

Critical Analysis of Marketing Strategies of UK Dance Events

Chapter Two: Literature Review

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Chapter Two: Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

The revolution brought about through communication and technological advances in the entertainment business has been the major contributor to the interest in dance. Characters engaging in dance have been featured in movies, television and radio, of which movies have been the most notable. Shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* have increased the exposure of the viewing audience to dance. The purpose of this review of literature is to discuss the importance of marketing and factors impacting the marketing of dance festivals. This research acknowledges that there is limited research which directly relates to dance festivals. Therefore, evidences have been gathered from the marketing of music and other performing arts festival or event related research.

2.2. Marketing of Events and Festivals

There are diverse interpretations regarding the role of event or festival marketing. As Allen et al. (2002) argue, the traditional interpretation of marketing is that it is used for advertising and selling products in addition to satisfying the needs of the target customers. Similarly, Kotler and Armstrong (2010) define marketing as the analysis, planning, execution and quality control of programmes that are carefully formulated and designed so that they can bring voluntary exchanges of values with target markets in order to achieve organisational objectives. According to Hills (2015), event marketing is associated with the development of relationships with customers as well as with the suppliers, stakeholders, volunteers and staff. Regardless of the various purposes for which a performance arts event originated, marketing determines the achievement of the purpose of the event.

Hence, marketing is innate to the promotion of events and festivals, and various communities and organisations can benefit from the successful marketing of performance arts festivals (Hill et al., 2012). Lee et al. (2008) contend that festivals are big businesses that involve a great deal of marketing. This implies that marketing is crucial to the entire process and enables the events to be a success, the primary goal of any performance arts festival. However, as Hills (2015) argues, understanding of the audience, the market and the product is necessary for marketing to be successful. Hoyle (2002) identifies market research and

analysis as being a key component of marketing. Highly-educated audiences and artistic products are particularly required at music and dance festivals. According to Colbert (2007), it is imperative for artistic organisations to identify consumers who would appreciate the product. With strategic marketing, the audiences can be engaged so that their satisfaction can be guaranteed. The significance of the role played by marketing in the success of a festival has been identified by various studies on the marketing of festivals. Hill et al. (2012) conclude that changes in lifestyle and increasing competition in arts and cultural events are seeing them occupy a growing percentage of leisure time over other forms of activity. If performance marketing is to be successful, attractive benefits need to be offered in comparison to other leisure activities.

An additional perspective communicated in literature is that technology has changed the environment of arts sectors. According to Bernstein (2007), the marketing of arts and cultural events needs to be more skilled, because the development of electronic media has allowed audiences to opt easily for other alternatives for entertainment or performance through the use of the various electronic devices. The marketing of arts and cultural products therefore faces a challenge in the form of the necessity to understand the nature of the art itself. Kerrigan et al. (2004) argue that it is difficult not to consider the intangibility of arts and the impracticality of communicating the fundamental experience.

A significant feature of the promotion of arts is that the application of marketing cannot be done uniformly for a range of products and endeavours across the board. It is imperative that modifications are made to marketing so that it can fit the specifics and the needs of the given cultural products (Conway and Leighton, 2012). The authors also argue that while there are different marketing related factors which need to be considered by event and arts marketing, the focus on the product and the focus on the customer experience are key to its success. According to Hill et al. (2003), arts marketing is different from other forms of marketing due to the unique nature of the experience of the arts and the focus on the customer in the creation of that experience. The most important thing in the marketing of arts and cultural products is the careful analysis of the characteristics of the cultural products. Therefore, in the case of this research, understanding the independent marketing needs of different dance events is vital without using umbrella strategies. The following section considers the importance of the “product” and “price” as marketing mix factors which impact the development of the arts market.

2.3. Product Development

2.3.1. *Performing Arts as a Product*

It is imperative for the performing arts sector to balance out financial, educational, social and artistic objectives. This means that the focus of the product is not restricted to the needs of the customer, as is the case with commercial industries (Ericsson, 2014). According to Kotler and Scheff (1997), performance arts organisations aim at providing exposure to an artist so that their message can gather the widest possible audience. Boyle (2007) contends that this implies that the traditional marketing mix does not incorporate arts products as a variable. Boorsma (2006) thus identifies the significance of the nature and quantity of the artistic experience. Fillis (2011) further argue that arts organisations should increase their focus on customers so that the product has value for the customers. Boorsma (2006) therefore indicates that the creation of an organisational culture that, in addition to being art-centric, is also customer-centric is often very difficult to balance.

According to Boter (2005), a consistent, large supply of new products is offered by performing arts that normally have short shelf lives. Pulh et al. (2008) further emphasise the fact that cultural products have a reduced life time. In the current market, which is huge and varying, it is not always possible for customers to familiarise themselves suitably. Marketers should be able to seek out their customers in a targeted manner and provide further support in the process. As Hartley (2007) concludes, there is constrained availability, which implies the availability of the product at specific times that the organisation, and not the customer, decides.

Boter (2005) also argues that in such cases marketers of dance events need to ensure that the marketing is done in an interesting and effective manner. The existing programming systems for traditional forms like ballet in concert halls and auditoriums are not flexible for customers. Consumers are prompted by concert halls to make advanced bookings. Wils and Van Klaveren (2008) identify the barrier that this lack of flexibility creates for some customers. Furthermore, the flexibility in the way people want to spend their leisure time is not supported by inflexible subscription structures. De Rooij and Van Leeuwen (2011) observe that as a result of this, flexible, renewed subscription offers and programming schedules can be seen in some of performing arts venues. Therefore, it is evident that new methods of promotion are being developed to increase customer patronage of performance arts festivals.

2.3.2. *Secondary Products*

Another factor that determines the promotion of any performance arts event is the secondary product. According to Hume (2008), consumption is primarily driven by experiential and subjective aspects, and the quality of the show can be measured by emotion. However, the author further adds that the perceived repurchase, satisfaction and value can be better predicted by the quality of utilitarian aspects like deliveries and peripheral services. Additionally, Robertson and Wilson (2008) argue that the concept behind this is that rather than the show or the emotional outcomes, consumers return because of the perceived success of the execution and the experience. Therefore, understanding the performance arts related secondary products is of crucial importance.

Employees: According to Davis and Swanson (2009), an important attribute that enables the evaluation of service quality is the quality of employees, which includes aspects like attentiveness, knowledge, assurance, helpfulness, responsiveness and politeness. They argue that when the importance of the staff is ranked, members and non-members of staff are not differentiated. Therefore, it is important to ensure that any marketing tactic also promotes the facilities and customer service that is available to those who choose to watch the performance.

Seating: The relevance of comfort of seating, preferred seating (seat location) and priority seating has been acknowledged by various authors. Clearly, as Vila-Lopez and Rodriguez-Martin (2013) argue, the risk of scarcity explains the importance of priority seating. Any patrons who visit any music or dance festival will want to make sure that they get the tickets they need. As Hume et al. (2007) posit, priority seating is a major reason for the purchase of a subscription. Davis and Swanson (2009) identify preferred seating as a significant attribute in the evaluation of service quality. Therefore, marketing and providing a unique experience by providing preferred seating does have major significance in the development of customer relationships.

Accessibility: According to Hume et al. (2006), the customer experience and relationship is affected by accessibility, as pre-arrival stages are included in the overall service offering that the customers perceive. Johnson and Garbarino (2001) contend that a major factor that discourages occasional subscribers or single-ticket buyers from becoming regular subscribers is the discontent with the trouble of reaching the event. Andreasen (1991) provides evidence that there are five main barriers to attending more performing art events and travel is one of

them, in terms of parking problems, traffic, transportation and distance. Its relevance is perceived to be relatively small by other authors, however. Scheff (1999) observed in a study that, in comparison to the past, minor significance is attributed to inconvenient location of performances when it comes to stopping subscriptions or attending fewer performances. Additionally, Petr (2007) contends that a minor role is played by distance in not subscribing to a venue.

Additional services: Hume et al. (2006) identify complimentary extras like additional programmes or refreshments as satisfiers, a factor that is likely to have a positive effect on the perception of performance and repurchase if it is improved upon. Davis and Swanson (2009) also argue that when the service quality is evaluated, not more than average significance is ascribed to the availability of pre-show activities.

2.4. Impact of Pricing Strategy

Literature has several discussions on the pertinence of price and price discounts. According to Seaman (2006), the focus of the research has been predominantly on demand for the performing arts. Many researchers contend that the marketing mix focus on performing arts should be on product first and then the pricing. As Seaman (2005) emphasise, price is a significant factor in subscription. Foekema (2008) also contends that high prices of performing arts tickets can be a major factor impacting non-attendance of performing arts. Colbert et al. (1998) identify price as a primary reason for not attending the theatre for consumers with a low income. According to Johnson and Garbarino (2001), occasional subscribers or single-ticket buyers refrain from becoming regular subscribers if the cost is high. Scheff (1999) also acknowledges the inability or unwillingness to pay as a major reason for stopping subscriptions and attending fewer performances.

Andreasen (1991) reports that cost is one of the five main barriers when it comes to attending more performing arts. Radbourne et al. (2009) support this idea, but argue that even though ticket price is perceived as a primary barrier among both attenders and non-attenders, this is a relatively insignificant factor: they believe that the quality of the product supersedes the impact of pricing. The author also argues that even if the prices are halved, most non-attenders would still not attend unless they have an interest in the performing arts festival.

Discussion has been carried out on the price in addition to price discounts and price elasticity. Colbert et al. (1998) observe in their measurement of consumer demand for the performing arts that it is relatively insensitive to price; however, Schimmelpfennig (1997) contends that there is an elastic demand. According to Willis and Snowball (2009), the ticket price and the perception of price as an indicator of value explains price-insensitivity. Colbert et al. (1998) thus conclude that customer experience in the performing arts is affected only moderately by prices. The authors further add that even though the ticket price may not motivate some non-attenders to attend, yet repeat purchases of other consumer groups are affected by prices and price discounts, particularly in the case of popular festivals like rock shows, hip-hop dance and other such popular events. Thus, it can be expected that customer relationship and experience are affected by price depending on the income of the consumer and the interest of the consumer in the performing arts.

2.5. Experiential and Relationship Marketing: Talking to the “Diverse Audience”

Since the marketing of arts and cultures is perceived to be audience dependent, the most influential factor for marketing is the customer appreciation of the arts. The intangible value involved in cultural products increases their complexity (Venkatesh and Meamber, 2006). The application of these values related to cultural products can be related to the audience as well, since there is great variation in populations and individuals depending on their aesthetic appreciation. Thus, subjective consideration can be given to factors that spark the enthusiasm and appreciation of the audience, making it difficult to handle in quantitative ways (Swanson et al., 2007). According to Colbert (2007), the taste of the audience and the time available with them influences choice of cultural products, while consumption is largely influenced by the experience of the audience.

When a cultural product is purchased by the audience, the services they can enjoy in addition to the products are also considered. According to Bernstein (2007), layers of value are derived by classical consumers from the experience of a concert, and it is not always the case that all the value gained is related to what transpires on the stage. The diversity of markets is another characteristic of cultural products. Since there are diverse funding sources available to arts organisations, the customer market is not the only avenue for marketing. Therefore, it is important to consider the importance of marketing to different groups. According to Colbert (2007), there are a variety of players in the cultural market such as the government

and private markets, festival business partners and the consumer. Also, substantial risk is entailed by cultural products. For instance, take the case of performance arts: in addition to a single premiere, the period of performance is fixed and it is difficult to preserve such performances with their full impact outside the original live format. Thus, all these characteristics of the performing arts need to be taken into consideration when marketing arts and cultural products.

Since cultural products are intricate, a nuanced and sophisticated approach should be attempted by the marketers to handle this intricacy. As substantial money is paid by audiences for cultural products and the value attached to them, it should be made explicitly clear by the marketers when the desired values are being provided (Bouder-Pailler, 1999). There has been constant change in the marketing approaches used in the marketing of art and cultural products. According to Hausmann and Poellman (2013), a command-and-control approach has been used in the traditional marketing mind-set. This approach is dependent on selling to passive customers who can be manipulated and influenced in terms of their perceptions and demands (Hill et al., 2012). However, such an approach cannot be adopted when there is a large dependence on experiential marketing.

It is necessary that the methods of marketing directors evolve so that they can connect and tailor their mind-set in a manner that determines the collaboration of the organisation with the customers so that value can be created, delivered and shared (Hill et al., 2012). A major factor in the case of contemporary marketing endeavours is the communication between marketers and customers. According to Bernstein (2007), communication is the final artistic experience that occurs between the audience and the performers, and it is imperative that this communication be facilitated by marketing. The ultimate objective of marketing, using this type of communication, is not just attracting the audience for a performance on just one occasion, but establishing and building customer loyalty.

Researchers (Bernstein, 2007; Colbert, 2007) argue that the focus of marketing strategies should be linked to the diversity of audience needs and understanding the audience expectations. Even though it is necessary for marketers to seek out new audiences, it is imperative that the marketing of art and cultural products takes into consideration the augmentation of the current audiences' experiences so that a firm sustainable basis can be

built. In line with this view, the purpose of the next section is determining the factors impacting audience relationship development.

2.6. Customer Relationship Development

Audience development is another aspect of performing arts. According to Scollen (2008), the aim of audience development is to increase the number of the audience, broadening the arts audience base by widening the range of people who engage as an audience and striving to enrich customers by increasing their interest in and knowledge of performing arts. This is referred to as audience education and taste cultivation. Since education is very important, an educational department is a part of many performance arts venues. Rentschler et al. (2002) contend that the customer relationship development, along with their acceptance of the dance forms and dance festival, is linked to the differences in the product itself. As Van Maanen (2005) argues, there is a need to distinguish between unconventional, specialists, complex, challenging, high or traditional culture on the one side and conventional, general, uncomplicated, common and popular forms on the other (Van Maanen, 2005). Levickaite (2011) further contends that such differences in the dance industry include ballet, traditional or ethnic dances and modern dance on one side, while hip-hop, break dance and street dance are on the other.

Chung (2014) argues that relationship development in performance arts festivals can be a complex phenomenon that ranges across different dimensions and takes many forms. This particularly seems to be the case for music festivals, where loyalty can be seen among customers in the form of interest in a leisure activity, a performing arts venue (provider of performing arts) in the form of venue loyalty, a specific performer, a genre or a festival. Furthermore, there are several means through which venue loyalty can occur, such as the various loyalty indicators. These varied forms of connection may have different meanings across dance festivals (Manthiou et al. 2014). According to Hayes and Slater (2002), the complexity of customer loyalty in the performing arts is higher than in any other service industry.

Another crucial factor which impacts audience development is knowledge regarding the consumption motives. Every consumer has a different set of motives, at a given time, for attending performing arts. Nevertheless, as Swanson et al. (2008) indicate, the fragmentation and incompleteness of the concept of consumption motives in the performing arts may impact

the audience development process. The authors further add that there is very little empirical research regarding the investigation of consumption motives for taking part in the performing arts and increasing involvement in them.

2.7. Research Focus: Targeting of Marketing in Performance Arts

Even though customer loyalty in the performing arts has been the centre of various studies (e.g. Hume and Sullivan Mort, 2010; Johnson and Garbarino, 2001), these studies have not elucidated the patterns of development of customer loyalty from the perspective of the customer. In some studies, though the customer relationship and the importance of customer influence were highlighted (e.g. Rentschler et al., 2002), the influence of determinants was examined only at a single point in time. This means that the information gathered over time regarding the relationship dynamic is limited. Nevertheless, knowledge about the subject is quite pertinent.

There are two important implications which need to be discussed based on the above outcomes. Firstly, as Fillis (2011) contend, the dynamic nature of relationships in the performance arts world warrants adjustments to the service offering. Secondly, as Hume (2008) contends, there is a difference in the determinants that influence relationship management and the ones that influence relationship development. Thus, as Reinartz and Kumar (2003) conclude, comprehending the temporal dynamics in the relationship between an organisation and a customer is rather interesting. This raises questions regarding the development of customer loyalty in the performing arts, especially with respect to dance events and festivals, as well as in understanding the patterns that can be distinguished.

Customer loyalty and retention in performing arts festivals can be influenced by many factors. The relationship between customer loyalty and its determinants has been central to several studies in the field of performing arts. The focus of most of these studies is on the impact of a single performing arts organisation (e.g. Hume et al., 2006), a destination (e.g. Rivera et al., 2015) or a specific dance event (e.g. Dunin, 2006). Mixed results have been obtained from these studies regarding the influence that satisfaction with the performing arts product has on customer loyalty (Petr, 2008). According to some studies, satisfaction with a performance event has a positive influence, while others do not acknowledge any influence of product satisfaction on customer loyalty and relationship building (e.g. Bowen and Daniels, 2005). Furthermore, proper attention has not been given to competition related factors (e.g. Pegg and Patterson, 2010) or internal factors like social influences and personal factors (e.g.

Kruger and Saayman, 2012). However, this review of literature contends that given different attributes related to customer relationship development in the performance arts, there is a clear need for the development of an integrative model on the basis of a holistic approach. This model can offer a better understanding of the significance of the various determinants which can impact the marketing tactics adopted by dance festivals to help promote audience relationships.

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