



I've learned that people will forget what you **said**, people will forget what you **did**, but people will never forget how you made them **feel**.

Living an event experience:

A psychological overview

Every industry has its buzzwords. In the events industry, we tend to overuse the word 'experience', especially when trying to market events. Often, this word is used in conjunction with positive adjectives, in the hope of selling that 'feeling of a unique experience'. By only using such words to market an event is not the recipe for making it unforgettable. What you need is careful planning, as well as knowing how to create that special 'X-factor'. This article will take a closer look at the psychology behind living an event experience.

How do we actually transform an event into an experience? By triggering the right emotions, since human beings are driven by them. Knowing how to stimulate the right emotions will result in transforming an event into an unforgettable, unique experience. To quote the famous author Maya Angelou, "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

How we interpret information lies in its context. In order to trigger the right emotions, it is crucial to immerse the audience into an environment that combines these

three contexts: the Physical Context (material objects surrounding us, size of a venue, colours, temperature, time of day), the Personal Context (personal values, perceptions, cultural differences, previous experience), and the Social Context (interaction with others, and state of belonging).

In practice for an event, one should not only focus on finding the right venue (Physical Context), without considering the cultural background of the attendees (Personal Context), or the way they will interact with each other during the event (Social Context). Similarly, not taking personal values into consideration (Personal

Context) when creating an event program can also limit the level of interaction (Social Context) between attendees.

THE FIVE SENSES AND THEIR ROLE IN LIVING AN EXPERIENCE

Humans perceive the world through the five senses: taste, sight, hearing, touch and smell. These senses do not only allow us to receive sensorial information, they also directly determine how we interpret the information. Together with our previous experiences or personal cultural background, the information can be processed and interpreted very differently by our brain. Simply put, two people can look at the same thing, yet 'see it' differently.

We perceive the surroundings of an event with the help of the same five senses. So in order to send a stronger message across, it is worth considering the involvement of multiple senses for the different touch points during the event (e.g. registration, stage, transportation, content, AV, catering, speakers, venue, social media). Did you ask yourself, what would the event smell like? What colour would visualize 'success'? Activating your audience through involvement in or exposure to the event will transcend them into the interactive experience we should always aim to achieve.

The pre- and post-event communication are vital in closing the circle around living an experience during an event. Using the five senses also pre- and post-event can create excitement and cement the experience, long after

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Our business is founded on a simple human insight: we believe that when people come together magic happens. The DNA of MCI is to understand people, and what drives them, in order to turn events into experiences.

the event has taken place. As an example, an event invitation sent out the 'old fashioned way' via post, has its importance: the attendees can feel the event by touching the paper and visualizing its content.

We have to strongly consider how we trigger the right emotions, in order to create an experience during an event. Because "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

