

## SET CREATIVE BUILT A FICTITIOUS BRAND TO MEASURE THE REAL POWER OF EXPERIENCE - THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES



**Brands continue to fight for a memorable outcome, with marketing teams who rely on traditional channels, churning out TV and digital spots, and depending on programmatic impressions and retargeted social posts. This cyclical machine then produces analytics reports that answer the same formulaic question: how many people saw, and probably ignored, your campaign?**

**The real question should be: what are these audiences really feeling? What did they actually absorb from your messaging? And crucially are they compelled to take action?**

Whether it's for a B2B live event, a pop-up store for consumers or a brand activation for mixed audiences; we've seen the impact of experiences with our own eyes. However we've also been challenged over and over again by clients to justify why a physical experience is a more effective form of communication than more traditional channels, each of which come with well-established and in some cases, outdated metrics against which success can be judged.

So we decided to conduct an experiment. We created a fictitious drink brand - a bitter orange non-alcohol spirit called "Sevillian" (get it?).

Our audience was introduced to Sevillian in a contextual brand space, a cocktail bar, programmed for "mocktail

making". The audience consumed the brand story across a number of mediums (audio, video, text and a masterclass) and then tested the audience's propensity to take action. Here's what we found.

### THE SEVILLIAN EXPERIMENT: DELIVERING 3 TIMES THE PURCHASE ADVANTAGE

One thing was immediately clear: the audience projected a higher brand affinity after participating in the physical mocktail experience. What was even more revealing was how it pushed them into action.

- » 73% were more likely to purchase the brand, when they experienced it first-hand in a live event, delivering 3 times the 'purchase advantage', compared to traditional advertising
- » 83% agrees that the best way to build trust in a brand is to experience it first-hand
- » 82% want brands to create experiences that entertain, engage and educate them

If we consider 'listen, watch, view' through the lens of digital media, and 'participation' as indicative of brand experiences, it becomes clear that experiential impressions garner higher impact. Another interesting thing to consider is scale: this experience was deliberately low-fi, hopefully dispelling the myth that brand experiences need to be executed on a large scale to be effective.



Having seen the results, the question becomes: how can brands capitalize on participatory experiences to generate the highest emotional response? And how, in turn, can this lead to scale?

#### GENERATING PR IMPACT WITH EXPERIENCE

The underlying issue with experience has always been its limited reach. If 100 people participate in a brand experience, is that really going to move the needle for a brand en masse?

This is where the experience needs to be considered within a larger marketing ecosystem to get the ROI and impact that brands are looking for. Let's look at Vans' ComfyCush High, where the brand recently dropped their renewed ComfyCush sneaker. We orchestrated a launch moment by creating a relatable, interactive, socially shareable expression of ComfyCush in the contextual epicenter of their target audience - Brooklyn.

The limited existence of "ComfyCush High" needed to generate enough reach and authentic storytelling to cement the franchise before 60,000 sneakers hit the shelves. It was about the reach: we needed the audience across the world to see this experience.

To do this, and hit some lofty PR goals, we invited top tier influencers and media outlets, alongside 150 lucky sneakerheads. This, coupled with experiences that were both culturally relevant and designed for social sharing, allowed these audiences to get our message out, creating a platform for influencers to amplify ComfyCush across thousands of unique perspectives.

The strategy of combining PR with an experience-lead campaign worked. Vans ComfyCush received over 4.78B PR impressions and 334 pieces of online coverage, far exceeding expectations.

#### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE WITH YOUR NEXT EXPERIENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The rise of experiences has influenced the way audiences

respond to brands in a big way. With the majority of audiences and affluent millennials seeking out live events and memorable interactions, it's now critical for brands to show up experientially.

As our experiment showed, the experience channel is not only increasing brand consideration, it's adding a new layer of authenticity to earned media: people crave being entertained, engaged and educated in a hands-on, participatory manner. If you cleverly pair experiences with PR, you can drive higher reach and generate impressions with greater impact, leading to sales. Experiences should be planned as contextual programs and integrated into your 360 campaigns.



So, where does experience show up in your media mix? Is it time to rethink your budget and marketing? Are you ready to have experiential play a greater role in your 2020 plan?

*If you're interested, we can provide an Experiential Future Workshop for you and your team, either consumer or B2B focussed. During this strategic session, we'll open up opportunities and help focus your investments to make sure you are getting the right impact and ROI for your brand.*

*Send an email to [hello@setcreative.com](mailto:hello@setcreative.com), and we'll be in touch.*