

PROMOTING EVENTS THROUGH PRINT MEDIA

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Abstract: *This paper defines event and identifies specific types of event (agritourism events, cultural events, recreation events, religious events, sporting events, and tourism events). It identifies the most relevant types of events from the perspective of their physicality – online / virtual events and offline / physical events – as well as the most common types of offline / physical events promoted through print media (breakfasts, lunches and dinners, carnivals / festivals, conferences / conventions, exhibition / expositions or trade fairs / shows, roadshows, seminars, and summits). The paper shows that the promotion of offline / physical events requires a multi-touch approach: besides banners, call downs, displays, flash mobs, graffiti, radio advertising, search engine marketing, sponsored emails, television advertising, telesales outreach, etc., there are also advertorial, direct mail, media / news / press release and paid ad / advertisement / promotion. It also identifies the promotion tools with the widest range of forms.*

Key words: *promotion, event, print media*

INTRODUCTION

According to [27], the *Marketing Program Investment Mix in the U.S.A* in 2017 had the structure shown in Figure 1 below.

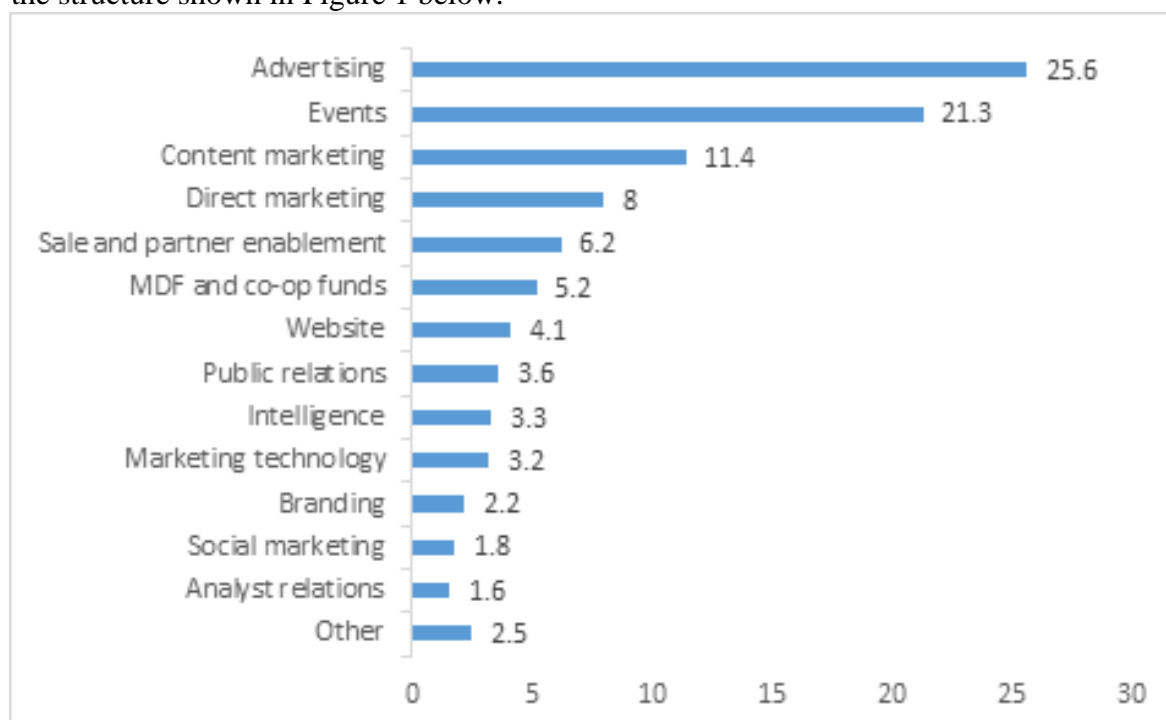


Figure 1. Marketing Program Investment Mix in 2017 (after [27])

It is easy to note that “Events” got more than 20% of the marketing budget, which speaks of itself about their importance.

Event is defined by English language dictionaries as “planned public or social occasions” – cf. [34]). There are two major **types of events** – *online / virtual* and *offline / physical* [37].

Online / Virtual Events connect presenters and participants through a web-based interface. They are less costly than in-person events and allow organisers to easily reach a geographically dispersed audience, which makes them convenient for both sponsors and attendees. The most common **types of online / virtual events include live streaming events** (“event transmitted live over the Internet” – cf. [34]), *virtual events* (“events carried out, accessed, or stored by means of a computer, especially over a network” – cf. [34]), and *webinars* (“seminars conducted over the Internet” – cf. [34]). The promotion of this type of events does not require print media because everything is done online (by sending emails).

Offline / Physical Events require physical attendance and more investment than virtual events, but face-to-face interactions are essential to building long-term business relationships. The most common **types of offline / physical events include breakfasts, lunches and dinners, carnivals / festivals, conferences / conventions, exhibition / expositions or trade fairs / shows, roadshows, seminars, and summits**:

- *Breakfasts, lunches and dinners* (it is interesting to note that English language dictionaries consider only *dinner* an *offline / physical event*: “a formal evening meal, typically one in honour of a person or event” – cf. [34]):
 - Are more targeted;
 - Are typically small: with 8-10 people, providing a private setting for networking for the executives, or larger, with 50 or more people, including thought leadership presentations as part of the event;
- Can be both customer and prospect focused;
- *Carnivals / festivals* (“a day or period of celebration, typically for religious reasons; an organized series of concerts, plays, or films, typically one held annually in the same place” – cf. [34]) [2, 8, 43]:
 - Gather attendees for the purpose of entertainment or worship;
 - May be targeted locally, regionally, or nationally;
 - May vary in length;
- *Conferences / conventions* (“formal meetings of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days” – cf. [34]) [28, 42]:
 - Are company-specific;
 - Are held by companies for training or educational purposes;
 - Are larger than seminars but smaller than trade fairs / shows;
 - Are usually 1-2 days;
 - Gather attendees for the purpose of delivering information (e.g., a user summit);
- *Exhibition / expositions or trade fairs / shows* (“public displays of products and services” – cf. [34]) [28]:
 - Are gatherings of individuals in a particular industry or profession in a forum that typically features numerous companies in a specific market;
 - May network;
 - May show off a product;
 - May strengthen its presence in the market;
 - May usually be more than 1-2 days;
- *Roadshows* (“touring political or promotional campaigns” – cf. [34]):
 - Are more targeted to regions vs. nationwide;
 - Are smaller versions of a conference or summit;
 - Are usually small day or half-day;

- *Seminars* (“conferences or other meetings for discussion or training” – cf. [34]):
 - Are meetings, roadshows, or field events smaller than conferences or summits;
 - May be set up similar to a classroom lecture, where an expert shares information with the audience in a traditional, formal style;
 - May be styled as roadshow or field events, through which marketers take their company’s message out to the public or to employees or partners;
- *Summits* (“meetings between heads of [organisations]” – cf. [34]):
 - Are usually a few hours;
 - May include a breakfast, a lunch, or a dinner.

Current usage also mentions agritourism events [30, 36], cultural events [29], recreation events [31], religious events [14], sporting events usually considered mega-events [9, 31, 39, 44], tourism events [31] and event tourism [8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 43, 44].

There are also small-scale events [11,12] and mega-events [9, 22, 31, 39].

The promotion of this type of events requires mainly print media though emails may also be used.

It is not surprising that there are synergies between traditional media such as print, radio and TV. Moreover, there is no strict wall of partition between the use of traditional and modern media since print media containing website addresses often pull viewers to websites that may contain links to other online media [5, 13, 38]. In Ghana, a print magazine may be delivered in TV version as a form of sponsorship [1].

Though considered traditional and even obsolescent, **print media** are still an important source of referrals [13]. [26] analysed the impact of the multi-media vasectomy promotion campaign in Brazil, in 1989, and found that, during the pre-campaign, 55% of callers said they were referred by friends and relatives, 15% by print media, and 5% by television; after six weeks of campaign, television spots shared 58%, friends and relatives shared 20%, print media shared 10%, and radio shared 5%; five month after the campaign, friends and family shared 43%, television shared 34%, print media shared 6%, and radio shared 2%; following the mini-campaign, print media shared between 17% and 20% (newspaper ad and direct mailing). Back in 2002, print media ranked third, after radio and TV, but it was closely followed by the Internet [23]. In 2010, print media had already fallen into disgrace: speaking of health campaigns, [41] said, “Exposure to such messages [magazine and newspapers] is generally passive, resulting from an incidental effect of routine use of media.” According to the *World Press Trend Report* of 2012, “2.5 billion people read print newspapers and only 600 million read them in digital form” [4]. Other authors spoke of “the movement away from broadcast and print media towards digitized content distributed via networked communications technologies” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012, in [6]). In 2014, in Australia, newspapers shared 11% and brochures shared 6% of sources of information about events, compared to specific event website (31%), family/friends (26%), past event attendance (13%), information centre (9%), social media (8%), interest groups (6%), TV travel programmes (5%), and travel review websites (5%) [3]. A study carried out in the same year showed that television and print media were still favoured by media consumers in India [35]. In 2015, the decline of print media reached 27% in the EU, 17% worldwide, and 6% in Bulgaria, for instance [40]. In Romania, event promotion and print media relationship has been tackled by very few researchers [21, 32, 33].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material consisted in the literature on the promotion of events through print media published in the last two decades and a half (see **References**).

The research method is a **descriptive** one: it “seeks to describe a situation” (Mishra, 2008, in [25]), and, in our case, to describe promoting events through print media. The **comparative method** (“the systematic comparison of a relatively small number of cases” – [10]) has also been used to compare the two major types of events and of media.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Event marketing can be approached from different perspectives: celebrity endorsements, event selection, integration with strategic planning, measurement of effectiveness, setting objectives, etc. [19].

The **promotion of offline / physical events** requires a multi-touch approach: besides *banners, call downs, displays, flash mobs, graffiti, radio advertising, search engine marketing, sponsored emails, television advertising, telesales outreach*, etc., there are also *advertorial, direct mail, media / news / press release* and *paid ad / advertisement / promotion* [13].

Advertorial refers to “a newspaper or magazine advertisement giving information about a product in the style of an editorial or objective journalistic article” [34]. This is a non-paid form of promotion.

Direct mail refers to “unsolicited commercial literature sent to prospective customers through the post” [34] or to “a direct marketing method in which carefully targeted prospects (chosen on the basis of age, income, location, profession, buying pattern, etc.) are presented with custom tailored offers for goods or services via ordinary mail or email” [7]. According to [37], direct mail can take one of the following forms:

- A *gift unique to the area* (e.g., cowboy hat, poker chips, etc.) together with a note from the sales representative;
- A *magnetic / sticker calendar* that can be put on a cubicle or desk;
- A *simple postcard* promoting the event;
- Several *reminder postcards* each week before the event starts, mentioning the reason(s) why the event should be attended.

Media / news / press release refers to as “an official statement issued to newspapers giving information on a particular matter” [34] or to “written, audio taped, or video-taped matter about a book, event, person, or program, presented by its promoters or principals to the media for editorial comment and free coverage” [7].

Paid ad / advertisement / promotion refers to “the publicizing of a product, organization, or venture so as to increase sales or public awareness” [34]:

- *Billboard* “a large outdoor board for displaying advertisements” [34];
- *Bulletin* “a short official statement or broadcast summary of news” [34];
- *Card* “a card with a person's name and other details printed on it for purposes of identification, for example a business card” [34];
- *Catalogue* “a publication containing details of items for sale, especially one produced by a mail-order company” [34];
- *Flyer* “a small handbill advertising an event or product” [34];
- *Info-graphic* “a visual representation of information or data, e.g. as a chart or diagram” [34];
- *Journal* “a newspaper or magazine that deals with a particular subject or professional activity” [34];

- *Leaflet* “a printed sheet of paper containing information or advertising and usually distributed free” [34];
- *Magazine* “a periodical publication containing articles and illustrations, often on a particular subject or aimed at a particular readership” [34];
- *Newsletter* “a bulletin issued periodically to the members of a society or other organization” [34];
- *Newspaper* “a printed publication (usually issued daily or weekly) consisting of folded unstapled sheets and containing news, articles, advertisements, and correspondence” [34];
- *Poster* “a large printed picture, notice, or advertisement displayed in a public place” [34];
- *Publication* “a book or journal issued for public sale” [34];
- *Signboard* “a board displaying the name or logo of a business or product” [34].

The list above support [23] claim that “Creative marketers will find that advertising is not limited to magazines, newsletters, and brochures, but rather to virtually any item that will accept print.”

According to [22] and [24], local media (including print) can transform a conference / convention into a mega-event.

CONCLUSIONS

There are two major *types of events* – *online / virtual* and *offline / physical*.

The most common *types of offline / physical events* promoted through print media include *breakfasts, lunches and dinners, carnivals / festivals, conferences / conventions, exhibition / expositions* or *trade fairs / shows, roadshows, seminars, and summits*.

There are also *agritourism events, cultural events, recreation events, religious events, sporting events, and tourism events* to which correspond specific tourism types: *agritourism, cultural tourism, recreational tourism, religious tourism, and sports tourism*, all circumscribing *event tourism*.

There are also *small-scale events* and *mega-events*.

The *promotion of offline / physical events* requires a multi-touch approach: besides *banners, call downs, displays, flash mobs, graffiti, radio advertising, search engine marketing, sponsored emails, television advertising, telesales outreach*, etc., there are also *advertorial, direct mail, media / news / press release* and *paid ad / advertisement / promotion*. *Paid ads* and *direct mail* have the widest range of promotion forms.

Print media are constantly decreasing in importance compared to modern media, since even in *developing nations* (nations where the average income is much lower than in industrial nations, where the economy relies on a few export crops, and where farming is conducted by primitive methods) companies use radio and cell-phones to promote their products and services.

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