

# 6

## Event marketing and brand strategy

### Learning objectives

On completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning, scope and nature of event marketing and brand strategy
- Explain what is involved in the process of marketing and the development of marketing communication strategies
- Identify key issues associated with communicating and promoting the not-for-profit sector
- Discuss the growth of event sponsorship, explain the concept of sponsorship fit and identify the various sponsorship packages that can be developed
- Appreciate the importance of leveraging sponsorship
- Identify and explain other key marketing issues including ambush marketing

The term 'event marketing' has been used in a range of different ways and given a range of different meanings. While all of these meanings may be appropriate in various contexts, the term utilized in this chapter refers to that part of the event management process that involves the marketing of events and hence, to the market research, promotion and advertising that aims at increasing the number of customers that pay to attend the event. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "*the set of activities, institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large*" ([www.ama.org](http://www.ama.org)).

In this vein, event marketing includes the activities, tactics and tools used to communicate and promote the value of events to prospective attendees. When thinking about marketing, it's not uncommon for people to adopt a product focus and emphasise those aspects of marketing that involve

advertising and personal selling. However, a real marketing focus, particularly with the marketing of services, or events which may be regarded as a service experience, involves an emphasis on the customer. This customer emphasis or focus necessitates conscious efforts aimed at identifying, anticipating, and satisfying the needs and wants of customers in a manner that is commercially viable. In an events context, the emphasis is on seeking to provide an event experience that event attendees will find satisfying, perhaps surprising, but certainly memorable.



*Why is a customer focus as distinct from a product focus, more effective as a means of marketing events?*

## The scope and nature of event marketing

As discussed earlier, event marketing can be viewed from different perspectives. In terms of the marketing of events, this involves all activities that are associated with market research, that is, identifying the needs and wants of prospective attendees, promotion and advertising of the event, and development of all aspects of the event that contribute to a positive and memorable event experience.

When considering the nature of marketing in an events context, it is important to recognize major differences between the marketing of services and the marketing of tangible products. These differences include:

- **Intangibility** or the fact that physical products can be seen, felt, and touched whereas services can't. In an events context, previous events may provide an indication of what can be anticipated, but every event is unique and different.
- **Simultaneity** or the fact that the customer receives a particular service, or experiences an event, at the same time that the service is produced, or the event is staged.
- **Inseparability** or the fact that the service provider is inseparable from the service. In the case of events, the event provider is inseparable from, and is a major influence on the event and the event outcomes. Customers or event attendees are also part of the process and have a major impact on outcomes.
- **Heterogeneity** or the fact that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to standardize the quality of a service or an event. An event that is staged at a particular time by particular people for a particular group of event attendees, is unique.

- **Perishability** or the fact that services and planned events cannot be produced and stored before consumption. Events exist only at the time in which they are being staged and experienced.



*Which of the above differences do you think is the most important when considering the marketing of events?*

A major implication of these differences relates to the importance of human resources. While the quality and value of tangible products can be worked on, improved, and tested well before it is offered for sale, the quality and value of an event is only tested when it is staged and experienced, at the so-called ‘moment of truth’.

Service quality and event quality depends on human resources, the talent, ability, attitudes, and motivation of the people involved in providing the service or staging the event. How event employees and volunteers perform and respond to various circumstances has a major impact on expectations regarding future events and the capacity of event organisers to effectively market those events.

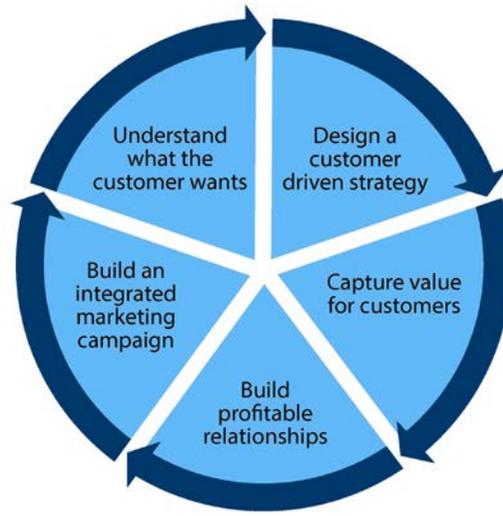
## The marketing process

Traditional theories posit that the key steps to a marketing process includes: marketing analysis, marketing planning, implementation and control. In an events context, the marketing process has been described in a number of ways but given the need for a customer focus, generally starts with the research required to identify and understand the needs and wants of event attendees and finishes with the creation of customer satisfaction and customer equity in a manner that is profitable. The key steps to a marketing process in events mainly include those shown in Figure 6.1.

### Understand the marketplace and customer needs and wants

As indicated in the model, the first stage involves development of an understanding of the marketplace and the customer. In an event context, understanding the customer involves developing:

- An understanding of the needs and wants of prospective event attendees
- Knowledge of the tangible and intangible benefits that attendees want to gain from the event
- An appreciation of the likely motivations of prospective attendees
- An understanding of the decision-making processes of prospective attendees



**Figure 6.1:** Customer value process

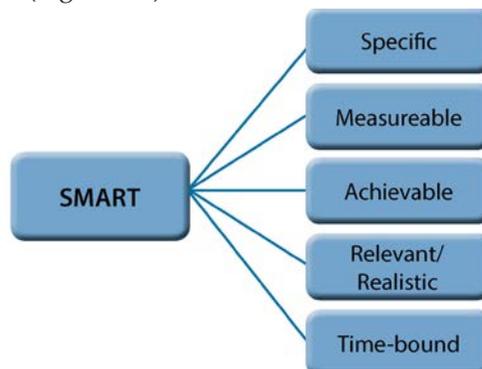


*How might you describe the wants of attendees at an academic conference? What benefits are they likely to gain from it? What are their key motivations for attendance? What other factors may impact on their decision to attend?*

## Design a customer-driven market strategy

The second stage involves designing a customer-driven marketing strategy. Key components of a marketing strategy are:

- **Identifying a target audience.** This may be based on demographic (age, income, gender, etc.), geographic (location, culture, language, etc.), psychographic (values, lifestyles, opinions, etc.) or behavioural (actions, website activity, etc.) factors.
- **Developing goals and objectives.** Goals and objectives should be SMART (Figure 6.2)



**Figure 6.2:** SMART based objectives