented by the organization which communicates through events also, with clients, business partners, as well as employees.

The survey unit is represented by a member of the organization (the general manager, the marketing manager, the sales manager or an employee of the firm who is in charge with organizing events).

Establishing the manner of collecting and systemizing information

In order to be able to respond to the objectives established within this research, a series of variables of the research were established which were pursued in the case of each organization.

For measuring as accurately as possible the phenomena pursued within this research, metrical as well as non-metrical scales were used.

In case of this research, the “face to face” survey was used as method of collecting information and the questionnaire was used as an instrument.

Determining the size and structure of the sample

In order to determine the *size of the sample* on which this research will be made, the following formula was used:

$$n = \frac{t^2 \times p(1-p)}{\Delta_{\omega}^2},$$

where „n” represents the number of organizations that the sample is made of, „t” represents a coefficient which corresponds to the probability with which the results of the research are guaranteed;

„p” represents the non-percentage weight of the sample components which possess the researched characteristic;

“ Δ_{ω} ” represents the error margin.

In the case of this research there is a 95% probability of guaranteeing the research results, for which $t = 1,96$ and the error margin is $\pm 5\%$. The value assigned to „p” is of $0,66 \cong 0,7$, according to the hypothesis according to which six organizations out of nine use communication through events within the promotion mix.

Taking these data into account, we have obtained an increase of the sample of:

$$n = \frac{1,96^2 \times 0,7 \times 0,3}{0,05^2} = 322,6 \cong 323 \text{ respondents.}$$

In order to determine the *sample structure* the stratified sampling was used, taking into account criteria referring to the ownership type, number of employees and turnover, types of organizations, profit or not for profit domain.

The methodology for the questionnaire which will be applied to Employees/Participants

The decisional problem

One of the basic elements of marketing is represented by the communication with the employees, and the communication with the help of events which is addressed to the employees is a process through which an organization aligns and motivates its employees at all levels and positions, to permanently deliver to the client a positive experience which will lead to achieving the general objective of the organization.

In our country also this method of communication through events with the employees of the organization has been developed recently, among multinational organizations as well as national ones.

No research has been done yet among organizations that carry on their activities in Romania, regarding the communication with the help of events among employees, a fact which will lead to a progress from a practical point of view as well as from a theoretical one of this method of communication.

Establishing objectives for the research addressed to Participants, and among the most important ones can be mentioned:

- A) establishing the degree of knowledge of the employees in which domains the company they work for sponsors;
- B) identifying the companies and the reasons why the respondents would still participate at sponsored events, at the company they work for or at other companies;
- C) determining the types of events that are addressed to the clients or other business partners of the organization for the companies that the respondents work for as well as other companies;
- D) the notoriety of the organizations which sponsors / organizes different events, which the respondents participated at;
- E) establishing the degree of productivity of the events which are addressed to employees, and proposals of improving them.

The next step after establishing the research objectives is formulating the hypotheses according to the objectives, previously established for the questionnaire which is addressed to the Participants.

Defining the researched collectivity, the observation unit and the survey unit

The researched collectivity is represented by employees who are over 18 years of age, and the organizations which they work for, organizes events for clients and business partners as well as for employees and does not have as main object of activity organizing events for other companies. And the organizations activate on the territory of Romania, from the urban environment (cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants), national ones or foreign, regardless of the activity domain.

The observation unit is represented by the employees who participate at events which are organized by the company they work for, which are addressed to them or to the clients of the organization.

The survey unit is represented by a member of the organization.

In order to be able to measure as accurately as possible the phenomena pursued within this research, metrical as well as non-metrical scales were used.

In case of this research, the "face to face" survey was used as method of collecting information and the questionnaire was used as an instrument.

Determining the size and structure of the sample

In order to determine the *size of the sample* on which this research will be made, the following formula was used:

$$n = \frac{t^2 \times p(1-p)}{\Delta_{\omega}^2},$$

where „n” represents the number of organizations that the sample is made of;

„t” represents a coefficient which corresponds to the probability with which the results of the research are guaranteed;

„p” represents the non-percentage weight of the sample components which possess the researched characteristic;

“ Δ_{ω} ” represents the error margin.

In the case of this research there is a 95% probability if guaranteeing the research results, for which $t = 1,96$ and the error margin is $\pm 5\%$.

The value assigned to „p” is 0,3 according to the hypothesis according to which three organizations out of ten use communication through events to communicate with the employees as well as with the clients and other business partners.

Taking these data into account, we have obtained a size of the sample of:

$$n = \frac{1,96^2 \times 0,3 \times 0,7}{0,05^2} = 322,69 \cong 323 \text{ respondents.}$$

In order to determine the *sample structure* the stratified sampling was used, taking into account criteria referring to the residence area, level of income, age, level of education.

Taking into account the fact that organizations are trying to communicate in various ways and as efficiently as possible, and clients have become more and more elevated and educated, and the fact that they are bombarded daily with hundreds of publicity messages must not be omitted, and their segmentation is more and more accentuated and a mass marketing approach cannot be applied with the same effect to the stakeholders, where we can include business partners, clients, suppliers, debtors as well as

employees of the company. Organizations must find the most efficient, effective and productive methods through which they can attract stakeholders to the events they are organizing, knowing the fact that spending free time is considered, and has become an important element of our society. And the results of the researches to prove which are the most profitable and which events have a positive impact in what regards communication through events.

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