

PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUIRING INFORMATION BY MASS EVENT PARTICIPANTS

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Abstract

The principal objective of this publication is to determine the preferred method of acquiring information by mass events participants. The survey was conducted on the group of 1,520 individuals that participated in XXII Rzeszow Juwenalia, the largest student project implemented in the South-East of Poland. Rzeszow Juwenalia is the perfect example of a mass event, which, on average, is participated by 25,000 individuals present on the campus. For the analysis of data, the STATISTICA 12 program was applied. Conducting the survey made it possible to determine the marketing activities which will reach the target group most effectively. The following ones were included: social media, a web page of the event, acquiring information from acquaintances, and also visiting a web page of the event. In accordance with the opinion of the authoress, the results of the research may be applied in practice, and constitute a valuable guideline for the future organizers of mass events.

Keywords

mass events, promotional activities, survey

Introduction

Currently, sporting, cultural and artistic-entertainment events are enjoying an ever greater popularity amongst society. The organizers of mass event undertake a number of activities the objective of which is to attract prospective spectators, and also to ensure that the latter ones are satisfied with their participation in an event. Guaranteeing the highest standards of quality in every area of the project is, therefore, of an enormous significance for the success and prosperity of the undertaking being in progress.

It goes without saying that every mass event, even the largest one, requires an appropriate promotion. The purpose of the marketing activity of the organizers is to reach a broad group of future participants. In the case of mass events, an effective promotion can result in evoking interest, and also encouraging to participate in an event. Such a promotion includes, for instance, such aspects as: maintaining the web page of an event, and also profiles on social portals, advertising in public space and on the means of transport, and also presenting commercials on television and on the radio, as well as publishing advertisements in the press.

Attention ought to be paid to the fact that marketing activity is not only about conveying information, but, as well as about that, about creating the expectations of future customers, which, in turn, exert influence upon the ultimate assessment of the quality of an event. An organization promoting a certain event ought to pay attention to the fact that, should there occur a discrepancy between the service which was promised and the service which was provided, a customer will assess the event as representing a low quality. Therefore, it is important to constantly verify the capabilities and resources of an organization, and try to adjust them to the needs of the constantly changing market (Nijholt, J. J., Bezemer, P., Reinmoeller P., 2016; Sreedharan, V. R., Raju, R., Srinivas, S. S. 2017; Zimon, D., 2016).

1. Informational policy of the organizers of mass event

In the context of the organization of a mass event, promotion constitutes a set of means with the application of which an organization informs about the possibilities, proposals and services which it is capable of providing in the course of the event being planned. In this case, informational policy is relevant not only to the information provided prior to an event. It is important to make sure that the management of the flow of information take place as well in the course of the event, and also after the end of it. Thanks to such activities, it will become easier to control the crowd, which will also contribute to increasing the level of safety in the course of an event (Markowski, D., 2012; Szymonik, A., 2012). In this paper, due to research material, attention is concentrated upon the analysis of the forms of the promotion of an event prior to the beginning of the event in question.

The external communication of the organizers of mass event prior to the beginning of the event can, therefore, encompass such forms:

maintaining the web page of the event – in the epoch of informational society, this is one of the most important methods of reaching a wide group of recipients. It is very important that the information connected with, for instance, the venue of the event and the time of it, the layout of the venue, programme and regulations of the event, the prices of tickets, the arrangement of parking spaces, or the possibility of taking advantage of additional attractions, are made available by the organizers to public opinion in advance. On the web page of the event, answers to (the most) frequently asked questions (FAQ) ought to be provided as well. This way, a user can be assisted without the necessity of involving the representatives of organizers in responding to the questions which have been asked earlier. It is important that all the functions of the web page be available in mobile applications as well. This way, participants in the event will have the possibility to acquire indispensable information at any time and at any place which they find convenient (Parszowski, S., Kruczyński, A., 2015).

social media – the constant development of informatization exerts, to a significant degree, influence upon changes in social communication. Currently, a very big significance is that played by social portals, on which those who are interested can exchange their experiences relevant to particular services and events (Tiance, D., Chenxi, L., Xu, H., 2017). Expressing opinions and judgements, and also discussing conducted by Internet users, and relevant to an event makes it possible to achieve the rapid distribution of information, and also the possibility of communication in two directions. This is the more important that the most recent reports claim that 24% of teenagers have access to social portals virtually all the time. This fact is principally connected with an increased access to smartphones (Moll, R., Nielsen, W., 2016). It is possible, therefore, to formulate the conclusion that social media are currently one of the principal channels of communication with young customers.

media – from the point of view of an organizer, collaborating with the media may be found to be the most important element of informational policy. Television, radio, and also the press, to a significant degree create the image of the entire organization, and they are also the effective tool of the promotion of an event (Fill, K., 2016). Participants in events expect the media to present the current news, coverage on the course of an event, and also to fulfill the integrative or entertainment function.

information in public space – in spite of such a noticeable development, and also the significance of modern technologies, informational policy has to as well be conducted in public space (Parszowski, S., Kruczyński, A., 2015). The organizers of an event ought to ensure preparing and distribution of posters, leaflets, brochures, guides, billboards, or other promotional materials. The task of this materials is to encourage to participate in an event, to present the most important information connected with an event, and also to constantly remind a community about the project which is to be implemented soon.

2. Objective of the article, adopted hypothesis and methodology of research

The principal objective of this article is to determine the preferred method of acquiring information by mass event participants.

In this publication, an attempt to verify the following research hypothesis: it is being assumed that social media, and also the web page of an event, are the preferred methods of acquiring information by mass event participants was made as well.

One of the methods of acquiring information from customers is to conduct a survey (Zimon, D. 2017). Therefore, striving to meet the selected objective and to verify the assumed hypothesis, a survey questionnaire made available with the application of

the CAWI method was taken advantage of. With the application of a form placed in the Google questionnaire the respondents were requested to answer the following question: *Where do you most frequently obtain information about Rzeszow Juwenalia?* For the analysis of data, the STATISTICA 12 program was applied. In the statistical analysis, first and foremost, contingency tables, which presented both numerical collation, and the per cent one alike, of particular answers, were taken advantage of. The processed results were presented in the graphic form.

The survey was conducted in February, 2017, on the group of 1,520 individuals that participated in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia – the largest project implemented in the South-East of Poland. Rzeszow Juwenalia is the largest free-entry student event in Subcarpathia, and, simultaneously, included into the best ones in Poland. On average, it is participated by 25,000 individuals present on the campus of Rzeszow University of Technology. A proof of the recognition of the event was winning, in the year 2014, the title of ProJuvenes in the plebiscite of Gala of Students Awards organized by the Parliament of Students of the Republic of Poland (www.projuvenes.pl/laureaci/).

The organizers of an event, motivated by concern about the safety and satisfaction of service-recipients, strive to constantly increase the effectiveness of their activities. Intention to make themselves acquainted with the opinions and suggestions of participants relevant to acquiring information connected with the event has become, therefore, the principal inspiration to conduct the survey by the authoress. This knowledge can be applied for future the organizers of mass event in better planning promotional activities connected with their events.

3. Preferred method of acquiring information connected with the event – results of research

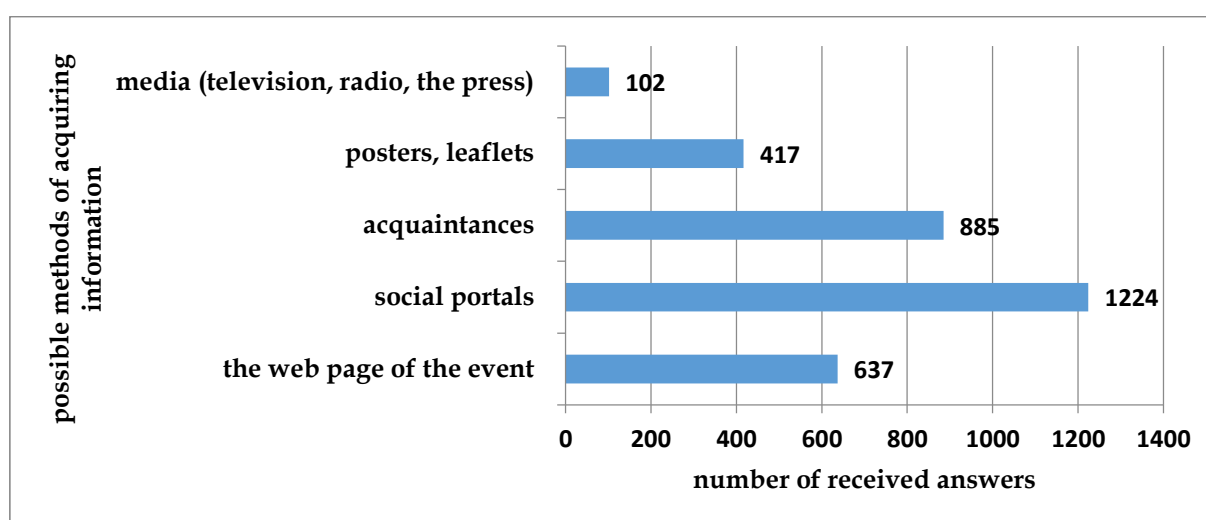
In this sub-chapter, the results of the research relevant to the preferred method of acquiring information by participants in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia are presented. the respondents could choose any number of the answers among which there were the following options:

- taking advantage of the web page of the event,
- taking advantage of social portals,
- acquiring information from acquaintances,
- obtaining information from posters and leaflets,
- acquiring information from the media (TV, radio and the press).

In the survey, a choice of the above-mentioned methods of acquiring information was made, because these are the principal methods of external communication applied by the organizers of Rzeszow Juwenalia. In addition to that, as it is commonly known, 'word of mouth marketing' constitutes a popular method of acquiring information in every aspect of social life. In connection with that, the authoress resolved to verify the degree to which acquiring information from acquaintances is respected by the participants in the event being studied.

The graphic presentation of the results is Chart 1.

Chart 1: Preferred method of acquiring information relevant to the event by the participants in the event



Source: own calculation upon the basis of research

The results of the research indicate that the participants in XXIII Rzeszow Juwenalia in order to acquire information about the event most frequently took advantage of social portals. Amongst 1,520 individuals, 1,224 (80,5%) indicated that they take advantage of this form of communication. It suggests that this form of the promotion of an event ought to be particularly well planned and analysed by organizers.

885 (58.2%) of the surveyed indicated as the method of acquiring information contacts with acquaintances. Upon that basis, it is possible to ascertain that in the population being researched interpersonal liaisons constitute a very important element of the exchange of information. Numerous individuals making a decision relevant to participation in the event acquire information from their acquaintances beforehand.

In turn, 637 (41.9%) individuals searching for indispensable information take advantage of the web page of the event. Taking advantage of the web pages and Internet applications provides the possibility of rapidly acquiring information

relevant to, for instance, the programme, or the map of the venue (facility) of the event. In the times of the development of new technologies, the choice of a web page as the source of knowledge to be acquired does not, therefore, seem to be surprising.

Little fewer than every third individual participating in the event in order to acquire information reached for posters and advertising leaflets. This kind of promotion was ascertained in the case of 417 individuals (27.4%).

In turn, the media (among others, radio, the press and television), in accordance with the opinion of the respondents, is the least demanded method of acquiring information. Amongst 1,520 individuals, as few as 102 individuals (6.7%) were taking advantage of this form of acquiring information.

Conclusions

The informational policy of mass events is an aspect of an enormous importance both for the organizers of mass event and its participants alike. Not only does it exert influence upon the promotion of an event and the process of acquiring sponsors, but also contributes as well to conducting the event smoothly, and ensuring the safety of all its participants (Wojciechowski, R., 2013; Zomer, L. B., Winnie, D., Meijer, S., Hoogendoorn, S. P., 2015).

The principal objective of this publication was to determine the preferred method of acquiring information by mass event participants. Upon the basis of the research, it was ascertained that participants in Rzeszow Juwenalia, while searching for information relevant to the event, most frequently take advantage of social portals, information obtained from acquaintances, and also of the web page of the event. In turn, the least preferred method of acquiring information, as it was revealed, was posters, leaflets, and also television, radio and the press.

The research process made it possible as well to verify the adopted research hypothesis. Most likely, social media, and also the web page of the event, are the preferred methods of acquiring information by mass event participants.

In accordance with the opinion of the authoress, in spite of the received results of the research, the organizers of mass event ought not to give up on the promotion of the event in television, radio or the press, and also with the application of posters and advertising leaflets. The reason for that fact is that collaboration with the media makes it possible to reach a broad group of recipients and convey information to them, and that group includes those that do not care if they obtain that information. The media exert influence upon the formation of the attitudes and behaviours of recipients. Presenting a mass event in a favourable light, they may awake willingness to participate in the event in a community. Here, one ought not to forget, as well,

about the economic dimensions of the matters. From the point of view of sponsors, this is the very media-connected aspect that is the condition determining involvement in the organization of an event (Parszowski, S., Kruczyński, A., 2015). Companies deciding to become involved in the organization of mass events may gain a lot. They increase the recognizability of the products or services offered by themselves, and also enhance their image, as well as raise the level of their own trust and credibility in the eyes of society.

In recapitulation, it may be found that all the forms of promotion referred to in this elaboration constitute an important element of marketing activity of the organizers of mass event. The organizers of an event ought to, however, establish the requirements of future event participants relevant to the method of communication with the organization. Those activities may enhance the flow of information between the involved, determine the direction of the development of marketing activity, and also optimize the form of the promotion of organization.

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