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**Creation of integrated events: the case of Cervezas Victoria at the Malaga Carnival**

***La creación de eventos integrados: el caso de Cervezas Victoria en el Carnaval de Málaga***

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**Abstract**

Events have become the best option for reaching consumers and brand-users. This project expounds the precedents and methodology for creating integrated events, proposed by Galmés and Argudo (2016). Furthermore, it aims to present trends in marketing communication strategies associated with integrating channels and creating experiences. To this end, the campaign conducted by Cervezas Victoria at the Málaga Carnival (Spain) in 2019 was analysed. This campaign combined both off-line and on-line media, which were the largest disseminators and transmitters of the brand values. These values were transferred from the brand to the city event and vice versa. Hence, this inter-relationship and synergy have enabled new means of communication to be created. These modes of communication and their results are presented in the conclusions.

**Keywords**

Digital Media; integrated Advertising; Integrated Events; Málaga Carnival; Online Advertising; Victoria Beers.

**Resumen**

*Los eventos se han convertido en la mejor forma de acercarse a los consumidores y usuarios de marcas. En la presente investigación se exponen los antecedentes y la metodología sobre la creación de eventos integrados, propuesta por Galmés y Argudo (2016) así como la evolución de las estrategias de comunicación de marketing hacia la integración de canales y la creación de experiencias. Se pretende exponer dicha tendencia a través del ejemplo del caso de Cervezas Victoria en el Carnaval de Málaga analizando la campaña llevada a cabo por la cervecera en 2019. Dicha campaña combina medios off con medios on, que se convierten una vez más en los grandes difusores y transmisores de los valores de la marca. Dichos valores se trasladan de la marca al acontecimiento de la ciudad y viceversa, fusionándose y dotándose mutuamente de nuevos matices comunicacionales. Dichos matices y resultados se exponen en las conclusiones de esta investigación.*

**Palabras clave**

*Carnaval de Málaga; cervezas Victoria; eventos integrados; medios digitales; publicidad integrada; publicidad online.*

## 1. Introduction

Integrated marketing communication has been defined as that which combines online and offline strategies, resources and tools in order to reach a larger target market and to obtain a more comprehensive brand experience. It arose in a setting in which traditional marketing communication approaches started becoming less effective. Partly as a result of changes in communication models target markets have become unpredictable with traditional marketing communication and all tools need to be integrated in order to establish synergies and to make meaningful offers. In this setting, experiential marketing arose, which is based on communication and actions that give targets the chance to directly become involved with the brand.

In this research, the integrated marketing campaign of Cervezas Victoria and the Málaga Carnival will be analysed.

The relationship between Cervezas Victoria and Fundación Ciudadana del Carnaval de Málaga (The Citizen's Foundation of the Carnival of Málaga) goes back to 2012, a year in which the brand, which belongs to the Damm consortium, became an official sponsor of the event. Fundación Ciudadana del Carnaval de Málaga, is a non-profit organization which appears in the Foundations Registry of the Regional Government of Andalusia. The foundation today dates back to 1966. It was originally the previous Association of Friends of the Carnival, which had been in charge of organizing the festival since 1979.

In 2012 Cervezas Victoria became a sponsor of the event when it made an agreement with this Foundation. The brand has undergone many changes throughout its 90 years of history. Founded in 1928, in the nineties it went into commercial decline, and was taken off the market. This situation was reverted when the Damm consortium took it over, relaunched the brand in 2007 and began selling it in and around Málaga. In almost twelve years, Damm has turned Victoria into one of its leading regional brands, similar to Keler in San Sebastián or Turia in Valencia, placing Victoria as a brand that is competitive with the main breweries.

Moreover, in 2017, Victoria opened a factory and bottling plant in the city, thereby regaining physical presence and consolidating its bond with its land of birth. It must be remembered that the only brewery that has been constantly present in the city with a factory is the Mahou-San Miguel consortium.

## 2. Trend in marketing communication: integrated strategies and experiential marketing

A few years ago, the term Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) was used to name a series of tools which were planned separately and that sometimes, were unconnected (Kitchen 2005). In today's business world brand managers have had to change their approach. They have now adopted integrated strategies for all communication tools in order to transmit consistent messages to a target market. Today, there has been a clear trend towards Integrated Marketing Communication, which stems from a new way of conceiving and carrying out a marketing communication mix.

Victoria (2005) states the term was coined at North-western University. It was there Caywood (1997) first used it. Since then there have been many Anglo-Saxon works dedicated to analysing IMCs in depth (De Pelsmacker and Kitchen, 2005; Clow and Baack, 2005; Schultz and Schultz, 2004; Broderick and Pickton, 2005; Holm, 2006; Belch and Belch, 2009; and Andrews and Shimp, 2013).

The goal of IMCs is to make communication effective among different marketing tools (personal selling, advertising, public relations, digital marketing, events organization...) and the remaining activities of the company which might influence the brand image and value perceived by a target group. Integrating a marketing communication tool means the advantages each of them has, makes up for the limitations others have. The results from each communication tool are reinforced with those from other ones they are integrated with (Kitchen 2005)

In their minds people integrate all these messages about a brand, and do not distinguish where they come from. For this reason, companies must plan all marketing communication in a synchronized and associated manner in order to transmit a message that is consistent and in keeping with the brand. The purpose of this is to harness the advantages of each tool in the integrated strategy. For this reason, the results from each of the marketing communication strategies must be known as well as what impact they have on the overall message. This is the most important challenge when using an Integrated Marketing Communication strategy. (Rguez. Ardua, 2007)

When adopting this integrating approach for marketing communications the means of planning changes. This no longer concerns maximizing the effectiveness of marketing communications on mass

audiences for a given budget. Now, the aim is to relate to the target market, using types of communication which are more in keeping with their lifestyles. This is done in order to reach a segmented target market, at the ideal time, with the right message, by creating positive experiences.

Lindstrom (2004) describes the IMC strategy from three basic concepts: synergy among channels, flexible tone, and response to consumers preferences.

Synergy amongst channels refers to a change from passive resources to interactive ones. Therefore, it is advisable to take the target from a passive media to an interactive one, such as, for example, from television to a website, or from a social network to an event. Flexible tone of voice means each tool requires a different tone, but the coherence of the brands lies in their central values, in concepts and in their own style. Finally, response to consumer preferences consists in seeking the marketing communication tools the consumer prefers, not those the company wants, or those which are easiest to plan. In this respect, more and more consumers look for more interactive tools which enable them to experiment with the brands.

In this vein, there are many voices like Cluetrain's (developed by some innovative marketing professionals, which support the notion of "having a conversation" with their customers, and seek means of general dialogue which are respectful to them), or the IXMA manifesto (International Experiential Marketing Association. This is made up of international experts in experiential marketing. In the "IXMA Manifesto" there are various phrases which state that the public identify with brands from experiences. They consider "markets are conversational" and that "consumers want respect, recognition and to have a good self-image in marketing communications". It has been demonstrated that the best way to give them this is through "experiences which are personally relevant to them, memorable, sensory, emotional and meaningful". In this new context, events organization has been proposed as a very interesting tool for companies to relate to their audiences from having conversations and through experiences. This is the understanding of experienced marketing experts.

Doctor Bernd H. Schmitt (2006), at the University of Columbia developed a conceptual framework to create and manage brand experiences. He focuses on two fundamental concepts: "Strategic Experiential Modules" (SEMs) and Experience Providers" (ExPros).

Strategic Experiential Modules are different types of experiences, which are defined from some structures and principles, whereas Experience Providers are tools by which SEMs are created.

Experiences are private events which occur as a result of a specific stimulus. Marketing professionals can provide stimulus which results in some specific experiences for a target market. They must choose the experiences providers (ExPros) in order to generate a determined brand experience. From this experience the audience will feel closer to the brand. Marketing communication managers will be able to define the type of experiences they must provide in order to obtain a determined response or a change in attitude and/or a relationship with the brand. Experiences can be dissected in different modules, each of which have different structures and processes. They can be defined as five types of Experiential Modules: sensations, feelings, thoughts, activities and relationships. (Schmitt, 2006)

These SEMs have been defined from an in-depth analysis of the contributions to the previously described experience dimensions in different fields of knowledge from philosophy, anthropology, psychology, business management and marketing perspectives of the experience. The SENSE SEM provides sensations that appeal to the senses which create sensory experiences through the five senses. The FEEL SEM appeals to the customers' deepest emotions and may create experiences in which the brand has an emotional appeal. The THINK module works on intellect, creating cognitive experiences in which problems are solved and in which an audience is attracted by creative means. The ACT SEM may create physical experiences or interactions with the brand, showing the target other ways of doing things and enriching their experiences. Finally, the RELATE SEM acts on social relationships, tries to create optimum ones with ideal self-images and with others and may appeal to a craving to be perceived positively and group belonging. The experiential strategies are not usually based on just one type of SEM, but on "Experiential Hybrids", in which two or more SEMs are combined, or on "Holistic Experiences" which combine the five Experiential Modules (Schmitt 2006).

Strategical decisions on experiential marketing must be taken after planning. Firstly, the focus the strategy will have must be decided as well as the "Experiential Modules" that must be chosen to create an experience. Next, decisions must be taken on how to carry out each SEM. To make decision-taking easier, Schmitt designed an Experiential Matrix which helps to plan an experience, and is adapted to the needs and goals of each strategy.

### 3. Marketing communication events and their role in integrated strategy

Experiential tools, such as Marketing Communication for Events (MCE) play a crucial role within the integrated strategy: they let guests share real experiences which revolve around the brands (Galmés, 2010). With face-to face relationships there can be very direct contact with a specific segment, and interaction with the brand is through a fully sensorial experience instead of simple visual or auditive contact. (Schmitt, Rogers and Vrotos, 2003).

The MCE must provide satisfactory experiences. If they do not provide any benefit to the consumer, whether this be physical, emotional or intellectual, there will be no point in doing them. Experiences in themselves are worthless. A brand experience which leaves the target indifferent will not work. If customers do not perceive any benefit, it will become just one more means of marketing communication, which they are already saturated with. However, if the experience is satisfactory, it will remain in the consumers' memory and will have an influence on their satisfaction and loyalty. (Galmes and Victoria, 2012).

For an event to be effective within the experiential marketing strategy, it must create a brand experience that the target makes an emotional connection with, be remembered and those attending must speak about it to others. We could say that events are an effective tool for responding to the needs of prosumers (the prosumer- concept has been developed from joining the words producer-and consumer and refers to those who produce whilst they consume. Alvin Toffler coined the term in the Third Wave. At present, in the world of 3.0 communication, a prosumer is a potential customer who has an active role in producing contents. They look for interesting types of communication for themselves and their networks, which can satisfy their craving for novelty and emotion. (Schmitt, 1999)

According to Masterman and Wood, for a MEC to create or reinforce an emotional bond which is difficult to break, the shared brand experience must meet a series of requirements (Masterman and Wood, 2006):

- Involvement In the event experience: the target must be emotionally involved with the brand, the event and, of course, with the experience.
- Interaction: ambassadors of the brand must develop positive interactions with the target, with other attendants, with the exhibitions and activities, with the brand and with the products.
- Immersion: the target must participate in the experience in all senses. Moreover, it must be isolated from other messages.
- Intensity: the experience must be memorable and have a very high impact.
- Individuality: the event experience must be perceived as one's own. The presential relationship, in which experiences can be individual and personal must be taken advantage of.
- Innovation, New experiences must be offered. It is crucial to make the most of design resources.
- Integrity. The event experience must be seen by the target as being a genuine and authentic one which provides real benefits and gives value to consumers.

Therefore, we could say that the capacity of the events to generate brand experiences are the main value they have in the marketing communication strategy. The MCEs may reinforce the results of other less experiential tools, and they, in turn, may be promoted by other ones. The events need to be integrated with tools that enable the range of experiences to be broadened and the results to be evaluated. These resources must be in accordance with the preferences of the target market. So, digital resources and social networks supplement events in experiential strategies. Moving events more into the forefront, these may have a pivotal role when the integrated communication strategy focuses on experience.

#### 3.1. Integrated experience

Integrated campaigns from a marketing communication event must be conceived in three phases:

- Announcing the experience. At this time the target market must be invited to participate. This phase needs to be designed to attract a target, making them see they could experience something that would be interesting to them, and which could only be experienced once. To do this, there are traditional resources (personal invitations sent by email or by announcements in the mass communication media) and digital media (web or blog about the event, sharing on social networks, invitations by text messaging, whatsapp or other apps).

- Experience during the Event. This phase consists in the experience of the event in itself. It is the time at which the target - which responded to the invitation- becomes emotionally attached to the brand. To design the experience during the event, resources must be used creatively, with a main argument, by establishing a suitable rhythm, with an attempt to surprise and be memorable, by maintaining coherence between the media, by using innovative formats and creating meaningful experiences. At this stage new technologies and resources can be used to design the experience of the attendants, as virtual reality, streaming or as interactive apps.
- Sharing Experience. This phase concerns making the most of the experience the participants have had and spreading it by means of other integrated tools in the campaign. The participants will probably be a relatively small group, and that there may be a high budget for the event. Therefore, the "experience" should be shared as much as possible with other interest groups. Using digital media, the experience may be spread to an audience that has not been directly present in the experience, but may have been involved in the digital experience which is designed to give the event continuity. Digital media can also be used for participants to have lasting memories of the experience by sending attendants pictures of videos recorded in the event. In addition, marketing plans that go viral can be planned, so attendants share part of the experience they have had in the event.

After the experience the results must be evaluated, since this is the only way of confirming that the experience created and shared has reached the objectives set for a determined target market. Therefore, when planning events some specific goals will have been set for the event experience within the integrated strategy. Only if the goals of the IMC campaign are clearly defined can the role the event will play within the strategy be defined. Therefore, if planning and the MCE brand experience is designed well, the relationship the target has with the brand will have improved for good, and its perception of the brand will not be the same as before.

### 3.2. The objectives of the experience of an integrated event

In order to delimit the role an event will have within an integrated strategy, goals must be clearly defined. Firstly, some objectives must be set for the integrated marketing communication strategy, and what the desired effects from the MCE experience will be must be established. Organizing an event always means making an investment, which can only be justified according to some goals and results which will be evaluated once the experience is shared.

Measuring attendance and sharing on media is not enough to evaluate events. Evaluations must be approached from the goals set within the brand experience in the event. (Masterman y Wood, 2008)

The approaches of various authors in respect to experiential objectives for events have been reviewed. Masterman and Wood deem the goal of an experience that is created in an event might be to develop a relationship with the audience; associate the brand with concepts the segment market is interested in; and to improve the image of the brand, products or the company.

Lenderman (2008) determines four main goals of marketing communication events:

- To reach a degree of intimacy between the brand and target market: a well-planned experiential event may achieve personal and close interaction between the target market and the company.
- To create brand communities: interaction with the target market may even go beyond this and might make consumers identify with each other and share moments and experiences which revolve around a brand.
- To obtain consumer responses: when «brand ambassadors» talk to the attendants of an event, there is a priceless dialogue (Lenderman 2008).
- To create rumours and broaden the event experience: for Rosen, the key to "buzz marketing" is to reach many "strategic connectors" and to do this, people must be considered as being part of a network. The goal of this is to directly access the most strategic cores of the network (Rosen 2009). It is here where the MCEs may play an important part, since if an event is capable of accessing this "network core" and in creating positive interactions and experiences, the rumour might spread with great speed.

In conclusion, we might say that when an event is planned, the aim is for the target to have a satisfactory experience of the brand, products or organization; and from that point, to reach some objectives which

may be assessed from this experience. The goals of an integrated event experience may be classified into three categories; sharing on media or creating rumours; creating or reinforcing the experiential relationship with the brand, and encouraging a determined behaviour (praising the brand, mixing together and with the brands in order to create brand communities).

These goals may be approached bearing in mind that achieving them can be evaluated. So, they must be specific, measurable, accepted, realistic, timed and defined within an integrated and experiential context.

### **3.3. Evaluating experience**

Any evaluation of these experiences must focus on researching what the experience of those attending the event has been like and, more importantly, if such a thing is possible, their long-term responses.

To evaluate the MCEs quantitative and qualitative methods may be combined, and usually quantitative ones come first in order to identify trends. These are then explored in-depth with qualitative methods. A methodology cannot be developed for use in all events, but an overall methodological model can be established, which is applicable to each situation according to the objectives of the event experience and those of an integrated strategy.

The evaluation system must be capable of evaluating the results of the experience for each phase.

#### **3.3.1. Evaluating the Announcement**

The objective of this phase must be established in terms of attendance. To evaluate how efficient it is, the number of attendants who come must be measured as well as the characteristics of the target market who have responded to it. In most events this number is not as important as the attendant profile. The announcement is successful if it manages to attract the foreseen number of people; and if the profile matches that of the defined target market. At this stage evaluation methods may be simple quantitative ones which provides some control over those attending the event.

#### **3.3.2. Evaluation of the Experience during the event**

The experience objectives during the event may be classified into two categories: to reinforce an experiential relationship with the brand and to encourage a certain type of behaviour. In these two categories one or more specific, timed and measurable objectives may be set. Any method may be used which enables it to be determined how far the set goals defined have been reached. For example, the attendants may be interviewed afterwards to find out if they would be interested in being interviewed by the sales team. Also, the method put forward by Reichheld (2006) may be used and attendants may be asked about whether they would recommend the event to others. Moreover, the experiences scale may be used which allows the experiential relationship to be compared before and after the experience (Schmitt, Rogers and Vrotsos, 2003).

#### **3.3.3. Evaluating Dissemination**

The dissemination goals are approached in term of appearances in traditional communication media or by presence in digital media. In order to measure the extent of media dissemination, a summary of the press may be made in which the quantity and the quality of appearances in traditional media is observed. To evaluate dissemination in digital media the web analyser is used with which the activity can be tracked and how viral the experience has been can be analysed.

From all this, it can be deducted that just by making a rigorous evaluation of the results, it is possible to measure how profitable the integrated experience has been. And, therefore this justifies organization of the event as the main theme in an integrated communication strategy.

## **4. The integrated communication campaign for Cervezas Victoria at the Málaga Carnaval.**

Using the Galmés and Argudo (2016) model, shown in the introduction, the integrated campaign for Cervezas Victoria at the Málaga Carnaval has been analysed.

The general goal of the brand, and, in turn, of each activity is to explore the traditions of the city in order to create a bond between Málaga, its citizens and Victoria in order to maintain and transfer the values associated with it since 1929.

Being the official sponsor of Victoria at the Málaga Carnival means that in the last seven years both brands have joined together. The advertising agreement was signed in private and was confidential, but here, integrated advertising of the Victoria brand, specifically for the Málaga Carnival festival entailed making observations for this purpose. By following this three-step model, we can describe:

- Announcing the experience. Since here this is a third-party event, which Cervezas Victoria has participated in, the announcement about the experience was much more widespread than if just the brewery had made it. Apart from the conventional media (the press, radio, posters and local television), the social networks, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook were used for inviting residents of Málaga to take part in this popular festival with the hashtags, #carnavalmg #malagueñayexquisita #cervezavictoria, to mention just a few. Moreover, with these networks the brand has, organised different performances at the Málaga Carnival: the end of the Cervantes Theatre, the street Carnival and the Burial of the Anchovy. In these three acts, the appearance of Cerveza Victoria had been foreseen with brand and product placements, both of which were integrated into the scenes with the target, which gave rise to a very important brand experience, in which leisure and fun was shared with the target, one that identifies with, is confident and reasserted with the Málaga beer brand.
- Experience during an Event. The 2019 Málaga Carnival began on the 3rd of February with the first edition of *Las previas* ( warm-up activities at the start of the carnival) in the Cortijo de Torres neighbourhood, where associations in the area held a festival during the day with Carnival performances, comedy bars and drinks and the Victoria brand appeared with products that were integrated into the event. This formula was repeated in the following editions of the *previas* on the 9th of February in the Jardín and Teatinos neighbourhoods of the city, on the 10th of February in Calle de La Union and in Alhaurín de la Torre, on the 16th of February in the Palma-Palmilla District and on the 17th of February the *previas* came to a close with the same formula and Victoria could be seen in the El Perchel neighbourhood. Additionally, on the 7th of February, with the preliminary phase of the Official Contest for Singing Groups, the main part of the festival began. At this time, there was heightened activity about the event on the official Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts for Victoria and the Carnival. As for the online channel, the @cervezavictoria and @carnavalmg accounts provided draws related to the event. The most outstanding observation at this time was the stories appearing on Instagram.
- Sharing the experience. As for online advertising, the main digital media in the city made campaigns focused on this field. A large part of the advertising stemmed from the marketing communication plan drawn up by Málaga Council, whose data is confidential, but which contains different formats of dynamic advertising in digital editions in the three main newspapers in Málaga: SUR, La Opinión de Málaga and Málaga Hoy. In this way, online advertising was important within the marketing communication plan for Victoria and the Carnival. In this plan, an advertising campaign was designed with traditional media: four local television stations (Canal Málaga, 101TV, PTV and 7tv), the three previously mentioned paid paper newspapers and the free paper Viva Málaga, apart from radio advertising: Onda Cero, SER, COPE, Dial, Europa FM or Los 40 Principales. On radio and television, the format was 20 second spots, apart from associated contents. As for the printed press, in Viva Málaga at least two advertising banners on the front page were published, and on three paid newspapers at least five inside colour advertising banners have been published. In all of them, Cervezas Victoria appeared as the main sponsor which had wide-ranging presence. In terms of outdoors advertising, the Málaga Carnival had important spaces in the city for this. Around 100 banderols were placed on lampposts in different circuits of Málaga. In addition, in the Plaza de la Constitución, the nerve centre of the street Carnival, between the 22nd of February and the 3rd of March, a large-scale stage was put up where Cervezas Victoria was seen with two large size vertical canvases. Moreover, the brand appeared on the open-air bar situated in this square with a large customized marquee where there was an image of the brewery. Lastly, thanks to the agreement with the sponsor, Cervezas Victoria appeared at the official press conferences made by the Fundación Ciudadana del Carnaval de Málaga and the city council. Data provided by this foundation gave the number of Twitter followers as over one million users, and confirmed that this year 400% more printouts were made than in the previous edition. Lastly, on Instagram, the Carnival foundation had 40% more followers on its official account in January, February and the first week of March.

## 5. Conclusions

An analysis of the Cervezas Victoria campaign at the Málaga Carnival helps us understand that integrating communication tools every day makes more sense in experiential contexts. The key to these types of campaigns is to create and share experiences, which enhance the relationship between the brand and a certain target group. Here, this means the beer brand and the city of Málaga via the Carnival.

We could summarize strategic approaches which have been analysed in this chapter with two key concepts.

- Experience: the marketing department for Cervezas Victoria, planned an experiential communication strategy. The main tool for all of this was a specific event in the city. In fact, this brand of beers could be seen in the most important events in the city of Málaga. This is an event that has been enriched thanks to contributions made by the brand which has helped the target have a meaningful experience in the way of emotions, sensations, thoughts, actions and relationships. The objective was to create personal and close interactions between the target market and the Victoria Cervezas brand. The result was attendants had a positive experience and decided to share this on their social networks. In the campaign, an event that already existed - The Málaga Carnival-was taken advantage of when designing the experience, and this was just as positive for the target which participated in it.
- Integration: in order to fulfil the end goal of the campaign, the strategic integration approach was crucial. The main part of the strategy was the experiential event, but the key to success was to establish synergies between this and digital media. These media were used to qualify the target, to improve the experience they had at the event, and to share the experience. Thanks to its activity on social networks, Cervezas Victoria was part of the event and invited consumers to participate in an experience. As the target had a meaningful experience with the brand, they were given the opportunity to share it on social networks, and to do so media and tools were provided for sharing part of this experience, in videos, posts, comments and photographs.

With the Cervezas Victoria brand, in the integrated campaign under analysis, the main value the event provided in the marketing communication strategy was seen to be its capacity to create and share experiences amongst the representatives of the brand, the attendants and their networks. However, without integrating digital media and social networks this would not have been possible, especially, in the phases for announcing and sharing the experience. Moreover, by integrating digital media, the objectives set for these campaigns could be evaluated.

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