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Holly Barry

Doctor of Philosophy

2021
Declaration of Authenticity

I hereby declare that this PhD thesis, entitled “An Exploration of Experiential Marketing in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry: Development of The Experiential Implementation Model & the Return on Integrated Experience Formula”, is entirely the candidate’s own work except where otherwise accredited and that the thesis has not been submitted for an award at any other institution.

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Abbreviations

AR: Augmented Reality
ATL: ‘Above the Line’ Advertising
BTL: ‘Below the Line’ Advertising
CEM: Consumer Experience Management
CPG: Consumer Packaged Goods
CRM: Customer Relationship Management
CROI: Customer Return on Investment
CSF: Critical Success Factors
Cx: Customer Experience
EPOS: Electronic Point of Sale
EVS: Experiential Value Scale
FMCG: Fast Moving Consumer Goods
FSDU: Free Standing Display Unit
IMC: Integrated Marketing Campaign
MROI: Marketing Return on Investment
NPD: New Product Development
PLC: Product Lifecycle
PR: Public Relations
PWC: PricewaterhouseCoopers
ROE: Return on Engagement
ROE: Return on Experience
ROE^2: Return on Experience x Engagement

ROI: Return on Investment

ROIE: Return on Integrated Experience

ROMI: Return on Marketing Investment

ROX: Return on Experience

S-D Logic: Service Dominant Logic

SEM: Strategic Experiential Modules

VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol

VR: Virtual Reality

WOM: Amplified Word of Mouth

WOMM: Word of Mouth Marketing

XP: Experiential Marketing
Abstract

The nature of brand-customer relationships has long been the focus of marketers’ attentions, however, the competitive environment of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods industry in the modern era, has significantly elevated the importance of that relationship in the literature. This is primarily due to the evolution of consumers’ needs and wants and their growing expectation of brands playing a key role in their daily lives. As a result, brands face the challenge of trying to communicate with their target audience through a multitude of marketing communications tools that both engages and excites them, while at the same time building effective memory structures which leads to brand recall, purchase and brand-customer relationships. In this landscape, experiential marketing has emerged as a way of creating authentic interactions with target markets that affords two-way communication and enables brand-consumer relationships to be cultivated. Research on experiential marketing has predominantly focused on the core philosophy of the concept, which is rooted in consumer behaviour literature, and on the benefits accruing to the consumer. Significantly, however, there is a distinct lack of emphasis on the theoretical development of the concept with little shared understanding in the collective body of work on experiential marketing regarding its application and evaluation, specifically in the FMCG industry. It is within this context that this thesis is positioned and from which two major contributions are extrapolated.

The first contribution to the marketing literature is the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model. This framework emphasises a strategic approach to experiential marketing, while also firmly rooting it in the long-established Integrated Marketing Communications model. The second major contribution of this research is the Return on Integrated Experience Formula. This formula presents an all-encompassing method of evaluating experiential marketing, both in the short-term and significantly over the long-term, in the context of overall brand health. Taken together, these research contributions provide new and significant insights into experiential marketing. Through the distinct conceptual framework and the under-researched practitioner perspective, this study broadens understanding of both the application and evaluation of experiential marketing. As such, the research, makes theoretical contributions, not only to the literature on experiential marketing, but also on the development and maintenance of brand-customer relationships, indicating parameters and guidelines for the future development of those relationships using an experiential marketing approach.
Chapter 1

Introduction
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction
This thesis explores the use of experiential marketing in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), also referred to as Consumer-Packaged Goods (CPG) industry. Many industries have witnessed a shift from traditional features and benefits marketing towards creating experiences for their customers (Pathak, 2014). Rather than communicate through traditional methods, brands create a brand environment in a public space and involve potential customers by encouraging them to take part in an activity (Strategic Direction, 2008).

Contemporary retailing in the FMCG sector has evolved from being a repetitious buying ritual in the exchange process to being about delivering an immersive shopping experience for the consumer (Jin and Sternquist, 2004). This approach to retailing is a result of the emergence of the experience economy and experiential marketing (Grewal et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999a; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The current exchange process where brands offer an immersive shopping experience is described as an integrated series of events which consequently result in a pleasurable, memorable, immersive, rewarding, and delightful retail customer experience (Backstorm, 2011; Arnould et al., 2005; Cox et al., 2005; Mathwick et al., 2001; Jones, 1999; Schmitt, 1999a; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The current generation of customers of FMCG products have greater disposable income, more choices and new shopping and spending patterns (Haddad, 2016). Customers’ not only want a desired product in today’s economy, they also want their personal values to be reflected in a memorable customer experience (Forhez and Evans, 2018; Haddad, 2016). However, despite the previously mentioned cues encouraging brands to stage immersive shopping experiences, 51% of customers say that brand experiences typically fall short of their expectations (Riordan, 2020).

Notwithstanding there being an evident academic focus on the topic of experiential marketing in recent years, literature is lacking on the strategic implementation and analysis of this communications tool in order for brands to effectively create experiences that fulfil consumer requirements. Lemon and Verhoef (2016: 70) share this sentiment stating that “there is limited empirical work directly related to customer experience and the customer
journey”. Additionally, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) point out a gap in the current literature on the subject stating that there is a lack of guidance for practitioners on the utilisation of experiential marketing, which this study is addressing. It is within this context that the present research lies, and the practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry is explored.

1.2 Framing the Empirical Research
With its theoretical foundations firmly rooted in consumer behaviour literature - (Holbrook and Hisrschman, 1982) - the practice of experiential marketing has garnered much attention in recent years (for example, Batat, 2019; Smilansky, 2018; Pine and Gilmore, 2011, 1999, 1998; Schmitt, 2010; Atwal and Williams, 2009; Srivistava, 2008; Caru and Cova, 2007; Lenderman, 2005; Shaw and Ivans, 2005; McCole, 2004; Holbrook, 2000) and has evolved along this timeline. Experiential marketing in its current format was first explored by Pine and Gilmore (1998) where they introduced the concept of the experiential economy which they described as a new economic offering, following the previous stages of economic development; commodities, goods and services in what they describe as the progression of economic value. This Harvard Business Review article, titled Welcome to the Experience Economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) sparked interest in both the academic and marketing practice communities, and fuelled interest and growth in research throughout the 2000s and the 2010s, right through to present day; examining and extending the utilisation of experiential marketing in many sectors and industries.

Following on from Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) introduction of the topic, many contributions have fuelled both the evolution of the topic in academic terms and the growth in the amount of brands using this immersive communications tool across many industries in practice. Where experiential marketing was once based on “a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999: 2), the discourse of experiential marketing has radically changed since this time. In the modern era, experiential marketing has become more strategic and encompasses “the process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and aspirations profitably, engaging them through authentic two-way communications that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the target audience” (Smilansky, 2018: 12). In line with this viewpoint of the practice of experiential marketing, it is essential to also note the interconnectivity between
experiential marketing and customer experience management (CEM) (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016b; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013a). According to Schmitt (2003), CEM embodies the process used to manage a customer’s cross-channel exposure, communication efforts and transactions with a company, brand or service. However, despite this interconnectivity the differences between these two interconnected practices must also be acknowledged. While experiential marketing can be categorised as a tactic, CEM represents a methodology that is employed to manage a customer’s cross-channel exposure, personal interaction and transaction with a brand, product, company or service (Yuan and Wu, 2008; Schmitt, 2003). This will be further discussed in the Chapter 2 in more detail.

However, despite the evolution of the topic and the growth in the number of brands employing this communications tool, many aspects of the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing still require additional research and analysis. Although efforts have been made to document frameworks, tools and concepts to manage customer experience (Chattopadhyay and Laborie, 2005; Davis and Longoria, 2003; Schmitt, 2003, 1999b; Shaw and Ivens, 2002; Smith and Wheeler, 2002; Pine and Gilmore, 1999), what has lacked in these contributions is an approach to unify the multi-disciplinary nature of experiential marketing. Despite these contributions offering guidance on the practice, they have not offered a structure which enriches the academic literature by codifying the various elements that are required to undertake an experiential activation. Lemon and Verhoef (2016: 85) reiterate this point stating that “there is a strong need to examine how existing marketing constructs, such as service quality, commitment, and customer engagement, relate to customer experience and interact with one another, resulting in the overall customer experience”. Additionally, research in this area largely focuses on the consumer outcomes of experiential marketing (Brakus et al., 2009; Oh et al., 2007), including communal norms (Mathwick, 2002), and customer emotions (Oh et al., 2007; Tsaur et al., 2006). Another key area of research in the realm of experiential marketing is the positive outcomes that this communication tool generates, including perceived quality of a brand (Oh et al., 2007), improvement in brand attitudes (Chang and Chieng, 2006; Zhang, 2008), customer loyalty/ behavioural intentions (Brakus et al., 2009; Keng et al., 2007), and brand recall (Oh et al., 2007). There is, however, a distinct lack of representation of the marketing practitioners’ perspective on the practice of experiential marketing. Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) share this sentiment stating that
academic literature on experiential marketing offers little guidance for marketers as their primary concern is content and solutions, the what of experiences, rather than processes and causation, the how of experiences, which is more favourably documented in research to date. While some quantitative data exists on the benefits of engaging with the customer through experiential activities, qualitative data pertaining to the implementation of the practice in the FMCG industry is particularly lacking. It is within this context that the research question is positioned, and the implementation of experiential marketing is explored.

1.3 Objectives of the Research
In this context, whilst the theoretical foundations, benefits and outcomes of experiential marketing have been explored in great detail by academics and marketing practitioners alike, there is a gap in the literature on the theoretical development of the practice of experiential marketing which is fuelled by a lack of theory which addresses the topic of experiential marketing implementation from which practice guidelines can be drawn from. Specifically:

1. There is a lack of emphasis on the marketing practitioners’ perspective, more particularly in FMCG markets; and

2. Research is required on how to successfully implement and evaluate an experiential marketing activation through the effective use of strategy.

Deriving from this observation, the overall research question, therefore, is defined as follows:

**How do brands in the FMCG industry implement the practice of experiential marketing and evaluate the outcome of this communications tool?**

Considering that in 2016, the FMCG industry accounted for 20.6% of experiential utilisation globally (Pearlfinders, 2016) as seen below in Table 1.1, it is essential to ensure that the views of FMCG marketing practitioners’ are represented in academic literature. Until the marketing practitioners’ perspective on the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing is explored, the utilization of the practice will remain hindered. Despite calls for research from academics, including Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013), with the exception of a few studies, there still is a lack of theoretical development therein. As stated by Wood (2009), there are clearly documented benefits of experiential marketing, however, without an understanding of the correct implementation process of experiential
marketing, one cannot reach an informed decision of how to measure the outcome of the practice or what exactly should be measured.

Table 1.1 Top Five Sectors for Experiential Marketing Utilisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMCG</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>+0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPAREL</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel, Transport &amp; Hospitality</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>+2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Pearlfinders (2016).

This thesis - positioned within the FMCG domain – offers insight on marketing practitioners’ perspective, while also considering other business professionals’ who have played an integral role in the experiential marketing process from conceptualisation right through to analysis. This research deems this to be an appropriate decision considering that although the implementation process of experiential marketing is not adequately represented in academic literature, it is utilised by brands. Therefore, within the field of marketing practice, there are key insights which much be accounted for. Without the consideration of these key stakeholders, the theoretical development of experiential marketing will continue to lack structure and marketers will continue to struggle to justify the investment required to senior management. In the context of the overall research question, research objectives arose, specifically:

1. To investigate how companies, implement experiential marketing in the FMCG industry;
2. To explore how companies, integrate experiential marketing with traditional or alternative marketing activities; and,
3. To evaluate how approaches companies in the FMCG industry who implement experiential marketing activities, measure the effectiveness of the outcome of the campaign through ROE and other methods.
In the context of these research objectives, theory will be developed to reflect the marketing practitioners’ perspective from which practice guidelines can be drawn. The resulting theory will not only meet the criteria of this research study but also will satisfy the call for further research by academics by examining the experiential marketing process in totality.

An interpretive approach to the research is employed, where the use of qualitative research was deemed appropriate given the necessity to understand and explain marketing practitioners’ perspectives on the most effective approach to undertake when employing experiential marketing as a communications tool. It is crucial to note that to date, the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing has not been researched from the practitioners’ perspective nor explored in any sector. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the primary focus will be on the FMCG industry. The aim of qualitative research is to provide data and resolutions on a given phenomenon and offer insight as to how or why something happens (Carson et al., 2001; Hyde, 2000). Considering that qualitative research enables the gathering of information and data from research participants perspectives to establish themes which grants them to cultivate theories inductively (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007), this approach is quite appropriate for the present research study.

Within the interpretative repertoire, there are many methodological options for researchers to choose from; however, it is imperative to consider that the chosen methodology must sufficiently address the research issues. With this in mind, in-depth interviews were utilised to offer the research insight into the practice of experiential marketing from the industry practitioners’ perspective.

1.4 Positioning the Research
As discussed previously (Section 1.2), although the origin of experiential marketing can be dated back to 1982 when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) presented their research on consumer behaviour in the Journal of Marketing, experiential marketing in its current state did not emerge until 1998 when Pine and Gilmore (1998) first discussed the topic of the experience economy. A review of the literature on experiential marketing since the publication of these landmark contributions, as presented in Chapter 2, evidently depicts that experiential marketing has been a clear point of interest for both academics and marketing practitioners alike. This interest has been fuelled by customers interacting with firms through
multiple touch points in a growing number of channels and media, resulting in more complex customer journeys (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016b). In addition to the growing number of touchpoints available for a customer to interact with, it is essential to note that this directly correlates with the multi-disciplinary nature of experiential marketing. The practice integrates long-lasting marketing concepts including customer buying behaviour process models, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, customer centricity, customer focus and customer engagement (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016b). Additionally, research to date has emphasised an apparent benefit to utilising experiential marketing in many fields of interest including experiential marketing including web-based media (Smilansky, 2009a), as part of a customer’s shopping experience (Codeluppi, 2001), to build intimate relationships between brands and customers (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015), brandscaping (Mikunda, 2004; Mitchell and Orwig, 2002), guerrilla marketing (Lenderman, 2005), to cultivate customer satisfaction (Chou, 2009) to develop the quality of relationships (Ming, 2010). However, despite the evident interest in the topic, the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing, specifically in the FMCG industry from the practitioners’ perspective lacks defined focus and investigation in academic literature. Instead as previously stated in Section 1.2, research to date has primarily focus on consumers’ and the benefits of experiential marketing from their perspective.

While aiming to represent the marketing practitioners’ perspective in academic literature on experiential marketing, this research makes significant contributions, enriching the practice in the FMCG industry and in academic literature. It is valuable to consider the marketing practitioners’ perspective on experiential marketing as they have accumulated valuable insight on the practice while utilising and interacting with this communications tool. Although there are benefits to the practice, a defined path to achieve these has not been established resulting in inconsistencies, ambiguities and ineffective marketing practice. This in turn has led to the fundamental flaw of experiential marketing where one of the key barriers to use is the justification of budget allocation due to the perceived cost and investment required (Smith and Hanover, 2016). The current research plays an integral part in the development of this valuable marketing tool through the establishment of an implementation model for the practice of experiential marketing and the development of a tool to evaluate the outcome of an experiential marketing campaign and its contribution to an integrated marketing strategy.
Figure 1.1 summarises the Conceptual Map of the thesis as discussed in this chapter.
Introduction

Research Question

How do brands in the FMCG industry implement the practice of experiential marketing and evaluate the outcome of this communications tool?

Research Objective 1

To investigate how companies, implement experiential marketing in the FMCG industry

Finding 1

There is no unified approach to conducting an experiential activation

Research Objective 2

To explore how companies, integrate experiential marketing with traditional marketing activities

Finding 2

It is difficult to quantify the return on an experiential activity

Research Objective 3

To evaluate how companies in the FMCG industry who implement experiential marketing activities, measure the effectiveness of the outcome of the campaign through ROIE and other methods

Discussion

The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model

Return on Integrated Experience

Conclusions

By utilising the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, brands have a framework that will successfully guide them in the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing.

ROIE makes the practice of experiential marketing more accountable by evaluating all of the key metrics required.
Chapter 2

Literature Review
Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
The review of the existing literature pertaining to experiential marketing, often abbreviated as XP or Ex, begins in Section 2.2 with an exploration of the historical origins of experiential marketing. An investigation of the development of consumption experience through to the contemporary practice of experiential marketing is conducted in this section while evaluating contributions from key authors on the marketing practice. The origins of experiential marketing are firmly rooted in consumer behaviour where the concept of experience was first analysed. An important dimension to the research arises in this analysis; the core component to successful experiences and the importance of customer engagement and memorable interaction. Section 2.3 explores the concept of experience and experiential marketing in academic literature. Equipped with an in-depth understanding of the modern-day practice of experiential marketing, its application to the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) market is possible. This critique follows in Section 2.4 where an exploration of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry is conducted. This section presents data which shows the positive growth in the use of this marketing technique and the potential it offers therein, while portraying how experiential activities are a response to present day consumer requirements. Section 2.5 presents an exploration of word of mouth marketing (WOMM) through an online medium and social currency utilisation, to disseminate the message of the experiential event to a mass audience. WOMM is an essential component to the current research as it ensures that experiential marketing activations do not merely live in that moment, but alternatively, reach a mass audience online. Section 2.6 draws together the literature on the role that experiential marketing plays in the generation of consumer collectives both online and offline and the role they play in modern marketing practice. A clear progression from this point is presented in Section 2.7 where the role that experiential marketing plays in the development of brand relationships is explored. A primary objective of conducting experiential events is to cultivate a long-term relationship with the customer demonstrating strong customer ties and long-term loyalty. This chapter concludes, by amalgamating the diverse perspectives of experiential marketing and highlighting the requirement to conduct empirical research on the topic. It is revealed that the practitioner perspective on experiential marketing is largely
missing from the existing literature, and without this insight it is argued that any debate of 
the application of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector is incomplete and moreover, 
that the measurement of effectiveness of experiential marketing campaigns is therefore 
limited.

The review of the current literature begins with an analysis of the concept of experiential 
marketing and its historical origins through to present day practice.

2.2 The Historical Origins of Experiential Marketing

The origins of experience in the marketing context are rooted in Holbrook and Hirschman 
(1982) where the concept of experience was first explored in consumer behaviour literature. 
Although elements of experience had previously been discussed by multiple authors, 
Holbrook and Hirschman brought the concept to the forefront. Abbott (1955) emphasised the 
importance of the role of services performed by products to provide consumption 
experiences as a core basis for customer value and, in a similar timeframe, Alderson (1957) 
had highlighted the significance of the consumption experience. Following on from these 
contributions, Goffman (1959) adapted the core principles of theatre to social situations and 
work. In this context, he referred to this concept not as a metaphor, but as a business model. 
In his book *Future Shock*, Toffler (1970: 221) presented questions alluding to the practice 
including “Where does the economy go next? After the services, what?” and answered this 
with “the growth of a strange new sector based on what can only be called the experience 
industries”. Along with the existing mainstream literature on consumer behaviour that 
portrayed customers as rational decision makers, Holbrook and Hirschman offered a new 
experiential approach which revolutionised the common rationale of customer behaviour 
(Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The duo’s innovative work addressed “those facets of 
behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of product use” 
(Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982: 99) and gave a glimpse of a revolutionary movement which 
signified the transition from the traditional information processing approach of consumer 
behaviour (Pham, 1998). In the 1980s, the broad concept of experience was garnering much 
academic attention, which was influenced by its growing application in marketing practice. 
Ogilvy (1985), the co-founder of the Global Business Network, reiterates this point by 
documenting the need for *vivid experiences* which he believed were contributing to the 
growth of the US economy at that time. These authors’ work identified many significant points
which have acted as a strong foundation to the development of experiential marketing. Firstly, they highlighted the need to investigate the consumption experience in its totality from pre-purchase through to disposal. Secondly, emotion as a critical aspect of consumption came to the fore as an issue which had attracted the interest of many academics including Winsted (2000), Bagozzi et al. (1999) and Richins (1997). Thirdly, they posit that individuals do not simply take part in experiences in a multisensory mode, but they also react and respond to the stimulus, therefore placing interaction at the core of the experience. Finally, they proposed that customers can not only recall past memories in response to an experience, but they can also respond by imagining events which they have never experienced (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). Therefore, imagination and nostalgia contribute to an individual’s experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a).

Further developing the concept of experiential marketing, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) developed a new experiential approach, as previously mentioned, with the aim of contrasting the differences between the informational processing (rational) and the experiential view (irrational) elements of consumer behaviour. This experiential frame of reference considers consumption as “a primary subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and aesthetic criteria” (Same, 2012: 4). Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) experiential view of consumption states that consumers continuously seek fantasies, feelings, and fun; otherwise known as the three Fs (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The duo argue that this experiential view encompasses consumption as a subjective state of consciousness. This view is in contrast with Thorndike’s (1932) previous conceptualisation of the information processing perspective which focuses on product attributes, utilitarian functions, conscious and verbal thought processes. Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) experiential view of consumption stresses the symbolic meaning, subconscious process, and nonverbal cues which arise from consumption. In this view, how the customer is affected plays a primary role, not just in the influencer of behavioural and attitude, but in terms of the full scale of consumer emotions (i.e. love, pride, anger, joy etc.) (Schmitt, 2010). The contributions by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) in their primitive research led to the rise in popularity of experiential marketing as they have highlighted the need to entertain, stimulate and emotionally effect customers throughout the consumption experience in its totality.
Building on the contributions by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Pine and Gilmore (1998) explored the experiential view of consumer behaviour and concluded that the growing popularity of experiential benefits among customers led to a new stage of economic development called the *experiential economy*. This new economic offering followed the previous stages of economic development; commodities, goods and services in what they describe as the progression of economic value. The earliest stage, the commodity economy, primarily focused on the extraction of substances from the world around us. Following this, the Industrial Revolution led the way to the manufacturing economy, where the making of products was the primary economic offering. Later, during the 20th century the service economy arose, where the value of delivering intangible services was enhanced.

In addition to this new era in consumption, Pine and Gilmore (1998) discuss the development of value from commodities to products, services and experiences by depicting experience as a new economic offering and how it differs from goods and services. The *experience economy* encapsulates an era where companies “…intentionally use services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.” (Pine and Gilmore, 1998: 98). However, these staged experiences are not only about entertaining customers, they are a communications tool utilised by companies to engage with customers in a personal and memorable manner (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) new stage of economic development generated both interest and criticism alike. Raghunathan (2008) queries whether experiential offerings are qualitatively different to the offerings which were available during the service and goods economy. Similarly, Schmitt (2010) questions its validity and credibility due to the lack of quantifiable information portraying the claim that economies are entering a new stage of economic offering. Schmitt (2010) additionally suggests that rather than defining this as a new economic stage, it may be more apt to define it as a new way of marketing products and services, and even consumer commodities. In this scenario, experiential value would not occur in the products or services themselves, but rather in the marketing of these items.

Similar to the viewpoint of Pine and Gilmore (1998), Wolf (1999) identified a change in economic offering but referred to it as the *entertainment economy*. While research by Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Wolf (1999) acknowledges that customer inclusion and staging entertaining experiences are the next step in marketing development, in the entertainment
economy there is a coherent fusion of both the entertainment element with the media (Fraim, 2000). Wolf (2003) states that traditionally, businesses had not considered entertainment as a marketing strategy, but by infusing it into the core economic offering it radically influenced the consumers’ purchasing choice. Through the use of entertainment, marketers were now communicating through the medium of emotion and escapism making the product or brand relatable to the consumer (Wolf, 2003). In previous research conducted by Wolf, he imparts “It’s about stories that move us; characters we can root for, ideas that transform the cultural landscape, special effects that take us to a world we’ve never seen before, situations and lines that make us laugh, and ideas that are universal, they forever change the way we live” (Wolf, 1999: 295). In this case, entertainment represents the use of telling a story and allowing customers to relate to the brand (Fraim, 2000).

Although there had been discussions in the literature on the concept of experience in the consumption situation, there was no defined agreed terminology until the 1990s when Pine and Gilmore (1999) further explored it and defined it as customer experience. In this new paradigm, a firm’s primary marketing objective is to continually stage unique and memorable experiences which appeal to their customers’ physical and emotional connection to the brand. They stated that customers are willing to pay a premium price for personalised experiences which are exclusive, non-transferable, and memorable. Pine and Gilmore state “rich and memorable experiences cannot be reduced to mere entertainment” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999: 29), but rather, they encompass different levels of participation and engagement. This led to their development of the four realms of experience. Pine and Gilmore (1999) concluded that an experience could engage an individual across a multitude of dimensions. Two crucial dimensions proposed were guest participation and connection. Each of these dimensions propose the following questions:

1. Guest Participation: How immersed is the individual in the experience? Are they passive or active participants?

2. Connection: What connects the individual to the experience? Are they engaged with the experience from a distance (absorption) or are they physically or virtually partaking in the experience itself (immersion)?
Literature Review

Through the amalgamation of these two elements, the four realms of an experience can be defined. Pine and Gilmore’s (2013) four realms of experience include entertainment, education, escapist and esthetic.

- **Entertainment**: These are everyday experiences that we passively absorb. For example, watching television or attending a concert.

- **Education**: The individual is actively engaged in the experience but is still watching from a distance rather than being immersed in the action. The key objective is to increase their knowledge of the brand or functionalities of the product. In educational experiences, the individual is an interactive learner.

- **Escapist**: These experiences can teach just as well as educational events, or amuse participants just as well as entertaining experiences, but they involve greater customer immersion.

- **Esthetic**: The individual is fully immersed in the experience but they themselves have little or no effect on it (Pine and Gilmore, 2013, 2011, 1999, 1998).
In addition, Pine and Gilmore also identify a *sweet spot* for any compelling experience which incorporates all four realms of an experience. By activating an experience of this nature, it acts as a mnemonic tool which aids in the creation and recall of memories, distinct from the mundane world of goods and services (Pine and Gilmore, 2013). For these experiences to be successfully implemented, the researcher concludes that it is imperative that the experience is as real as any service, good or commodity; in fact, an economic offering (Pine and Gilmore, 2013).

In a literary investigation into the development of experience and entertainment in marketing, research preceding Pine and Gilmore’s (2013) contribution was conducted by Holbrook (2000) where he identifies two primary criticisms that contradict this conceptualisation. This research garnered much academic attention due to the similar timeframes of being published and its altering views on the research topic between the
author. Firstly, the Pine and Gilmore framework categorises all products as experiences staged solely for guests even in the case of experiential products. Holbrook (2000) states that this view may be counterproductive in the case of education, medical services, or the penal system. Although these experiential products require guest participation and connection, they are not staged but rather are real-life experiences with quantifiable outcomes. Secondly, Holbrook (2000) discusses Pine and Gilmore’s ideology of charging admission for retail experiences. The researchers state “you’re not truly selling a particular economic offering unless you explicitly ask your customers to pay for that exact offering. For experiences, that means charging an admissions fee.” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999: 62). Holbrook (2000) believes that you cannot charge an admission fee for what was once free. He illustrates this by discussing businesses who utilise the concept of experiential as part of their core offer including Brookstone, Niketown and Victoria Secret. Each of these retail outlets sell merchandise through instore experiential activities, and for them to follow Pine and Gilmore’s advice, they would be charging admission to their retail outlet for a customer to purchase an item. Holbrook (2000) believes this is not economically viable.

Although Holbrook (2000) has stated criticisms with the content of Pine and Gilmore’s research, their 1998 paper Welcome to the Experience Economy undeniably set the foundation for further exploration. Naturally progressing from their investigation on the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, 1998), many academics expanded on this concept and focused on customer experience as a new method of creating value for not only the company, but also the customer (for example, Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Caru and Cova, 2003; Smith and Wheeler, 2002; Addis and Holbrook, 2001). In line with this progression, consumption is viewed as a holistic experience which involves a person, as opposed to a customer, who now is involved in all aspects of the consumption process (LaSalle and Britton, 2003). When examining experience from the perspective of LaSalle and Britton (2003), the memorability of the staged events, as stated in Pine and Gilmore (1999), has lost relevance and has progressed to the effect the experience has on the customer. LaSalle and Britton (2003) conclude that the primary contributor to the creation of the perception of value is not the selling of the memorable experience but the ability to create experiences which allow the consumer to build a relationship with the company through relatable and memorable moments, or according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), to co-create their
own experiences with the company. In accordance with this perspective, companies do not sell experiences as stated by Pine and Gilmore (1999, 1998), but rather they provide cues which are conductive of experiences which can be activated and utilised by consumers to co-create their own unique experiences (Caru and Cova, 2007).

The concept of customer experience paved the way for the development of the experiential marketing concept. Experiential marketing is an activity in which the involvement of the consumer is mandatory in the form of participation and aims to exceed the customers’ identified needs and wants. It not only addresses the needs and wants, but also an individuals’ self-image, values, dormant emotions, and desires (Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010). By identifying these variables, finding a correlation between them and the brand and communicating them through experiential activities, a relationship is built between the customer and the brand resulting in customer satisfaction and loyalty (Srivastava, 2008). It is also important to note that not only does experiential marketing respond to customers’ needs and wants, but also fulfils their desires. So much so, Dillon and McFeely (2018) depict a change of autonomies where brands and marketers are not the main influencers in marketing decisions, but the consumers who buy the product are.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) compared experiential marketing with traditional marketing and argued that contrary to the focus on products found in traditional marketing, experiential marketing attaches greater importance to the experience and the involvement of the customer. They stated that the core concept of experiential marketing is not just to provide customers with goods and services which satisfy them, but to offer unique, memorable and personalised experiences to them also. Schmitt (1999b) further reiterates this, stating that experiential marketing is a communications method which allows customers to sense, feel, think, act and relate with companies and brands. Through his research, he identified five different types of experiences for customers which he calls strategic experiential modules (SEMs). These include “sensory experiences (Sense), affective experiences (Feel), creative cognitive experiences (Think), physical experiences and entire lifestyles (Act), and social identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (Relate)” (Schmitt, 1999a: 53).
• **Sense**: Sense experiences are sensual and tangible elements of a product or service that appeal to the five senses of sight, sound, scent, taste and touch (Li and Yang, 2010). The overall purpose of this marketing activity is to provide aesthetic pleasure, excitement, beauty and satisfaction through sensory stimulation (Schmitt, 1999a).

• **Feel**: Feel experiences focus on the creation of moods and emotions (Nigam, 2012), with the objective of creating consumers’ preferred experience and influencing consumers’ attitude towards a more positive outlook towards the brand or product (Li and Yang, 2010).

• **Think**: The objective of the think experience is to encourage consumers to engage in elaborative and innovative thinking that may solve problems (Nigam, 2012). This marketing activity initiates customers’ ideas and creates emotions of surprise, joy and anger. It makes consumers aware of the power of wisdom, so they can communicate with products or companies, through their own ideas (Li and Yang, 2010). This marketing technique has the ability to aid the transformation of society as people re-evaluate old assumptions and expectations (Schmitt, 1999a).

• **Act**: The act experience focuses on the physical experience and the way in which it affects people’s lives (Li and Yang, 2010). It enhances customers’ lives by enriching their physiological experiences, portraying different methods of doing things, alternative lifestyle choices and interactions (Schmitt, 1999a). These changes in behaviour and lifestyle often motivate, inspire and generate an emotional response (Schmitt, 1999b).

• **Relate**: Relate experiences contain elements of sense, feel, think and act, but expands beyond an individual’s personal, private feelings and emotions, thus, relating the person to something outside their private state (Li and Yang, 2010). Campaigns of this nature appeal to an individual’s need for self-improvement. They appeal to the desire to be perceived positively by others (Schmitt, 1999b). They relate the person to a broader social system, therefore, establishing strong brand relations and active brand communities (Schmitt, 1999a).
These five categories of experiences as depicted by Schmitt (1999a) bear similarities and fall in line with the categories of experience previously presented by Dewey (1925, 1922) which are as follows:

1. Conceiving the world: Presentation & simplification
2. Feeling the world: Action, emotion, communication, cognition as original unity
3. Enliving the world: Proximity and distance, fiction and non-fiction and enhancement of life

Other constructs which also fall in line with Schmitt’s (1999a) categorisation include Pinker’s (1997) mental models and Dubé and Jordan’s (2003) pleasure constructs, which include social, physical, emotional and intellectual pleasures.

These SEMs allow customers to become immersed in the holistic experiential activity and build an emotional response with the brand (Schmitt, 2003). This emotional response results in the customer’s development of individual engagement and empowerment, unforgettable feelings, and memories, thus winning their trust and loyalty (Li and Yang, 2010). However, in Holbrook’s (2000) review of customer experience, he states criticisms relating to the literature composed by Schmitt. Schmitt holds a firm belief that customers have evolved, and through this process they are no longer satisfied with products or services but are now looking to be immersed in an experience which acts as an element of added value (Schmitt, 1999b).

“Today customers take functional feature and benefits, product quality, and a positive brand image as a given. What they want is products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. They want products, communications, and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience.” (Schmitt, 1999b: 22)

Holbrook (2000) concludes that this philosophy is flawed, that customer requirements have not evolved, but merely our understanding of them has been radically revised. Consumers still enjoy experiences in which they have always been involved in, for example, they still savour their food and daydream about going on a holiday. Therefore, consumption itself
remains constant and our understanding of the consumption experience is where the change lies.

Contrary to Holbrook’s (2000) critique, similar experiential dimensions share Schmitt’s (1999a) approach. Dubé and LaBel (2003) defined four similar pleasure dimensions; emotional, intellectual, physical and social pleasures. These pleasure dimensions similarly correlate to Schmitt’s experience modules, in particular feel, think, act and relate (Schmitt, 2010). Also, Gentile et al. (2007) distinguish the following experiential components:

- Sensorial: This relates to the senses and how aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction provoke them.

- Emotional: This involves moods, feelings and emotional experiences which provoke an affective relation with a company, its brands, and products.

- Cognitive: This type of component relates to the thinking or conscious mental processes to encourage customers to exercise their creativity or problem-solving mechanisms, so they revise their assumptions about a product.

- Pragmatic: This relates to experiences derived from the act of doing something and its usability.

- Lifestyle: This encompasses experiences derived from the assertion of values and personal beliefs.

- Relationships: This involves experiences which emerge from relationships and social context which happen during consumption as part of a real or imagined community or to assert social identity.

These experiential components are similar to Schmitt’s SEMs, however, they include one extra element, the pragmatic component.

Building on the foundation paved by Pine and Gilmore (1999), the concept of consumer experience management (CEM) was conceptualised by Berry et al. (2002). LaSalle and Britton (2003) state that customer experience derives from a set of interactions which occur between a customer and a product or company. Experiences are personal, existing only in the mind of
an individual who has been engaged with, on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level. Therefore, no two people can have the same experience. This is due to the fact that each experience is a result of a staged event and the individual’s state of mind (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The success of customer experience depends on the comparison between the customer’s expectations, how satisfied they were with staff interaction and the core offering in correspondence with the different moments of contact or touchpoints (Shaw and Ivens, 2005; LaSalle and Britton, 2003). According to Schmitt (2003), CEM embodies the process used to manage a customer’s cross-channel exposure, communication efforts and transactions with a company, brand or service.

There is a clear correlation between CEM and experiential marketing (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016b; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013a), and it is important to also acknowledge the differential factors between these two related practices. Yuan and Wu (2008) find that experiential marketing is a tactic employed by a brand to stage the physical environment in its entirety along with its operational processes in order for its customers to have an immersive experience. However, when discussing the concept of CEM, Schmitt (2003) states that it represents the methodology that it utilised to manage a customer’s cross-channel exposure, personal interaction and transaction with a brand, product, company or service. Cantone and Risitano (2011) share this sentiment stating that CEM is not a tactic but rather a programme or schedule.

Retailers, including the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, globally have grasped the concept of CEM, with many now including it in their company mission statements (Verhoef et al., 2009). Through modern marketing management, there has been a shift from customer relationship management (CRM) to the new concept of CEM (Hill and Hill, 2012). This is due to the re-emergence of focus on customer experience and the importance of the customer in the daily functionalities of business activity (Lenderman, 2005). CEM promotes a balanced relationship between consumers and businesses that will improve and strengthen the quality and length of the consumer’s lifetime value (Das and Hota, 2014). CEM is a vital component in the creation of successful loyalty driven programmes, taking companies into an era where the primary differentiator is through immersive experiences at every consumer touchpoint (Smilansky, 2009a). However, despite the common utilisation of CEM in marketing practice, in academic research this topic has not been developed adequately. In fact, research
to date on CEM is fragmented across a multitude of contexts and is differentiated from other marketing management concepts. It does not integrate the key components of CEM, elaborate on its underpinning in marketing management theory or evaluate the feasibility of its utilisation as a standalone concept (Homberg et al., 2017). Alternatively, the few studies available have a primarily focus on the service context, in particular the creation of methods of service experience design from a service-dominant perspective, which have been detailed in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Main Literature on CEM

Thus, despite there being research available in academic literature, its fragmented nature has led to a lack of understanding on the topic despite the fact that it has been a key topic in marketing literature (Homberg et al., 2017).

Although the concept of experiential marketing is firmly rooted in Holbrook and Hirschmann’s (1982) paper, in the present era of the experiential economy where experiences are now considered an economic offering and an integral element of modern marketing strategy

Source: (Homberg et al., 2017; 378).
(Smith and Hanover, 2016; Pine and Gilmore, 1998), it is timely to explore the concept of experiential marketing and its many components. Due to the emergence of the influence of the modern day consumer, customer requirements have evolved (Koulopoulos and Keldsen, 2016; Fromm and Garton, 2013). This cohort of consumers are no longer content with traditional marketing practice and presently want brands to be responsive to their individual needs and to build brand experiences which are memorable and immersive. This assertion forms a critical component of the current research and to enhance the discussion on experiential marketing, it is argued that all dimensions and definitions of the term experience need to also be explored.

2.3 The Experiential Marketing Concept Explored
The consumer marketplace has witnessed a fundamental shift in recent years (Shobeiri et al., 2014). In a discussion on the experiential concept, McCole stated “Experiential marketing is essentially concerned with the six senses: smell, sight, taste, hearing, touch and balance. Experiential marketing has grown in importance because traditional marketing has largely ignored the notion of act experiences” (2004: 535). In order to offer context to this, this section endeavours to explore:

1. Contrasts between traditional marketing communications and experiential marketing communications;

2. The nature of experiences;

3. The concept of experiential marketing;

4. The role played by customer experience;

5. Experiential Value; and

6. The return on experience.

2.3.1 Differentiating Traditional Marketing and Experiential Marketing
Immersive and interactive marketing techniques have become a more utilised tool over its counterpart, traditional marketing, due to the growing popularity of the concepts of customer experience and experiential marketing (Maghnati et al., 2012). A predominant reason for this preference by brands is that the media landscape has become overwhelmingly saturated in
recent years. Consequently, brands are trying to differentiate themselves from the competing brands by avoiding the use of conventional marketing methods which result in the customer feeling that they have merely been spoken to and are instead focusing on experiences which nurture the relationship between brands and their audiences (Riordan, 2020). Although experiential marketing has grown in popularity and in use in the FMCG industry (Perrett, 2016; Rayport, 2013), it is important to also explore its traditional counterpart. Considering traditional and experiential marketing follow different rationale and procedures, it is valuable to compare and contrast these communications tools in order to understand their core characteristics and their symbiotic relationship. There are numerous differences between these marketing methods which have been explored by many scholars and academics alike. Schmitt (2000) discusses four defining characteristics which explore the differences between these two marketing methods.

Table 2.1 Schmitt’s Defining Characteristics of Traditional and Experiential Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Marketing</th>
<th>Experiential Marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Features and benefits of a product</td>
<td>Holistic customer experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Narrow definition of product category and competition</td>
<td>Broader consumption situation and holistic experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View</strong></td>
<td>Rational decision-makers</td>
<td>Rational and emotional beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods and Tools</strong></td>
<td>Analytical, quantitative, verbal</td>
<td>Diverse, multi-faceted, eclectic, highly analytical, quantitative, verbal, visual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Schmitt (2000).

According to Schmitt (1999a), the practice of traditional marketing considers the following; consumers evaluate products or services by firstly, looking at their functional features, then they evaluate it in terms of importance and trade-offs by comparing it to a similar offering,
and lastly, they select their desired product or service by deciding which has the “highest overall utility” (Schmitt, 1999a: 56). Traditional marketing emphasises mass production and consumption, growth of the consumer base, and the recruitment of new customers (Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010). In their research on the foundations of marketing, Fahy and Jobber (2012) depict traditional marketing as a method of satisfying consumer needs while under-cutting competitors, in a way in which organisational goals could not be achieved nor accomplished. In line with this method, products and services would suffer price reductions, therefore resulting in unsustainable price wars (Razi and Iajevardi, 2016). Although these definitions of traditional marketing all highlight different components of the practice, the collective analysis of these perspectives offers an in-depth understanding of the facets of the practice. However, research conducted by Riordan (2020) suggests that for brands that solely rely on the use of digital and traditional marketing methods, it can be difficult to capture and hold customers’ attention. This is predominately due to the accelerated frequency of media cycles and the sheer volume of content that is presently being circulated. While traditional marketing’s core objective is based on delivering a large volume of target audience impressions through brand exposure, experiential marketing revolutionises this approach. By employing experiential marketing techniques, a brand interacts and engages with a smaller audience, creating authentic and bespoke customer experiences which influences customer perception and brand affinities (Lawler, 2013). The following section will explore the utilisation of experiential marketing in the current marketing environment.

2.3.2: The Present-Day Utilisation of Experiential Marketing
The utilisation of experiential marketing by brands has grown in popularity on account of the fact that traditional marketing has largely ignored the notion and importance of creating brand experiences to connect with brand audiences (Barnes et al., 2016). As depicted below, experiential marketing is not merely a fad, but is being implemented in multiple industries and correlates a predominantly positive growth in utilisation.
Table 2.2 Top Five Sectors for Experiential Marketing Utilisation Globally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMCG</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>+0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparel</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel, Transport &amp; Hospitality</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>+2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Pearlfinders (2016).

Many companies are now reallocating their marketing budget expenditure and spending less on traditional advertising to deliver the essence of their brand, with 70% of brand-side marketers who took part in the research study stating that they want to include more high-quality brand experiences in the strategy plans (Agency EA, 2019). In a study conducted by Freeman, an experiential marketing agency, one thousand chief marketing officers and brand managers across Europe, North America and Asia were polled about where they expect to allocate their resources. Globally, 51% of participants stated that more than a fifth of their budget allocation would be directed to experiential in the next three to five years, compared to just 31% who did so at that point (Gwynn, 2017).

The reason why experiential marketing is becoming a mainstream marketing activity is that the marketing tactic is aligned to how brands presently want to connect with their consumers (Smith and Hanover, 2016). This has been driven by the reality that traditional advertising does not have the same allure that it once possessed as it is passive and does not provide the same benefits to brands as does the experiential alternative (Monllos, 2017). For example, the consumer reach of television advertising is plunging as people can now skip the ads and there is a growing number of people utilising ad blockers (Perrett, 2016). Adidas have now stepped away from television advertising and moved towards digital and social media advertising in a bid to engage with their younger consumers as they predominantly interact with the brand on smart devices (O Reilly, 2017). Therefore, experiential marketing depicts a
divergence from the practices of traditional marketing and reiterates the importance of brand-consumer relationships. The crux of experiential marketing is that the primary concern of a brand should not be customer satisfaction as seen in traditional marketing, but the creation of an emotional consumer attachment with the brand (Wohlfie1 and Whelan, 2004; Lenderman, 2005). Therefore, marketers need to conceptualise immersive methods of connecting with their audience. This is easily achieved through experiential marketing as the primary aim of the practice is to create an ongoing emotional attachment between a brand and a consumer (McCole, 2004).

Research conducted by Shaw and Ivens (2005), found that the vast majority of marketing professionals perceive superior, relatable, and memorable customer experiences as the next arena of competition among brands competing for market share. Experiential marketing creates an opportunity for marketers to create such memorable experiences through offering a series of experiential benefits which are strategically tailored to the target market (Mathwick et al., 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). While customers are seeking these memorable and captivating experiences, authors including Ritzer (2004) Goulding (2000) offer additional perspective on this stating that companies must allow customers to escape their ordinary life by immersing them in a pre-conceptualised, pre-established and themed brand world. Upon successfully achieving this, the consumption experience and the relationship it generates with the consumer is the ultimate point of brand differentiation in an overcrowded marketplace (Chaney et al., 2018; Schmitt, 2000; Holbrook, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Sherry, 1998).

Consumers in the era of the experiential economy take marketing elements including promised benefits of a product, its aesthetics and features as a given. Therefore, marketers have had to re-evaluate marketing activities and develop new strategies which encompass the customer experience (Schmitt, 2010). Experiential marketing has key attributes which differentiate it from traditional marketing. Its primary emphasis is on the consumer’s experience, the consumption situation, and awareness of both the logical and emotional aspects of the customer decision making process (Chou, 2009). A well-constructed experience garners the attention of the consumer, emotionally engages with them, and becomes a memory dependant on individual interpretation (Hoch, 2002). In comparison to traditional marketing which has a primary focus on gaining customer satisfaction, experiential marketing
appeals to a customer’s emotions cultivating an emotional bond between the customer and the brand, product, or service (McCole, 2004). Instead of viewing customers as inactive message receivers, experiential marketing considers that customers should be actively engaged in the creation of marketing plans (Jain and Lohia, 2014). The sensory, emotional, and nostalgic elements of an experience hold a greater possibility of impacting consumer preferences than the product or service attributes (Zaltman, 2003). Evidently, customers desire experiences and for businesses to capitalise on this, they must create and engage with memorable experiences that capture their attention and ultimately build customer loyalty (Adeosun and Ganiyu, 2012). As a result of this evolution in marketing, marketers who engage in experiential activities are witnessing a deeper, more genuine connection with customers (Lawler, 2013).

As depicted throughout this section, experiences and experiential marketing have played an integral role in the marketing of brands throughout the years. Fuelled by a growing interest in academia and marketing practice, experiential marketing today is an immersive communications tool that affords brands the opportunity to build authentic connections with customers. Equipped with an understanding of the historical origins of experiential marketing, the concept of experience will now be evaluated in the following section.

2.3.2 Experience

Having an in-depth understanding of consumers and their consumption experiences with both products and services, with brands, in both online environments and retail, is a fundamental task in marketing practice. However, the concept of experience is not as well established as other marketing constructs in the in areas of marketing and consumer behaviour, including attitudes, satisfaction, consumer choice or brand equity (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013b). Experience is generally categorised as the main component of experiential marketing and has been referred to as the future of marketing (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999a). Rauen (2006), reiterates this belief stating that creating memorable experiences for consumers is more important than ever. Chuang and Hu (2017) concur, concluding that nowadays, experience plays an integral role in business practice. Getting people instore is not enough, they want a memorable experience that will “dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds” (Schmitt, 1999a: 57). However, despite the recognition awarded to this concept, Poulsson and Kale (2004) believe that there
has been no attempt made to accurately define exactly what an experience involves in marketing terms. The lack of clarity regarding a universal definition lies in the fact that there are multiple ways in which the term *experience* can be applied. In a review of recent experiential marketing practice, Tynan and McKechnie (2009a: 502) conclude that experience is both a noun and a verb and “is used to variously convey the process itself, participating in the activity, the affect or way in which an object, thought or emotion is felt through the senses or the mind, and even the outcome of an experience by way of a skill or learning for example. Therefore, it is not evident whether experience is active or passive for the customer involved, whether it is expected to influence certain results including customer loyalty or skill development or finally if customer interaction is essential for the experience to be deemed successful (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). Poulsson and Kale (2004) assert that an experience refers to the mental state that materializes in any given individual, at any given conscious moment. However, Carbone and Haeckel believe that an experience is the “takeaway impression formed by people’s encounters with products, services, and businesses – a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information” (1994: 8). Razi and Iajevardi (2016) acknowledge that experience is utilised by organisations as the service platform, while using products as tools and surrounding it with customers, with the aim of creating an experience that will be unforgettable for participants. It is imperative to note that every experience is a collective of multiple micro experiences and each of these smaller experiences are what offers a brand a competitive advantage (Conway, 2016). These unforgettable experiences are so because they are internal. They exist in each individual customer’s heart, and they are an outcome of personal physique, emotion, and knowledge (Razi and Iajevardi, 2016). Brakus et al. (2009) further elaborates asserting that brand experiences are not static, they vary in both intensity and strength; that is, some brand experiences are stronger and can have a more profound impact than others. Therefore, it is important to tailor the brand experience to the intended audience in order for it to create the desired brand effect and campaign outcome.

2.3.2.1 Direct and Indirect Experiences
Essentially, experiences can arise through either direct or indirect methods. Indirect experience occurs when customers are exposed to or immersed in intangible aspects of marketing communications, and direct experiences take place when a customer either
purchases or consumes a product or service (Brakus et al., 2009). To offer context to this, an example of an indirect experience would be if an individual was walking in their local park and an experiential activation was taking place for Cadbury chocolate and they engaged with it. An example of a direct experience would involve the individual buying a bar of Cadbury chocolate from a retail outlet. Both of these categories of experiences are vital for brands who aim to gain competitive advantage as they offer multiple rich touchpoints to the brand (Shim, 2012).

Subsequently, direct and indirect experiences can take place on multiple brand landscapes. While discussing experience landscapes, Wu et al. (2004) indicate that both online and offline brand experiences result in a similar customer response. For that reason, by brands actively engaging in positive brand experiences through different platforms (for example, online), it influences the customer’s related experience (for example, offline) on a synergistic platform, developing the customers connection with the brand (Huang et al., 2015). Over time, these experiences are stored in a customer’s memory and should form a lasting impact on their customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Oliver, 1997; Reicheld, 1997). Caru and Cova (2003) have also identified that there is a difference between the mere satisfaction derived from an ordinary or mundane experience and the enjoyment achieved through an extraordinary or flow experience. Ordinary experiences are simply everyday occurrences that are routine and result in passive stimulation (Schmitt, 2010). However, extraordinary experiences are unique, not commonly experienced and transcend the realm of everyday life (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner, 2014). Extraordinary experiences have been the subject of many academic articles and have been referred to as “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 4), “epiphanies” (Denzin, 1992: 26), and are believed to “transcend customer experiences” (Schouten et al., 2007: 358). These definitions are further reiterated by Sussman and Alter’s (2012) discussion of the concept stating that purchases can be categorised along a continuum from ordinary (a common occurrence) to exceptional (sporadic and unusual).

Despite the term experience being frequently discussed by academics and practitioners alike, the premise of each of the below mentioned definitions by leading academics in this field focus on different elements of the concept. See Table 2.3.
Table 2.3 Lexicon of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Experience Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holbrook and Hirschman (1982)</td>
<td>Experiential aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Csikszentmihalyi (1990)</td>
<td>Flow experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnould and Price (1993)</td>
<td>Extraordinary experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbone and Haeckel (1994)</td>
<td>Customer experience engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmitt (1999b)</td>
<td>Experiential Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boswijk, Thijssten and Peelen (2005)</td>
<td>Meaning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarassanen and Kylänen (2007)</td>
<td>Experience pyramid, personal change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Same and Larimo (2012).

Hence, the term experience is broad and open to interpretation. Experiences by nature can take form in a multitude of ways and at different stages of the consumption experience. Section 2.3.2.2 progresses the evaluation on this topic and offers insight on each stage of the consumption experience.

2.3.2.2 The Stages of the Consumption Experience

Although experience is the foundation of experiential marketing (Pine and Gilmore, 1998), a key concept to also be considered in line with this is *immersion*. In line with the concept of immersion, consumers are said to take pleasure in “being immersed in McDisneyfied banalities” (Thompson, 2000: 134). It has been noted by Firat (2001) that this category of consumer is actively pursuing immersion in a variety of experiences over traditional marketing activities, as well as embodied experiences for their own personal entertainment (Simpson, 2017; Kupers, 2000; Sherry, 1998). In the experiential perspective, the consumption experience is not merely limited to “pre-purchase activity (the stimulation of a need, the search for information, assessment etc.), nor to some post-purchase activity, e.g. the assessment of satisfaction, but includes a series of other activities which influence
consumers’ decisions and future actions” (Vézina, 1999: 62). Therefore, the consumption experience is prolonged over a period of time which can be divided into four stages (Arnould et al., 2002):

- The *pre-consumption experience*, which derives from the seeking of, planning for, daydreaming about, or imagining the experience;
- The *purchase experience*, this is comprised of the choice, payment or transaction, and the packaging. It is the overall encounter with the service and the environment;
- The *core consumption experience*, which includes the impression, the satiety, the levels of satisfaction/ dissatisfaction, the irritation/ flow, and the transformation;
- The *remembered consumption experience* and the *nostalgia experience* evokes a reaction through the medium of photographs and videos to relieve a past experience. This stage is established on accounts of stories and on arguments with friends about the past, all of which can be accounted for through the classification of memories (Arnould et al., 2002).

**Figure 2.3: The Stages of the Consumption Experience**

![Diagram of the Stages of the Consumption Experience](image)

Source: Adapted from Arnould et al. (2002).

Therefore, the consumption experience cannot simply involve the service encounter but must consider the experience in totality from pre-consumption to the remembered consumption and nostalgia experience (Grönroos, 2008).

By offering experiences in addition to the product or service offering, organisations view this as a solution to avoid the commodity trap (LaSalle and Britton, 2003). The aim is to cultivate
a set of strategies, including *retailtainment* or *shoptainment*, which stimulate the customer physically and emotionally during the shopping experience (Codeluppi, 2001).

### 2.3.3 Experiential Marketing

Since the early 1980s when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982: 132) first introduced the belief that consumption involves a “steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun encompassed by what we call the experiential view”, experience has garnered the attention of academics and marketing practitioners alike. This interest has not been isolated to research on experiential marketing in isolation but has spanned across many marketing disciplines. A predominant reason for this is due to its multidisciplinary nature as it interlinks with other marketing disciplines including customer buying behaviour, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, customer centricity, customer focus and customer engagement (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016a). Although the practice of experiential marketing has defined consumer benefits which are discussed in Section 2.4, issues arise when defining experiential marketing as there is no consistent view of it. This mirrors the lack of a categorical definition for experiences as previously discussed in Section 2.3.2. Meier (2010) refers to a comment made by Hauser in 2007 in which he stated that the “definition of experiential marketing is fluid – as is the methodology itself. It was once little talked about and is now being embraced as a silver bullet”. In fact, Hauser previously posted on the Experiential Marketing Forum asking for the definition of experiential marketing and received over 200 definitions from more than 150 countries (Meier, 2010). Therefore, this section endeavours to discuss experiential marketing from differing theoretical perspectives in order to uncover the true meaning of the practice.

The most basic definitions point to experiential marketing as a tactic which is utilised by a business to combine an experience with elements of entertainment into the offering, with the intention of reinforcing the product or service in the consumer’s mind (Lee *et al.*, 2011; Atwal and Williams, 2009; Yuan and Wu, 2008; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Lenderman (2005: 19) states “experiential marketing uses credible voices, sensory experiences, and respect for the consumer in its tactics and strategies, and it is employed to create direct and meaningful connections between companies and their customers”. Companies that practice experiential marketing take a brand’s essence and implement it in the form of an event, experience or
interaction. This in turn will allow consumers to understand the brand at an intimate level by being active, rather than passive, participants (Gautier, 2003).

Experiential marketing has grown in popularity among marketing practitioners as a distinctive communication tool utilising all communication modalities (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015). The core functionality of the experiential approach is that the live brand experience is centralised on two-way communication occurring in real time, therefore establishing a profound consumer bonding process (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015). Considering that experiential marketing occurs in an isolated personal experience, there is a clear relationship and dependency on digital marketing and word of mouth marketing (WOMM) (Barry et al., 2019; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b). Due to social media’s innate ability to reach the mass market, WOMM has acquired a new dimension as it is now being used by brands to amplify their brand marketing message and expand the reach of an experiential activation (Kozinets et al., 2014). With Gautier’s (2003) previously discussed implementation, experiential methods including an event, an experience or an interaction in mind, experiential marketing can take place through a multitude of mechanisms. This includes brandscaping (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015; Mikunda, 2004; Mitchell and Orwig, 2002), promotions (Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Bruzzese, 1992), instore experiences (Smilansky, 2018; Park, 2003), guerrilla marketing (Lenderman, 2005), live brand experiences, also referred to as experiential event marketing (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015; Smilansky, 2009a), online (Rose et al., 2011; Constantinides, 2004; Mathwick et al., 2001) and through digital technologies (Bonetti et al., 2018; Yaoyuneyong et al., 2016; Eyüboğlu, 2011; Bulearca and Tamarjan, 2010).

In recent years, experiential event marketing has become the experiential marketing method of choice for brands and marketers (Smilansky, 2018, 2009a). This primarily is because this form of experiential marketing can create both consumer and consumption experiences and tends to be more effective in achieving communications goals and objectives (Adeosun and Ganiyu, 2012). In academic literature, experiential event marketing is viewed as a form of experiential marketing and has been defined in many ways. Although Kotler’s (2003: 94) definition, “occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences”, may be viewed as not specific enough, it does epitomise the communications potential for such an event. Offering a more specific viewpoint of the practice, Wood (2009) offers three other definitions:
1. An event that is created with the core purpose of marketing a product/service, place, person or idea;

2. Any events that simply communicates with a target audience; and,

3. At any event that there is a probable chance that brand representatives will communicate with customers.

To summarise, Jack Morton Worldwide (2006), an experiential marketing agency, defines experiential event marketing as live events where audience members or customers have the opportunity to interact with a product or a brand in a face to face manner. To provide clarity on the situation, Table 2.4 lists examples of experiential marketing events which fall into this categorisation.

**Table 2.4 Examples of Experiential Event Marketing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive/ Reward Events</th>
<th>Product Launches</th>
<th>Open Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>Product Sampling</td>
<td>Publicity Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Created Events</td>
<td>Road Shows</td>
<td>Press Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity Fundraisers</td>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>Product Visitor Attractions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As outlined in the previous discussions pertaining to the types of experiential marketing, it is clear that by nature, experiential marketing occurs on a smaller scale and additionally; it typically carries a higher cost per person ratio when compared to traditional mass media efforts (Nigam, 2012; Heitzler *et al.*, 2008). This is an implicit consequence of the marketing technique as it does not merely broadcast one way messages, but provides two-way dialogue, hands on experience, and develops a more intimate relationship between the brand and the consumers (Nigam, 2012). Kerwin (2004) concurs with this view stating that “the beauty of a
well-designed experience is that while it doesn’t reach nearly as many people as a TV spot, it can attract the very customers who are most likely to buy” (Kerwin, 2004: 94). Therefore, experiential marketing can be considered a “customer-focused discipline” (Lenderman, 2005: 27). Research conducted by SRI International, an international market research organisation, stated that experiential marketing resulted in more immediate results than traditional methods, with consumers communicating that it impacted on the speed of their purchase decision. Additionally, the same research asserts that experiential marketing made consumers readily responsive to other forms of associated advertising (Allen, 2005). Therefore, it results in high quality consumer engagement, but with a lower number of impressions compared to the reach achievable with mass media utilisation (Lenderman, 2005). The following table summarises the main contributory definitions to the performance perspective of Experiential Marketing.

Table 2.5 Experiential Marketing Definitions: Performance Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee <em>et al.</em> (2011: 37)</td>
<td>“Experiential marketing is one of the marketing approaches that gives a great framework to combine experience and entertainment elements into a product or service.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atwal and Williams (2009: 341)</td>
<td>“It is about taking the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical, and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuan and Wu (2008: 389)</td>
<td>“Experiential marketing can be seen as a marketing tactic designed by a business to stage the entire physical environment and the operational processes for its customers to experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willliams (2006: 485)</td>
<td>“Experiential marketing is about taking the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical, interactive experiences which reinforce the offer. Rather than seeing the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
offer in a traditional manner, through advertising media such as commercials, print or electronic messaging, consumers’ feel it be being part of it.”

Pine and Gilmore (1999: 2) “When one buys an experience, one buys a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way.”

Smilansky (2018: 12) “Experiential marketing is the process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and aspirations profitably, engaging them through authentic two-way communications that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the Target Audience”.

While the various definitions examined so far focus on the experience at hand, they fail to acknowledge the emotions and feelings associated with the consumer’s experience. Although a core element of experiential marketing is about taking the essence of a brand and amplifying it through an engaging experience, one must also consider that it offers an engaging, personalised, and memorable experience to consumers as a result (Li and Yang, 2010). Nigam (2012) considers this and concludes that experiential marketing is primarily focused on extracting the core traits of a brand and creating intangible, physical and interactive experiences which enhance the value of a brand. The practice enables customers to be immersed in the brand experience, generating an unforgettable feeling and satisfying their needs in order to win and retain customer trust and loyalty long term (Liu, 2006). Therefore, a well-designed and executed experience will engage the target consumers, be memorable, and will permit free interpretation as it is non-partisan (McLuhan, 2008).

Considering the consumer impact of experiential marketing, Srinivasan and Srivastava (2010) believe that the practice involves consumer participation and transcends their perceived needs. Therefore, the practice does not merely address perceived needs and wants, but the self-image, social goals, emotional response, values and desires of the consumer (Srivastava, 2008). The methods of segmentation are quite diverse in comparison to traditional marketing means. Experiential marketing seeks insights about customers’ passions and the connections which are then analysed and implemented as a form of communication between them and the equity in the brands (Srivastava, 2008). By addressing all of these requirements, the brand
Literature Review

will achieve consumers’ individual engagement and empowerment, memorable feelings and maximum levels of satisfaction, while ultimately winning their loyalty and trust (Li and Yang, 2010). Resulting from this, not only has a relationship been generated with new customers, but it maintains the relationship with existing customers also. These loyal customers are vital for organisational success as they will not only generate profit, but will also promote the brand through word of mouth both offline and online (Zena and Hadisumarto, 2012). Therefore, the primary aim of experiential marketing is to create a relationship with consumers that relates to them on multiple levels (Maghnati et al., 2012).

Table 2.6 highlights the main contributors to this interpretation of experiential marketing.

**Table 2.6 Experiential Marketing Definitions: Emotions, Feelings, and Senses Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adeosun and Ganiyu (2012: 21)</td>
<td>“Experiential Marketing is the process of engaging customers with in-depth experiences of the product or a brand. Its purpose is to appeal to the emotional senses of the customers and to influence their choice decision.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigam (2012: 70)</td>
<td>“It is a private event that happens to people on response to some kind of internal or external stimulus resulting experiential aspect about products and services. The aim of experiential marketing is to make the customer delighted in exultant jubilation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li and Yang (2010: 1)</td>
<td>“Experiential marketing not only attaches importance to goods and services, but also pays much attention to practical experiences, which gives consumers individual engagement and empowerment, unforgettable feelings and maximum metal satisfaction, thus win their loyalty and trust.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srinivasan and Srivastava (2010: 194)</td>
<td>“Experiential marketing creates memorable experiences. The customer fondly remembers them, and even shares them with peers and family, generating increasing sales through the power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of word of mouth and customer loyalty. The experience deepens with each successive interaction.”

Smilansky (2009: v) “A process of identifying, satisfying customer needs and aspirations, profitably, by engaging them through two-way communications that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the target audience’s experience.”

Heitzler et al. (2008: 188) “The goal of experiential marketing is to tie a product or campaign to an experience that is relevant to the target audience, the premise being that letting people discover the characteristics of a product or service on their own is more effective than having them see or hear about it through a passive medium such as television or radio.”

Srivastava (2008: 70) “Experiential marketing is said to be practiced when marketers go beyond meeting basic needs to excite the consumer, to build consumer enthusiasm by becoming part of the everyday life experiences of the shopper.”

With the definitions presented in Table 2.6 in mind, it is worth noting that in order for these emotional and sensory reactions to be cultivated, brands must note that experiential marketing activations should not intrude. The optimal approach is for the activation to enhance an individual’s experience with the brand or campaign message (Lenderman, 2005). With enhancing individual’s experiences in mind, it is recommended to add a positive emotional component to experiences as this ensures that participants link their sensory and emotional systems, which gives rise to the unconscious fantasies, equipping them to romanticise on their memories and connecting them to positive emotions over time (Smilansky, 2018).

Building on these many theoretical perspectives of the practice of experiential marketing, it is also essential to consider the integral role that customer experience plays in the
implementation of experiential marketing. This is due to the fact that this interactive method of communication is reliant on customer participation. The following section discusses the concept of customer experience and its relationship with the previously discussed concepts of experience and experiential marketing.

2.3.4 Customer Experience
In today’s current business environment, customers are searching for happiness, fulfilment and core values, which can be satisfied through experiential marketing efforts (Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2011). The previously mentioned customer requirements have been cultivated by the increasing demand for brands to differentiate in a commoditised world (Schulze, 2005; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 1999a; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016: 70) there currently is limited academic research related to the topic of customer experience and the customer journey, however, they point to extensive literature “investigating specific facets of what is now being called ‘customer experience’”. The duo further develop on this observation questioning whether the topic of customer experience is entirely new as it is viewed as the unification of established marketing concepts, while at the same time disregarding established marketing concepts including service quality, relationship marketing and customer satisfaction (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Research to date suggests that for a brand or organisation to successfully implement a marketing experience, Poulsson and Kale (2004) argue that the experience should be personally relevant to the customer, be novel, offer an element of surprise, be authentic, and engage with the customer. Customer experience (Cx) is a form of interaction between an organisation and a customer (Same, 2012). However, it is not only created by the factors which are within the control of the organisation, for example, service interface, retail atmosphere and price, but also factors which are out of the control of the organisation, for example, influence of other customers and the individuals’ purpose for shopping (Verhoef et al., 2009). It is a multidimensional takeaway impression or outcome of an event which is based on the customers’ enthusiasm, affective responses, cognitive evaluations and capacity to be influenced by physical, human or innominate interaction dimensions (Kranzbühler et al., 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Walls et al., 2011a, 2011b; Verhoef et al., 2009). It is noteworthy that experiences are subjectively cultivated emotions that cannot be influenced by the provider, rather they are processed and created by customers subjectively (Kilian,
Similarly, Schmitt (2010) classifies customer experience as perceptions, feelings and thoughts which occur in the mind of the consumer when they encounter brands in the marketplace or experience platform and engage in consumption activities. Gentile et al. (2007) classify this concept as an evolution of its predecessor; the relationship between the company and the customer. Customer experiences staged and implemented by brands across all touchpoints and branding instruments are a vital component of the branding process, whether they extraordinarily impact the customer or not (Brakus et al., 2009). They have the potential to educate, entertain, offer an opportunity to display particular knowledge, values or beliefs, or display an escapist, visual, or aesthetic encounter (Holbrook, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

While applying Vargo and Lusch’s (2004, 2008) service dominant (S-D) logic to the concept of customer experience, one can witness a fundamental shift in emphasis from the traditional perspective of managing resources and capabilities to the prominence on managing the customer experience (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). According to S-D logic, a service is an accumulation of the service experience derived from interacting with the utilisation of the goods in addition to the service interaction with a given supplier or brand. In this case, the exchange is no longer transaction-bound and every consumer touchpoint is an offer of service (Ballantyne and Aitken, 2007). In line with this thought frame, the view that producers produce and consumers consume must be revaluated to the experiential view that producers and consumers both produce, thus requiring a strategy encompassing a shared vision, mutually negotiated experiences and collaboration (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). This contends that customers and service providers co-create value. Effectively, this is achieved through the dialog and interaction between customers and service providers throughout the stages of product design, production, delivery and consumption. S-D logic states that value is co-created and defined by customers rather than being a component of a service output (Yazdanparast et al., 2010). S-D logic offers an alternative strategic view of marketing by shifting from the belief that marketing is formed from a point-of-sale selling focus to a stance where marketing is built off a service relationship focus. This shifts the timeline of marketing exchanges to become open-ended from pre-sale service interactions to post-sale value in use with the objective of evolving brand-consumer relationships (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006). Arnould et al. (2005) view consuming an experience as a process which takes place across the
following stages; pre-consumption, the purchase and core experiences, and the remembered consumption experience or post experience. The value created by the experience is enabled and judged by customers throughout the consumption process (see Figure 2.4) and not isolated to the point of exchange.

**Figure 2.4: The Customer’s Holistic Experience**


Beginning with the pre-experience stage of the customers’ holistic experience, as seen in Figure 2.4 above, customers prepare and forecast by *seeking* information, *imagining* how the experience may be, *planning* and *budgeting* for the experience at hand (Arnould *et al.*, 2005). However, at the consumer experience and post-experience stages, customers’ acquire value by engaging in the experience while co-creating the experience in real time (Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006).

While immersed in the customer experience, customers’ obtain value through *sensory* stimulation through sight, sound, touch, taste and the smell related to the experience (Schmitt, 1999a, 1999b). The value derived from the *emotional* meaning expands beyond the basic concept of liking or disliking the experience, but rather incorporates a vast range of emotions including excitement, joy, pride, love, optimism, guilt, shame, and surprise (Richins, 1997). The rational economic choices which consumers must actively make are directed by *utilitarian* meaning where a customer actively seeks out *functional* value (Arnould *et al.*, 2005). In investigations into value sources in the customer experience stage, papers by Vargo and Lusch (2008) and Lusch *et al.* (2007) state the importance of value obtained through *relational* aspects of the experience. The relationship between the customer and the brand experience can be *social* in nature interacting with participating individuals or groups (Tyan
and McKechnie, 2009b, 2008; Gainer, 1995), and also with inanimate objects including the brand or organisation (Fournier, 1998). In the internet age, customers not only obtain *informational* value from traditional media but also through online media (Kozinets, 1999). In addition to the previously mentioned sources, customers can obtain value through the consumption of *novel* experiences (Poulsson and Kale, 2004), and from a *utopian* state regarding the customer’s connection with the place and space (Maclaren and Brown, 2005).

Following the customer experience, from the consumers’ perspective there are a number of possible outcomes. Firstly, a successful experience will have entertained the customers involved and generated enjoyment (Holbrook, 2000). Customers should also depart having *learned* something about the brand, service or product (Poulsson and Kale, 2004). Depending on the objectives of the experience, customers may experience *nostalgia* as a result and may engage in the behaviour of nostalgic reminiscing (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003). Consumers may also *fantasise* about how the experience could potentially have had alternative outcomes or even other consumers to share it with. Fantasising offers the customer an opportunity to imagine beyond the actual experience and even experience things as their ideal selves (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). Lastly, consumers act as *brand evangelists* for an exceptional brand experience and persuade others to engage with it and the brand or organisation (Holbrook, 2000).

**Figure 2.5 The Customers’ Experience: Activities, Value Sources and Outcomes**

Source: Adapted from Tynan and McKechnie (2008).
For the customer experience to be successfully implemented, a crucial prerequisite to its potential success is a two-way dialogue between the partners in the network; the customer and the brand or organisation (Tynan and McKechnie, 2008). The dialogue must begin in the pre-experience stage to successfully understand the customer requirements and get them actively involved in the experience. However, not only must this dialogue be present in the pre-experience it must be successfully integrated through the customer experience and post-experience to reinforce the desirable outcomes for all partners in the network (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) concur with this categorisation stating that the customers’ journey is an accumulation of past purchase and consumption experiences, relevant external factors and the touchpoints which are present at each stage. The duo also note that it is of benefit to consider that at any stage, this experience can change and evolve from one stage to another. The challenge lies on cultivating strong emotional connections and cues, which in turn leads to the development of positive brand memory structures (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2016; Sharp, 2010), positive word of mouth both online and offline (Batat, 2019), and in turn, consumer collectives (Närvänä et al., 2013; Kozinets et al., 2008) - all of which will be discussed throughout this chapter.

2.3.5 Experiential Value
Building on the theoretical development of experiential marketing, it is essential to note that one of the most fundamental concepts of this communications tool is that value does not merely exist in the object of consumption, but in searching for and processing information about products or services; value also resides in the experience of consumption (Kim et al., 2018; Zarantonello, 2013; Schmitt, 2011). Similarly, Lee and Overby (2004) believe that value is subjective and is generated based on the exchange of experience that is created in the process of a transaction or during the development of individual perceptions. Therefore, value is not confined to utilitarian value, (functional value), but also involves hedonic value (experiential value) (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Gentile et al. (2007) concludes that experiential value can be achieved through a unique, memorable, and relatable consumption experience.

Developing from the consumption viewpoint of experiential value, Ritzer (2009) presents an alternative view. According to Ritzer (2009), there has been a shift from the concept of consumption to prosumption. Prosumption is the amalgamation of both the production and
consumption of products or services, rather than focusing on one element of this duo 
exclusively (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). In a previous publication, Ritzer (2008 [1993]) 
discussed how consumers have over time, developed into workers in the fast food industry. 
Not only does the practice of prosumption contribute to experiential value of offline activities, 
it plays a role in online experiences also. A series of social and technological changes, related 
to the internet and Web 2.0, have offered this concept greater relevance (Ritzer and 
Jurgenson, 2010). Web 2.0 is characterised by users ability to produce content collaboratively, 
in comparison to Web 1.0 where content is provider-generated (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). 
While discussing consumption and the emergence of prosumption in services, it is important 
to note that experiential value can take form in many dimensions which will be further 
discussed in the following section.

2.3.5.1 Experiential Value Dimensions
Experiential value has received vast academic attention over the past twenty-five years. 
Holbrook (1994) conducted research on the values that consumers’ acquire from an 
experiential offer and categorised them according to dimension of intrinsic vs. extrinsic and 
active vs. reactive. In this framework, extrinsic value relates to the utilitarian benefits of 
shopping, while intrinsic value refers to the “appreciation of an experience for its own sake, 
apart from any other consequence that may result” (Holbrook, 1994: 40). Holbrook (1999) 
later stated that the concept of value is built on a three pronged approach. Firstly, value is 
comparative as it can be compared amongst other products or services. Secondly, value is 
personal as it develops from subjective personal experiences. Lastly, value is situational as it 
is dependent on the context of the experience at hand. Moreover, Holbrook (2000) later 
expanded his original research, and argued that consumption experiences using methods 
including fantasies, feeling and fun will have a positive impact on the customer decision 
making process. Therefore, Holbrook (2000) incorporated three new elements into the 
traditional concept of experiential value; extrinsic value/ intrinsic value, active value/ reactive 
value, self-oriented value/ other oriented value. Influenced by the seminal work conducted 
by Holbrook (1994), multiple sources of experience value types or sources have been 
established (Varshneya et al., 2017; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; Tynan and McKechnie, 
2009a; Gentile et al., 2007). Table 2.7 presents an overview of experiential value dimensions 
and key related authors.
Table 2.7 Experiential Value Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential Value Dimensions</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>Agapito et al. (2014), Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>Varshneya et al. (2017), Babin et al. (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utopian</td>
<td>Maclaren and Brown (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>Varshneya and Das (2017)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Adapted from Österle et al., 2018; Varshneya et al., 2017; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a).

Consequently, when generating brand experiences, it is valuable for marketing practitioners to consider the multitude of experiential value dimensions which may apply. It is fundamental to value the role that value dimensions play in the successful implementation of experiential marketing and also appreciate that value is a subjective topic and may vary from customer to customer. Thus, it must be examined from multiple perspectives.
2.3.5.2 Typology of Experiential Value

Further to this, and also based on the foundations paved by Holbrook (2000, 1999, 1994), Mathwick et al. (2001) developed the experiential value scale (EVS) which incorporates four values; playfulness, aesthetics, customer return on investment (CROI) and service excellence.

Figure 2.6 Typology of Experiential Value

As seen in Figure 2.6, the intrinsic (hedonic) value dimension includes playfulness and aesthetics. Playfulness relates to feelings of escapism from everyday activities, as well as intrinsic enjoyment due to the high levels of engagement in absorbing activities (Shobeiri et al., 2014). Aesthetics is composed of the two elements; visual appeal and entertainment (Harris and Goode, 2010). While aesthetics refers to the physical attractiveness of the experiential environment, playfulness relates to the dramatic aspects of the experience in which the customers are immersed, therefore, lifting their spirits (Shobeiri et al., 2014). The
extrinsic (utilitarian) value dimension includes the latter, customer return on investment and service excellence. Customer return on investment includes the “active investment of financial, temporal, behavioural and psychological resources that potentially yield a return” (Mathwick et al., 2001: 41). This type of experiential value consists of economic and efficiency utilities, which emulate affordable quality and efficiency of the exchange encounter (Shobeiri et al., 2014). Lastly, service excellence is a measure of the ideal standard of quality to which a brand or an organisation delivers, as well as their ability to deliver on its promises by portraying expertise (Shobeiri et al., 2014). Mathwick et al. (2001) states that perceptions of service excellence are created on the level to which customers believe that a brand or organisation delivers on its brand promise and performed tasks.

In line with the research presented by Mathwick et al. (2001), Chou (2009) believes that experiential value will be determined by consumers as they evaluate the aesthetic, playfulness, service excellence, and CROI attached to the brand or organisation. However, Wu and Liang (2009) portray an opposing view, arguing that the experiential value is evaluated based on the levels of the service efficiency, service excellence, aesthetic and playfulness experienced in the service counter. Based on the findings proposed by Wu and Liang (2009) and Holbrook (2000), Boztepe (2010) conceptualised the traditional concept of experiential value, below presented in Table 2.8.

**Table 2.8 The Traditional Concept of Experiential Value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Oriented</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utilitarian:</td>
<td>Emotional:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency (e.g. Convenience)</td>
<td>Play (e.g. Fun) - Active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence (e.g. Quality)</td>
<td>Aesthetics (e.g. Beauty) – Reactive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other- Oriented</td>
<td>Social:</td>
<td>Altruistic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status (e.g. Impression)</td>
<td>Ethics (e.g. Justice) – Active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem (e.g. Possession)</td>
<td>Spirituality (e.g. Sacredness) – Reactive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Boztepe (2010).
Wang and Lin (2010) concluded that there is a positive correlation between experiential marketing and experiential value, and as a result, an effective experiential marketing campaign has the ability to generate positive experiential value in return.

This section is central to conceptually grounding the research as it provides for an explicit understanding of the term experience. This provides clarity when discussing the concept of experiential marketing and the suitability of experiential marketing across diverse industries.

2.3.6 Return on Experience

Today in the marketing sector, accountability for the actual or potential success of a campaign is an integral element of marketing strategy. For firms to successfully measure the return on marketing, it is imperative that they treat the allocation of marketing expenditure as an investment (Hughes et al., 2019). Traditionally, marketing has been myopically viewed as a short-term expense (Rust et al., 2004) to be indulged in when finances allow, and cut in the contrary. However, marketing expenditure must be considered an investment in order for it to be compared to other tangible and intangible assets, therefore, facilitating the marketing function to play a role in the organisational strategy (Schultz and Gronstedt, 1997). It is expected that marketers can provide quantifiable evidence that marketing investments are contributing to real, often tangible, results (Kehrer, 2015). Offering further context to this point Binet and Field (2013) state that marketing metrics can be divided into two categories; short term metrics and long term metrics where both of these metrics have different brand effects. In short, short term metrics measure brand promotional activity offering short term growth and long-term metrics measure brand building tactics that offer long term growth. Both of these categories of metrics are essential as they both offer different merits and analysis of different component of success.

Traditionally, the return on marketing activities has been calculated through a marketing return on investment (MROI), also commonly referred to as return on marketing investment formula (ROMI) (Kehrer, 2015). MROI creates positive value for a firm by demonstrating the marketing activity or campaign costs versus its payback (Young and Aitken, 2007). It must be acknowledged that there are fundamental differences between the traditional return on investment (ROI) used in the financial sector and MROI, specifically used in marketing. There are three distinct differences:
1. ROI metrics tend to be calculated in the form of annual returns, in contrast, MROI is typically expensed to the current period (Farris et al., 2015).

2. ROI is linked to a specified time period, but in the case of MROI, marketing investments typically generate profit over an extended time period, i.e. multiple years, building cumulative impact and generating assets with a potential future value (Farris et al., 2015).

3. Unlike other types of investments, marketing funds tend to be liquid and not investments tied to inventories, fixed assets, or receivables (Farris et al., 2015).

MROI is an estimate of the incremental financial value to a marketing activity or campaign, generated by identifiable marketing expenditures, minus the cost of the specified expenditures as a percentage of the expenditures:

\[
\text{MROI} = \frac{\text{Incremental financial value generated by marketing} - \text{Cost of marketing}}{\text{Cost of Marketing}}
\]

(Farris et al., 2015).

MROI is viewed as a predictive formula, utilised by a business or brand to demonstrate cost versus payback (Harden and Heyman, 2011; Young and Aitken, 2007). However, it is not merely a reflection of the past success or failure of a marketing campaign, but also a valuable tool in forecasting.

In an attempt to quantify the return on experiential marketing, alternative methods to MROI have arisen, typically referred to as Return on Experience in marketing practice or Return on Engagement (ROE) in academic literature. ROE plays an integral role in modern marketing practice due to the growing emphasis on customer experience. Although ROI can be deemed a reliable method of calculation, it does not account for the core attributes of experiences. Accordingly, there is a growing importance for brands to measure ROE (Martin, 2019). Harris (2016) considers the concept of MROI to be losing relevance due to the ever-changing nature of marketing. A primary contributor to this is the digital revolution and its inherent
measurability (Sheehan, 2010). Through the medium of digital channels, powerful tools have arisen which have created highly personalized and emotive relationships between a brand and their consumers which are measured through the return on experience. Alternatively, relationships are not measured through the medium of ROI, therefore resulting in it not being a representative measurement of experiential marketing activity (Frawley, 2015).

Commonly abbreviated as ROE or ROX, return on experience represents a long-term measurement of consumer satisfaction comprising of consumer experiences, interactions and reactions (Lenderman, 2005). For the purpose of this thesis, return on experience will be referred to as ROE. Although ROE has attracted the attention of marketing practitioners as discussed in this section, this has not been widely shared in the academic world. For many brands trying to quantify the benefits of their experiential spend, ROE offers a more compelling and relevant metric as it enables brands to gauge the effectiveness of live customer experiences. As experiential marketing utilises personalisation to segment and target, or to differentiate experiences between target markets, measuring the ROE allows businesses to individually measure and improve the experience according to each target market segment (Harris, 2016).

As a result, brands need to develop a more in-depth and dynamic understanding of their audiences. Through the practice of experiential marketing, individuals are not merely passive recipients, but are actively engaged in a dialogue with brands, products and services. Products and services are now intertwined in individual’s stories as they share the brand message post event experience, acting as brand advocates. Therefore, brands need to understand their consumers and their terms of reference. This should be considered as an integral part of a business’s brand strategy (Marketing Magazine, 2014).
Although in comparison to its traditional counterpart, ROI, ROE may be more difficult to measure, especially with short-term data, it conclusively offers a stronger brand allegiance and a more in depth emotional connection in the consumer-brand relationship (Wohlitz, 2017). According to Gill et al. (2017), engagement initiatives have quintessential differences from traditional marketing methods and thus, these must be reflected in methods of evaluation. Firstly, unlike traditional marketing activities, engagement initiatives primary goal is not generating a sale but to cultivate strong, long term relationships with customers. Secondly, unlike conventional marketing methods that tend to be formed by one-way communication, engagement initiatives tend to be interactive and elicit conversation and authentic experiences. In fact, Van Doorn et al. (2010) found that customers who have participated in brand experiences have a higher perceived connectedness to a brand, even when they do not purchase the brand. In it essential that these interactions are measured and managed in order to build stronger relationships, which potentially can lead to profitable value extraction (Gill et al., 2017). However, there is no defined method for quantifying ROE. Smith and Hanover (2016), state that the metrics utilised to quantify ROE are subjective and
depend on the brand and the campaign at play. They suggest a selection of the following metrics; attendee demographics, satisfaction, mindshare, journey, sales leads, acquisition costs, lifetime value, revenue and sales growth, event body language, digital body language, press impact, advocacy, sales impact, sales velocity, speed to action, net promoter score and message retention (Smith and Hanover, 2016). Similarly, in an investigation on how individual brands determine their ROE, Monllos (2017) uncovered the business model approach. Collectively, brands stated that regarding data and measurement, they no longer take a passive stance (hoping that the experiential event will gain traction and that participants will post about it online), to being active (implementing data points and tracking as a component of the experience or integrating social effort, including hashtags and geofilters). However, as ROE is conceptualised on providing good experiences resulting in consumer delight, challenges arise when trying to create a universal measurement for these parameters and in determining their effectiveness (Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010). It is essential to note that as a customer that learns about a brand through authentic engagement interactions, they are more likely to develop favourable attitudes towards the brand or business which will produce favourable economic outcomes. Additionally, this increase in perceived value cultivates loyalty and trust, which also may influence purchase frequency (Reinartz and Ulaga, 2008).

In addition to the ROE approach, the construct of ROE² (return on experience x engagement), conceptualised by Frawley (2014), has also been created to determine the return on experiential marketing. In comparison to MROI which calculates the short-term measurement of specific, individual campaigns, ROE² correlates a long-term, holistic measurement of consumers’ brand experience in its totality and their level of engagement (Frawley, 2015). In essence, it measures the emotional connection with a brand and their action as a result, i.e. referring the brand to friends and family, becoming a loyal customer, or downloading a brand’s app (Frawley, 2014). Fundamentally, “ROE² starts with an actionable brand idea that triggers positive consumer experience and engagement, leading to a higher return on brand and business equity” (Frawley, 2014: 54). In comparison to the ROE approach, ROE² is mathematically correlated through multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis is an approach utilised to determine how a set of variables predict or explain an outcome variable on interest. Essentially, it creates an algorithm which quantifies the correlation between the explanatory variables along with the outcome variable (Eye and Schuster, 1998).
In mathematical terms, the equation is as follows:

\[
ROE^2 = f \left( EX_i + EN_i + O_i \right)
\]

where:

- \(ROE^2\) = measures of brand business equity (the outcome variable)
- \(EX_i\) = measures of customer experience
- \(EN_i\) = measures of customer engagement
- \(O_i\) = other variables that influence \(ROE^2\)

(Frawley, 2014)

As previously stated, Poulsson and Kale (2004) believe that for brand experiences to be successfully implemented, they should be personally relevant to the customer, be novel, offer an element of surprise, be authentic, and engage with the customer as previously stated in the measurement of ROE and \(ROE^2\). However, live brand experiences are rarely implemented as an isolated marketing tactic, but integrated with a multitude of marketing tactics using a broad array of channels (Ruchi et al., 2017) and herein lies a caveat to the utilisation of \(ROE^2\). This method of calculation requires brands to use experiential marketing in isolation and for no other marketing activity to take place in a similar time duration. Whereas, Smilansky (2009) suggests that experiential marketing should always be activated as a component of an integrated marketing campaign (IMC), and never in isolation. Within the current exploration on experiential marketing, it is pertinent to acknowledge despite this contribution made by Smilansky (2009), Belch et al.’s (2001) Integrated Communications Planning Model does not mention experiential marketing within the framework. However, this maybe because at this time of its development, experiential marketing was not as prominent of a communication tool as it is in recent years.

Depending on the experiential marketing campaign, marketers rely on channels including advertising, sales promotion, sponsorship, public relations, social media marketing etc., where every channel has specific goals and objectives. This multi-channel nature to experiential marketing leads to complexities when trying to calculate a return on the practice.
Therefore, it warrants the need to establish a measurement metric which encapsulates all the potential success factors of the accumulative practice (Ruchi et al., 2017), which is not presently accounted for in ROE or ROE\(^2\). Past research has focused on individual components (Harris, 2016; Smith and Hanover, 2016; Frawley, 2015; Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010; Lenderman, 2005), but not the collective approach.

In an attempt to bridge this research gap, Ruchi et al. (2017) devised a 6Cs index which acts as a checklist for marketers implementing experiential events and activations at the onset of an experiential programme. The checklist, which is comprised of various components that are deemed necessary for a campaign to be successful, are depicted below.

### Table 2.9 6Cs Checklist for Agencies and Marketers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative</th>
<th>Opportunities with Brand Ambassadors and Other Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Creative Element, USP, Breaking the Clutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>Level of Immersion of All Senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerted</td>
<td>Memorability and High Impact Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customization</td>
<td>Individuality and One-to-One Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constancy</td>
<td>Genuine Benefits and Message Provided to Consumers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Ruchi et al. (2017).

Most recently, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) published a new measurement for calculating return on experience, or as they refer to it; ROX. As stated in the PWC (2019: 12) report on the metric, “An ROX framework zeroes in on customer touchpoints that need shoring up. It can also help identify the things your company does exceptionally well, and then make sure your IT systems, data infrastructure, business processes and performance metrics are aligned with those capabilities”. PWC refer to their ROX measurement as a virtuous cycle that strengthens the value of:

1. The emotional commitment and pride to brand strategy and brand purpose;
2. The involvement of internal and external brand ambassadors or influencers and sources of emotional energy;

3. The behaviours that typically define a brand's culture and values, that are typically assessed in performance management;

4. The value drivers from not only the consumers perspective but also the employees; and,

5. The financial outcomes that are produced by a higher ROX.

(Cornwell, 2020; PWC, 2019).

While not providing a precise calculation, one could summarise that ROX is a repetitious measurement formed on the foundation of both customer touchpoints and employees as essential contributors to the culture of an experience. It is set apart from the previous experiential marketing evaluation frameworks by its focus on the employees as well as customers and recognising feedback loops (Cornwell, 2020; PWC, 2019). Although this model sets a strong foundation for the implementation of successful experience events, the outcome of the return of experience from this perspective has not been examined. However, a key limitation of this calculation is that it does not account for ROI metrics and potentially, a lack of academic veracity. It is the intention of the researcher to progress this investigation on the ROE measurement.

Evidently, there is a growing requirement for brands to employ ROE tactics (Addis, 2020). However, although there are methods of measurement available including ROE\(^2\) and ROX, both of these metrics require brands to practice experiential marketing in isolation which is not the recommended approach according to Smilansky (2009), nor the reality. However, there is a lack of academic literature on the topic of measuring the return on the experiential marketing and to date, the agenda has not been pushed by marketing practitioners. Thus, additional research is required on the appropriate way to measure ROE, and in particular, in the FMCG industry. The following section further evaluates the practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry.
2.4 An Exploration of Experiential Marketing in the FMCG Industry

Companies in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry (FMCG), also referred to as Consumer Packaged Goods Industry (CPG) encompass manufacturers of retail products which have a short shelf life, either due to the high turnover rate of the product, or because the product declines in quality rapidly over a short period (Jaray, 2006). Marketing these commodity products requires unique strategies and plans, primarily due to the ever evolving needs of consumers (Haddad, 2016; Thain and Bradley, 2014). In addition to the adaption of consumer needs and wants, FMCG marketing differs due to the distinguishing characteristics of the practice. Marketing in this sector is landmarked by a key focus on low cost quality products, a constant requirement to evolve brands, products and business models, low barriers to entry, intense levels of competition from both direct and indirect competitors and an increasing challenges in engaging with customers in a cluttered digital environment (Haddad, 2016a). Contemporary retailing in the FMCG sector has evolved from being a repetitious buying ritual in the exchange process to delivering an immersive brand experience for the consumer as buying decisions are now based on personal values and the associated experience as much as the product itself (Forhez and Evans, 2018; Jin and Sternquist, 2004). This approach to retailing is a result of the emergence of the experience economy and experiential marketing (Grewal et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999a; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The present exchange process is described as an integrated series of events which consequently result in a pleasurable, memorable, immersive, rewarding, delightful retail customer (Backstorm, 2011; Arnould et al., 2005; Cox et al., 2005; Jones, 1999). The current generation of customers of FMCG products have greater disposable income, more choices and new shopping and spending patterns (Haddad, 2016). Customers not only want a desired product in today’s economy, they also want a memorable customer experience. In fact, for brands to generate the required customer experience, marketers need to create marketing strategies that adapt to individual preferences while always aiming to create a pleasant and memorable customer experience. This is achieved through the dissemination of a unique value proposition that resonates with target markets (Haddad, 2016). Research in this area largely focuses on the consumers’ experience of this marketing activity in addition to the methods of experiential marketing. Numerous research papers highlight consumers’ modern-day preferences for brand engagement through experiential methods (for example, Ming, 2010; Chou, 2009; Smilansky,
When a brand’s character is consistent through the company’s marketing campaigns and matches customer requirements, the customer then forms a relationship with the brand. As a result, companies in the present competitive environment need to actively work to retain their existing customer base and establish long term relationships with them (Chou, 2009). When a brand has formed a relationship with their customer base, in order to maintain this relationship, they must engage in relevant and relatable experiences with them in the long term (Pine and Gilmore, 2008).

The number of brands investing in experiential marketing across all sectors is increasing on a global scale. According to the Pearlfinders Global Index Report (2016), which was created by the sales intelligence platform, for the second consecutive year there will be a significant growth in demand for experiential and events in the FMCG sector, with 20.6% of global brands looking to invest in this activity, an increase of 0.7% the previous year. In Europe specifically, 21.6% of FMCG companies plan to utilise this marketing tool. Mike Thorne, the editor of Pearlfinders (2016: 16) said:

“We’ve been tracking the meteoric rise of experiential as an effective channel in recent years. Buoyed by sponsors’ increasing activation budgets and better ROI tracking, the number of brands investing in this area will continue to climb through 2016. More significantly, we predict that the scope and scale of projects will also grow.”

Additionally, in research conducted by Agency EA (2019), the agency found that 70% of brand side marketers who participated stated that they were looking to include more high-quality free brand experiences.

Vita Coco, for example, implemented an experiential marketing campaign in 2016 with the objective of creating a sampling experience which immersed consumers in the brand by actively getting them to work up a thirst as part of their #JustGetThirsty campaign (Benjamin, 2016a; Creative Brief, 2016). Embodying the vibrant brand personality, they created an immersive beach inspired pop-up event where consumers could listen to live music played by a DJ, challenge a friend to climb up a 30ft coconut tree, while trying to beat the scores of fellow attendees as well as some celebrity participants, or take a GIF, an animated image, with their surfer dudes activation staff. Attendees also sampled the Vita Coco coconut water range from an on-site beach shack, ate street food from the street vendor Kerb, who cooked
with Vita Coco coconut oil as well as coconut inspired dishes from street chef Oli Baba. Additionally, they partnered with Noble Espresso who offered a blend of espresso coffee with Vita Coco coconut oil. The multiple touch points encouraged exploration among the different elements of the event and supported a sense of curiosity, surprise and fun. Attendees were entered into a draw to win one of two adventure trips. Throughout the two-day event which occurred in London, Manchester and Birmingham, 50,000 consumers interacted with the brand, over 750 people participated in the Coconut Tree Climb, and 844 GIFs were shared across social media platforms with a reach of 176,000 (Benjamin, 2016a; Creative Brief, 2016).

As clearly depicted in the Viva coco experiential event, experiential marketing is customer centric. The Event Track (2015) research conducted by the Event Marketing Institute concludes that 98% of respondents stated that seeing a product or service marketed through an experiential marketing campaign would make them more inclined to purchase it. Post event, 74% of respondents had a more positive opinion about the company, product or service that is being promoted. While 70% of these participants indicate they were more likely to become more regular customers. The primary reason for this is that the company provided them with the opportunity to try the product first (Event Marketing Institute, 2015).

Resulting from positive findings such as these, there is an increase in the use of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry. According to the Brand Experience Report, virtual reality will be a popular method of experiential marketing. With the increased availability of 360° video camera products, the ability to create engaging content for a wider audience is a growing opportunity (Arrigo et al., 2016). Another avenue for opportunity highlighted in the report is augmented reality. Augmented reality has the ability to add an incremental layer onto the real-world experience via the device and allows the user to decide how involved they want to be in the activity (Zaveri and Amin, 2019; Event Marketing Institute, 2015).

An example of how technology can be used in experiential marketing is Boursin, a soft cheese brand, who utilised virtual reality and a custom 360° CGI film in a bid to fully immerse consumers in a contemporary brand experience. Despite having relatively high levels of brand awareness in the UK, Boursin discovered that awareness of its flavours and formats was not at satisfactory levels. The brand embarked on a journey to engage a new generation of fans, and therefore, increase Boursin’s importance in consumers’ everyday lives while maintaining
its luxury status. As seen in Appendix A, they created *The Boursin Sensorium* which utilised Oculus Rift VR headsets and CGI animation combined with a soundtrack, moving chairs, cool air, scented fans and product samples. It was launched at Westfield Shopping Centre in London, followed by a roadshow to county shows and regional food festivals, with a team of brand ambassadors dressed as French waiters. The reaction of all individuals who participated in the virtual reality experience was filmed in a six second clip for the participant to share across social media platforms using the hashtag #BoursinSensorium. The live experience was publicised by influencers in particular, lifestyle and food bloggers and targeted digital activity. To further utilise the impact of social currency, Boursin erected a photo-booth to capture photos of participants inside the fridge surrounded by Boursin products. Throughout the Boursin Sensorium roadshow 5,097 consumers participated in the experience throughout the six events over the eighteen days of live immersive activity, 86,298 samples were consumed by consumers and footage of the event was viewed on Facebook over 450,000 times. Prior to the event, 19% of consumers bought from the brand on a regular basis/ or monthly basis. Two months later, this figure increased to 36%. Overall, as a result of this experiential campaign, brand awareness grew from 93% to 98% (Davis, 2016; Hammerhead VR, 2016; Deighton, 2015).

An important consideration in the successful implementation of marketing activations in the FMCG industry lies in the fact that differentiating and positioning strategies change and develop along with the market and competitors overtime (Sharma, 2013). Product life cycle (PLC) management is an integrated approach to track all aspects of a product or brands life from conceptual design, manufacturing, introduction and development in the marketplace and removal from the marketplace (Teresko, 2004). PLC management offers marketers a vessel to interpret product and market dynamics and enables them to confront the need to balance a quick response to changes consumer demands (Jüttner et al., 2006). Additionally, the PLC concepts acts as a planning tool to aid marketers identify the main challenges of a product as it progresses through each stage of its lifespan and develop marketing strategies in response (Kotler, 2000). It is essential that PLC management remains a key focus throughout brand development as the selection of inappropriate strategies at specific PLC stages can diminish the competitive advantage of a brand (Sharma, 2009). Thus, it is
imperative that FMCG brands adopt an appropriate marketing strategy as each individual stage to ensure not only competitive advantage but marketing effectiveness.

Through the discussion of relevant industry examples and academic contributions in this section, it is apparent that experiential marketing is a popular communications tool amongst FMCG brands and customers. However, there is a lack of academic literature pertaining to the implementation, integration and measurement of experiential marketing. While some quantitative data exists on the benefits of engaging with the customer through experiential marketing activities, qualitative data pertaining to the implementation of the practice in the FMCG industry is particularly lacking. Currently, there is no framework or guidelines to support the design, implementation and measurement of experiential marketing. It is a trial and error process. In light of this, therefore, there is a clear gap in the literature for this topic of research.

In summary, this section has highlighted the customer involvement that is prevalent in experiential activations in the FMCG sector. The following section explores the dissemination of experiential marketing messages through word of mouth marketing and social media to support experiential activities which aid brands to ensure that the experiential marketing activation does not merely live in the moment but alternatively, interacts with a larger audience.

2.5 The Use of Word of Mouth Marketing and Social Media to Support Experiential Activities

There are two driving factors behind the exponential growth of experiential marketing. Firstly, in today’s social environment, individuals prefer to tell people about an occurrence in their life, and secondly, they have the ability to do this and amplify their experience on social media (Perrett, 2016). Combining the power of both online and offline experiences results in consumers being “informed, networked, empowered and active” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004: 5). This is achieved through word of mouth marketing (WOMM) (Kozinets et al., 2010).

WOMM is the “influence of consumer-to-consumer communications by professional marketing techniques” (Kozinets et al., 2010: 71). Trusov et al. (2009) states that it is comprised of the placement of products or services to a targeted group of consumers with the aim of encouraging them to disseminate a positive message about the brand, which in
turn, escalates brand awareness and sales. Also referred to as amplified word of mouth (WOM), social media marketing, viral marketing, buzz and guerrilla marketing (Sernovitz, 2012; Hinz et al., 2011; Kozinets et al., 2010; Liabai et al., 2010; Rosen, 2009; Trusov et al., 2009, Jaffe, 2007; Kelly, 2007; Sernovitz, 2006), organisations globally are revisiting “WOMM as a powerful marketing tool” (Sweeney et al., 2012: 237). The utilisation of WOMM in integrated marketing communications plans is becoming a common practice in not only the popular business press ( Sernovitz, 2012; Rosen, 2009), but also in contemporary marketing management textbooks (Kotler et al., 2009). Its utilisation has now transcended beyond its traditional use and is now employed as a communication and promotional medium (Winer, 2009).

WOMM is a natural transpiring phenomenon that has always held a role in the consumer purchasing decision process. However, academics and scholars have recently begun to investigate the importance of consumer generated content in online environments. Due to the Internet’s reach and ease of accessibility, WOMM has acquired a new dimension which is being utilised by marketers to amplify their brand message to larger audiences (Kozinets et al., 2014). For example, an investigation conducted by Liu (2006) identified that the measure of online WOMM interactions, positive or negative, best forecasts the success of box office movies. A multitude of other studies have examined the effects of online recommendation behaviours from customers on Amazon.com (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), social networking outlets (Trusov et al., 2009), and online communities ( Zhu and Zhang, 2010; Mathwick et al., 2008). Of these, only Trusov et al. (2009) explored the effects of messaging dissemination in the realm of social networks.

The accessibility, reach and transparency of the modern-day internet has garnered the attention of marketers and marketing researchers alike who aim to influence and monitor WOM through a global online platform, as social media enables companies to communicate with their customers and also allows customers to talk to one another (Kozinets et al., 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). By employing WOMM tactics when implementing an experiential activation, it allows the marketing effort to transcend beyond a planned experiential event itself to increase the potential reach on social media platforms, therefore, supercharging the experience (Agency EA, 2019; Perrett, 2016). By one participant sharing a message, image or video from the event, the experiential campaign has the potential to go viral over-night.
Through the medium of social media, brands have the ability to multiply an experience that was directed at hundreds of people to millions of others through online platforms (Smith and Hanover, 2016). These interactions are referred to as a brand’s social or experiential currency. Social currency provides brands with the opportunity to amplify their experiential event as participants are incentivised to share content from the event (Allagui, 2019). Although the use of WOMM and social currency is required when disseminating an experiential event, Smilansky (2009) identifies that brands should also utilise digital, public relations (PR), advertising and live broadcast in order to amplify the activation to reach the mass audience.

The facilitation of interaction and the creation of bonds amidst firms, their brands, customers and their extended audience via the Internet have enabled the establishment of brand communities (Kozinets, 1999). Bonds by nature act as the exit barrier that links the customer and a brand while maintaining a relationship (Wendelin, 2011). Online brand communities “create value for all their stakeholders, including the host, members, and any third parties, such as advertisers” (Farquhar and Rowley, 2006: 165) through the utilisation of two-way dialogue and relationships which have mutual value for both the organisation and its customers (Szmigin et al., 2005). Innocent Juices have been at the forefront of combining the power of experiential marketing and WOMM. The utilisation of experiential marketing allows the brand to build a loyal brand community and narrate a story when they had little funding for large advertising campaigns. Jamie Sterry, Innocent Brand Activation Manager believes that “by doing events and having a real-world presence it enables us to build a quite solid fan base and we had a lot of brand advocates” (Perrett, 2016).

The velocity of consumer-to-consumer interactions has increased over recent years due to the prevalence of digital communications and the popularity of social media platforms (Bugshan, 2014; Franklin et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2009). As a result, consumers readily have the ability to gather and disseminate information about brands openly and instantly within their social network (Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016). Interactions in online social networks provide consumers with the opportunity to share brand-related information and aid them in gaining an in depth understanding of the brand’s value. In line with this view, multiple studies have shown online brand related forums, which are typically formed by consumer collectives, positively affect consumers’ impressions of brands (Marzocchi et al., 2013; Adjei et al., 2010; Scarpi, 2010).
Social currency derives from the concept of Social Capital Theory which paves the foundation of social interaction and expresses the collective benefit derived from the corporation and two-way communication between brands, group and individuals (Lobschat et al., 2013). Social currency was first defined by Lobschat et al. (2013: 126) as “…the extent and modality with which consumers share a brand with others, or information about a brand, and derive social benefit from interacting with other brand users as part of their everyday social lives”. In line with this view, social interactions generated between a brand and its customers result in information acquisition, knowledge exchange and a multitude of other social benefits, including status and recognition (Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016).

The concept of social currency also relates to Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976), which pertains that individuals exchange resources through social interactions. Emerson (1976) depicts a resource as a possession, ability or other attribute that one actor gives to another actor as a reward. However, the resources that the donor holds are only of value if the receiver perceives them as valuable also (Trudeau and Shobeiri, 2016). The growth of digital in recent years has enhanced consumer desire to access, share and collaboratively consume resources through social exchanges (Kasriel, 2015). Researchers estimate that over 3.5 billion people interact via the Internet, which in turn results in consistent growth in the quality and vast nature of information available (Statista, 2017). Technological developments and the growth in popularity of the social media environment cultivates the creation and exchange of consumer-generated content through multiple formats, for example, text, image, video etc., and different forms, for example, blogging, forums, social networking etc. (Hardey, 2011; Burmann, 2010). Through these exchanges of information, consumers co-produce the image and perception of companies and brands which subsequently will influence future economic performance (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Sawhney et al., 2005; Godes and Mayzlin, 2004).

However, although companies are aware of the conversation happening between the brand and consumers, they also need to consider the value generated by consumers communicating with each other through consumption collectives and exchanging brand relevant information which falls beyond the company’s control (Lobschat et al., 2013). For brands to successfully implement an experiential marketing activation, it is recommended that they co-create brand meanings by actively communicating with brand communities and consumer tribes who effectively are key influencers in the success or failure of a marketing campaign’s online and
Fiat implemented an experiential marketing campaign based in London with the support of social currency to reach the mass market with their message. The brand aimed to communicate modern day Italy while celebrating the launch of the new Fiat 500, which features a fresh and bold colour palette (Benjamin, 2016b). Fiat created a pop-up granita bar with the intent of quenching commuters’ thirsts and communicating the car’s new image which can been seen in Appendix B. The bar was situated in Old Street underground station in London from 7-11 June 2016 offering commuters ice cold treats in six flavours which were inspired by the new Fiat 500 model; cranberry, sour apple, pomegranate, juicy lemon, blackberry and blueberry (Deighton, 2016). To receive a granita, commuters had to participate through social currency by taking a picture of their chosen flavour and share it on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram with the hashtag #FreshNew500, and show their post at the bar to redeem and collect their granita (Deighton, 2016). With 70,000 individuals passing through Old Street Tube station daily, by amplifying the message through social currency, encouraging participants to share the message online through social media, the campaign was dispersed to a much larger audience through the hyper-reach of WOMM and viral marketing (Benjamin, 2016b).

Viral marketing is considered a defining marketing trend of the decade and plays a vital part in the success of an experiential event and its transition online through the aid of social currency (Ferguson, 2008). Bonchi et al. (2011) define viral marketing as a process of targeting influential users, referred to as seeds, of a social network to induce a chain-reaction of influence to disperse a message in a timely manner. It has been previously demonstrated as an effective marketing tool in social networks (Leskovec et al., 2007) and has attracted much attention in recent research (Bonchi et al., 2011). Compared to targeted marketing, a traditional marketing task, viral marketing avoids the outlay of contacting all members of a target group. In comparison, only a small concentrated amount of influential seeds need to be contacted in order for a message to be dispersed to a vast network. Viral marketing and WOMM have transformed the practice of marketing as marketers no longer have to rely on creating customer relationships through loyalty and database marketing, they now have the ability to generate interest in a brand through unique experiential marketing campaigns, videos and interactive advert-games (Ferguson, 2008). The defining difference between viral marketing and WOMM is one of cause and effect. Viral marketing, an activity used through
the premise of experiential marketing builds awareness and buzz, is the cause. Positive WOMM, which leads to trial and acquisition, is the effect (Ferguson, 2008).

The viral nature of marketing and WOMM revolves around the concept of transitivity which emerges from sociology (Simmel and Wolff, 1950). Transitive ties occur in social relationships (Weimann, 1983; Holland and Leinhardt, 1971; Davis, 1970; Rapoport, 1953;) and the more ties present between members of a social network, the more transitive it is. Figure 2.8 illustrates the contrast between transitive and intransitive social networks. As seen in the intransitive networks, A is friends with both B and C, however, B and C do not know each other (dotted lines). In the transitive network, friends F, G, and all have mutual connections (solid lines).

**Figure 2.8 Diffusion Along Transitive Ties Across Two Generations**

![Diagram showing transitive and intransitive networks with nodes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and J.](image)

Source: Adapted from Groeger and Buttle (2014).
Transitivity may constrict the dissemination of WOMM and viral marketing messaging (Van Den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). As seen in Figure 2.8, in the transitive network an original Gen0 campaign member (F) communicates with two Gen1 friends, G and H (solid lines). G and H are affiliated to each other and have a common friend, J, with whom they communicate the message. However, in the intransitive network this communication pattern has not occurred as B and C have no friends in common; B and C communicate with their respective friends. In the eventuality of intransitive networks, WOMM and viral marketing passes through chain-like ties. The potential cumulative reach is estimated by $1 + X^1 + X^2 + X^3 ... X^n$, where $X$ denotes the quantity of recipients of the message in generations 1 to $n$ (Duff and Liu, 1975).

Another important practice to consider when examining the link between digital platforms, social media and experiential marketing is crowdsourcing. The practice of crowdsourcing outsources tasks that are typically performed by employees to a large group of people, who typically interact with the brand, through the internet (Howe, 2008). The practice has close ties to experiential marketing as it determines customers’ needs through two-way communication that generates value for both the customers and the brand (Mercurio, 2016). Crowdsourcing is also deemed a form of prosumption (Lehdonvirta, 2013), which has been previously discussed (Section 2.3.4).

Resulting from the investigation in this section, it is apparent that for an experiential event to reach the mass market, elements of its strategy must be conducted through the medium of social media, social currency and WOMM, expanding the brand effect and reach of an experiential event. Following on from this, Section 2.6 examines the link between experiential marketing and consumption collectives.

2.6 Experiential Marketing and Consumption Collectives

As previously discussed, experiential marketing has a dyadic effect as a result of the two way communication that occurs between the customer and the brand during the staged interaction (Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a). Deriving from this observation it is also pertinent to note that the brand meaning that is cultivated during this dyadic interaction is not solely controlled by the brand, but rather is co-created in the market (Diamond et al., 2009; Schroeder, 2009; Saltzer-Mörling and Strannegård, 2004; Brown et al., 2003), deriving from authentic interactions that occur while also building memory structures in the consumers
mind. Acknowledging this stance on brand meaning, Schau et al. (2009) and Muñiz and O’Guinn (2001) infer that brand meaning does not only service a purpose for the brand but is of importance to customers’ also, in their quest for identity and social value. This viewpoint is shared, with many accepting that brands act as an extension of the consumers concept of self (Belk, 2013; Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012; Belk and Costa, 1998; Fournier, 1998). Brand meaning is further constructed by customers’ analysis and perception of brand experiences and activity, and its sociocultural context which contributes to the development of a brand’s image (Cayla and Eckhardt, 2008). For a brand to successfully generate brand meaning through brand experiences, it is vital that brands stimulate memories and stories in customers’ minds, stimulate a longing for community and communicate a message that customers resonate with (Brown et al., 2003). For a brand to be successful when activating a campaign, it is imperative that they earnestly co-create brand meaning through experiential marketing activations with their customers by establishing customer-centric brand strategies (Berthon et al., 2009). For commodities to evolve to brands, and brands to be relevant in consumers’ lives, it is essential for active engagement and interaction to be present. Consumption collectives, also referred to as consumption communities, afford brands this opportunity (Närvänen and Goulding, 2016). By staging experiential marketing activations for both consumption collectives and the general target market, it affords brands the opportunity to build authentic interactions with customers, thus enriching the customers relationship with the brand. The following section further elaborates on this topic, while also identifying the relationship between experiential marketing and consumption collectives.

2.6.1 The Contribution of Experiences to Types of Consumption Collectives

Consumption collectives are a valuable component of the marketing environment (Canniford, 2011). Consumption collectives can be defined as collectives or communities consisting of customers who share similar consumption objects and/or practices, engage in loops of learning and either co-produce or create content pertaining to a given brand (Kozinets et al., 2008; Närvänen et al., 2013). Consumption collectives have the ability to undermine marketing campaigns or contribute to their success, elevating them to new levels of success (Schau et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2003; Cova and Cova, 2002; Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001; Ritson and Elliott, 1999; Hirschman and Thompson, 1997; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Amongst some academics and practitioners, the development and activation of consumption
collectives has been referred to as a factor of marketing’s unpredictable cornucopia, that some brands harness, while others remain envious spectators (Brown, 2007a). However, by considering consumer collectives when creating and implementing experiential marketing can be quite advantageous.

Various forms of consumer collectives have been the subject of academic attention in recent years (Goulding et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2013). Many perspectives have derived from this research. For some, classic sociological studies have been the primary source of research with the outcome referring to contemporary consumer groups as subcultures that are bound together, typically by experiences and activations through which interpersonal bonds are formed (Goulding et al., 2009; Kozinets, 2001; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Others identify with the belief that the brand is the focal point that brings a group of customers together and acts as a source of linking value (Cova, 1997; Muñiz and O’Guinn, 2001; Schau et al., 2009b). The following are three primary approaches to customer collectives.

Sub-cultures of Consumption: Early research pertaining to subculture described communities that fostered strong interpersonal bonds, ritualised modes of expression and beliefs that inhibited other social afflictions to corrupt dominant institutions such as political belief, family or schooling (Goulding et al., 2002). Theoretical developments in marketing contributed to this perspective by characterising the shared commitment to a particular class, consumption activity or brand that often appears within sub-cultural communities (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995: 43; Celsi et al., 1993). However, supplementary research has elucidated that unlike sociological studies of subculture, consumption communities seldom display political resistance, firm gender hierarchies or robust social structures. Furthermore, consumers take pleasure in being a member in a variety of fragmented groups in which identity is constructed and discarded quite fluidly (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). Characterised as self-selecting micro-communities, these social groupings construct multiple trajectories of identity bonded by consumption activities and temporary experiences either staged by brands through means of experiential marketing or community members (Kates, 2002; Kozinets, 2001; Belk and Costa, 1998; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995).

Brand Communities: Another term for a micro-community, a brand community is a collective of social relationships that are created around a specific brand. The community is not
geographically bound and is based upon a mutual interest and love for the brand that has been formed through brand experience (Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001). Therefore, brand communications can occur anywhere (Thompson and Sinha, 2008). The lack of geographical restraints means that brand communities can take place in both on and offline realms (Muñiz and Schau, 2005; Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001) in small groups (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006), in a large format through a virtually medium (Adjei et al., 2010), and brandfests (Schouten et al., 2007).

Within this consumer collective construct, members co-create value generally through their knowledge, skills and abilities, along with their emotional connection to the brand which is expressed through their actions (Schau et al., 2009). As the formation of brand communities is independent of the prescribed marketing plan, brands must abdicate their control of brand meanings and permit the community to format their own brand meaning based on personal experience and expression. In turn, this form of customer empowerment strengthens the brand through rites and rituals (Cova and Pace, 2006).

The relationships built in brand communities have been regarded as a key driver for the intense brand loyalty that derives from community members towards the brands they are based upon (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001). Consumers’ relationships with a brand provokes them to interact and identify with networks of others who share their passion, enthusiasm and infatuation for the brand. Sequentially, members of these communities motivate each other and boost levels of self-esteem (Wilcox and Stephen, 2013), therefore cultivating community-centric behaviours. Developing from these community-centric behaviours, brand communities share rituals, methods of play, unique ways of rationalising experiences, thoughts and traditions, along with a deep connection and sense of moral responsibility with other community members, and a religious adoration towards the focal brand (O’ Sullivan et al., 2011; Muñiz Jr and Schau, 2005; Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001). These characteristics further enhance the co-creation of value by brands and customers by maintaining brand values, increasing community members love and commitment to the brand and offers brands a channel to communicate with their most loyal customers and advocates (Schau et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2003; McAlexander et al., 2002; Fourner et al., 2001).
Consumer Tribes: Other forms of consumption collectives are also present where the members do not form around one particular brand. Less concerned with the brand and the attributes that are seen in brand communities, many consumption collectives develop weaker connections with a consortium of brands, services and products. This observation has led to the development of another form of consumption collective called the consumer tribe (Canniford, 2011). Cova and Cova (2002) and Cova (1997) characterise tribal consumption as the exploration for social links with others though the linking value that has been created during an experience or the common use of brands, products or services. For tribes to be successful, it is of great importance that a brand’s followers feel unique as adverse to mainstream; they unite through a shared experience which can be staged by a brand through experiential marketing means, a story, myth or a narrative that affords them the opportunity to easily connect with others (Goulding et al., 2013; Cova and Cova, 2001). In general, consumer tribes are distinct in comparison to subcultures of consumption and brand communities in multiple ways (Cova, 1997; Cova et al., 2007; Cova and Cova, 2002). These differences can be summed up in four key characteristics; multiplicity, playfulness, transience and entrepreneurialism.

1. Consumer Tribes are multiple. Unlike subcultures of consumption and brand communities, tribes rarely govern consumers’ everyday lives. Rather, they represent an interim escape from the pressures and stresses that derive from the working week (Goulding, 2002; Goulding et al., 2009). Therefore, followers are not subjected to following only one form of tribe or community (Elliott and Davies, 2006). On the contrary, tribal theory stresses the occurrence of flows between altering identities under diverse circumstances (Bennett, 1999).

2. Tribes are playful. Tied to the variety of membership and fluidity of identity, tribal consumption is typically devoid of the long term moral responsibility or religious adoration as felt by members of a brand community (Muñiz Jr and Schau, 2005; Muñiz and O’ Guinn, 2001), or deference afforded to social hierarchies, totemic actions and core products presented in subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Instead, the consumer tribe places value on active play with marketplace resources (Cova et al., 2007). These resources include emotions, material culture, aesthetics, institutions, brands, places, media, fashion and music.
(Brownlie et al., 2007; Canniford and Shankar, 2007; Kozinets, 2007; Maffesoli, 2007; Otnes and Laclaren, 2007; Rinallo, 2007; Schau and Muñiz, 2007; Schouten et al., 2007; Cova and Pace, 2006). In the process of active play, tribal followers pillage these resources, this is to say that they deconstruct and reassemble them, introducing fast-moving, intertextual performances in forms that assign little, reinvigorate passions and create new forms of linking value (Brown, 2007b; Brownlie et al., 2007; Kozinets, 2007).

3. Tribes are transient. Connected to these characteristics of multiple identity and play, tribes emerge, morph, and disappear again as the combinations of people and resources modify. This generates situations that are unpredictable and uncontrollable, intricate and emergent processes of consumption that may be critical and liberatory at one moment, yet at the next moment serve little meaning or context beyond sensory intensity or pleasure (Goulding et al., 2009). This playful acknowledgement of rapidly changing, contradictory and ambivalent meanings ascertains a power structure between consumers and the brand that oscillates between manipulation and emancipation (Cova et al., 2007; Cova and Pace, 2006; Shankar et al., 2006). This irresolution leads Cova et al. (2007: 8) to characterise tribes as double agents, a form of consumer collective that are content “to be misled, to remember and forget, and then mislead, and then manipulate these manipulations in ways that enliven their daily lives”. Many tribes that exist continue to be satisfied in expressing anti-market values through the consumption of market-based culture for example (Goulding et al., 2009; Kozinets, 2002).

4. Tribes are entrepreneurial. Deriving from the possibilities for play, and an empowered and emancipated attitude towards the market, are new opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures (Cova et al., 2007). Rather than waiting for and relying on ready-made consumption resources, tribes typically produce or customize market offerings (Kozinets et al., 2008; Goulding and Saren, 2007; Kozinets, 2001). This practice of bricolage alters the power balance between brands and the tribal followers, as the consumer tribes take the lead in dictating procedures of co-production (Shankar et al., 2006).
A tribe that maintains the previously discussed characteristics of multiplicity, playfulness, transience and entrepreneurialism, will remain, engaging, passionate and desired. Fundamentally, a consumer tribe will remain in a state of co-creation with all brand experiences (Canniford, 2011), which is of benefit to brands implementing experiential marketing initiatives.

Although consumption collectives can have a profound impact on a brand, it is crucial to note that these communities account for a small percentage of a customer base. As stated by Sharp (2010: 111), “Within every brand’s customer base there are a few people who feel much more attitudinally committed to the brand. It may be part of their self-image, used to signal what sort of person they are to themselves and to others. But the marketing consequences of these brand fan(atic)s turn out to be very limited. Most of a brand’s customers think and care little about the brand, but the brand manager should care about these people because they represent most of the brand’s sales; the brand needs these people if it is to increase its sales”. Therefore, although it is essential to consider the influence of consumption communities when creating brand experiences, it is vital to also remember the impact that other segments of your customers can make also and always consider the target market in totality also.

2.6.2 Loyalty Deriving from Consumption Collectives
As previously stated by McAlexander et al. (2002) and Muñiz and O’ Guinn (2001), relationships built through consumption collectives also have an impact on brand loyalty. In line with this view, Beardi (2000) stated that the stronger the relationship, the greater the brand loyalty. Brand loyalty exists when a customer continuously purchases a brand, and intends to repeat that purchase in the future (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

The relationship between experiential marketing and brand loyalty has garnered much attention by both academics and scholars alike. A common belief that is shared amongst many is that businesses cultivate a competitive advantage in the marketplace when they focus on the development and implementation of memorable experiences (Rivera et al., 2015; Pine and Gilmore, 1998) and also cultivate loyalty amongst their network of customers (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). However, in Byron Sharp’s (2010) book How Brands Grow, he states that loyalty is not a result of brand differentiation, but rather a characteristic of consumer behaviour. The concept of loyalty is underpinned by brand salience, not by love/hate. The concept of salience is typically associated with the ability of a
brand, product, service or item to stand out from its environment, its category and competitors (Guido, 1998). Brand salience is referred to as “the propensity of the brand to be thought of in buying situations. This is reflected in the quantity (how many) and the quality (how fresh and relevant) of the network of brand information in memory, or the brand’s ‘share of mind’” (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004: 334). This belief is built in the conceptualisation that buying situations are complex multi-cue environments, not limited by the product category, when obtaining options (Holden and Lutz, 1992). By having multiple cues to which a brand is linked, the more likely it is that the customer will interact with the brand in a buying situation, and therefore, the brand will evidently have a greater propensity to come to mind and be a purchase option (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004). Therefore, it is essential to note that experiential activation and consumer collectives do not have the ability to isolate the impact to enhancing loyalty, but rather aid the development of brand salience which in turn will contribute to the development of brand loyalty.

Continuing to present the literature on relationships and consumer collectives, Section 2.7 discusses the role that relationships play when enacting experiential marketing.

2.7 The Role that Relationships Play in Experiential Marketing

This section brings the concept of relationship marketing to the fore and explores the interdependency between it and experiential marketing. It will discuss concepts such as brand loyalty, bonding, brand-customer relationships, involvement, trust and commitment. By linking the literature on relationship marketing and experiential marketing, unmistakable commonalities come to the fore. Numerous studies have been conducted investigating the interconnectivity between relationship marketing and experiential marketing. In an investigation by Zena and Hadisumarto (2012), they examined the relationship between experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Ming (2010) explored the impact of experiential marketing and customer satisfaction in the context of relationship quality, and similarly, Maghnati et al. (2012) examined the correlation between experiential marketing and experiential value in the smartphone industry. In a literary investigation conducted by Chou (2009), he concluded that experiential marketing can be considered as experience centric relationship marketing.
Relationship marketing has been a popular and commonly utilised tool in marketing for more than two decades due to its unique ability to generate customer satisfaction and loyalty (Harker and Egan, 2006; Gummesson, 1999; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). The most basic definitions point to relationship marketing as a strategy for attracting, developing, and maintaining customer relationships (Chou, 2009). The aim is to convert buying behaviour and status from casual sporadic encounters to long term loyal customers through marketing interventions (Varey, 2002). Buttle (1996) affirms that the aim of marketing can no longer hold the myopic view that marketing is primarily about developing, selling, and delivering products with the aim of getting customers rather than retaining customers. Therefore, the opportunities to develop and maintain mutually satisfying relationships with customers must be recognised (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000; Buttle, 1996). Therefore, the goal of relationship marketing is to cultivate long term product (or company) attitudinal relationships rather than immediate or impulse sales (Craig Lees and Caldwell, 1994). Experiential marketing has the unique ability to aid in the development and maintenance of relationships between brands and consumers as the primary ambition of the communications tool is to create ongoing emotional attachment (McCole, 2004). This is achieved through the enactment of memorable experiences that are strategically tailored to a specific target market (Mathwick et al., 2001).

Beardi (2000) argues that people relate to brands in a similar way in which they relate to other people. Customers often converse about objects as if they were human (Aaker, 1996). Belk et al. (1989: 31) believe that brands are viewed as representing the “talismanic relationship consumers form with that which is consumed”. Van Durme et al. (2003) developed on this statement suggesting that in certain circumstances, consumers believe that brands add meaning to their lives. As customers encounter and interact with brands, thoughts and feelings are generated about the experience at hand. When this happens, brand memory structures develop and enrich a brand’s equity (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2016; Sharp, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative for marketers to understand that each customer must strategically be interacted with at an individual level, exhibited through the delivery of high customer service emphasis, high customer commitment and high customer contact (Christopher et al., 1991). Grönroos (1999) supports this arguing that customers no longer require anonymity, they now require individual treatment. As brands treat customer interactions as a bespoke and individual encounter, it is also important to note that in the development of each brand
memory structure in the brain, this happens in a way that is not only unique to that experience, but also to that person’s perception of the encounter (Greenfield, 2000). Therefore, across different markets, buyers may identify with different brand memory structures relating to both that category and brand (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2016; Greenfield, 2000). Thus, a brand implementing relationship marketing strategies provides meaning to its customers and is of importance to them because it connects with their own personal lives, in which behavioural, attitudinal and emotional involvement are evident (Varey, 2002). The essence of a brand–customer relationship resembles the typical personal relationship between two people (Schleuter, 1992: 4). The stronger the relationship, the greater the brand loyalty and easier the brand memory structure are to recall (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2016; Sharp, 2010; Beardi, 2000).

When trying to establish the brand as a partner in a brand-customer relationship, one way to achieve this is to highlight ways in which the brand is animated, humanized or personalised to customers’ needs (Fournier, 1998). Clifton and Maughan (2000: 8) concurs with this stating that customers are “looking for fun and entertainment, not just the rational side of life”, similar to Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) experiential view of consumption stating that consumers continuously seek fantasies, feeling, and fun. Harlow (2000) further establishes this ideology stating that the intangible features of the brand are growing in importance as a powerful tool of communication with the consumer. Therefore, throughout society the activity of anthropomorphizing inanimate objects is a prevalent practice (Brown, 1991). Customers assign personality qualities to inanimate brand objects (Aaker, 1997) relating to brands as if they were human characters (Levy, 1985; Plummer, 1985), or communicate the brands outlook in order to express their own personal relationship views (Blackston, 1993). It is fair to assume that consumers accept advertisers attempts to humanise brands due to their willingness to entertain brands as vital members of the relationship dyad (Fournier, 1998).

Whilst trying to develop consumer relationships and increase customer loyalty through the medium of experiential marketing, the bond method must be considered, implemented, and divided into two elements; social and structural (Chou, 2009). Bonds join two parties together, and when they are present and nurtured, they can lead to brand loyalty (Rao and Perry, 2002). While discussing these categories of bonds, De Chernatony (2001) states that bonds are present where consumers are loyal for either cognitive or emotional reasons.
Fournier (1998) reiterates this describing structural bonds as being substantively grounded and social bonds as being emotionally based. However, there has been a more substantial amount of literature published on the emotional reasons for customers being loyal rather than the cognitive.

It is proposed that social bonds develop between customers and brands as an outcome of repeated satisfaction or consistently strong favourable attitudes towards the brand (De Chernatony, 2001). They consist of tailor-made and one-to-one service interactions afforded to regular loyal customers based on their previous purchasing records (Joseph and Unnikrishnan, 2016). The most common types of social bonds include trust and commitment, followed by interdependence (Rao and Perry, 2002). Other bonds of this nature include reciprocity (Styles and Ambler, 1996), cooperation (Wilson, 1995) and satisfaction (Fontana and Frey, 1998). Bonds also form where consumers are loyal for cognitive reasons (De Chernatony, 2001). Structural bonds are the value-added services that offer solutions to customer problems (Joseph and Unnikrishnan, 2016; Lin et al., 2003; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000). De Chernatony (2001), believes that bonds such as trust and commitment, which are traditionally associated with loyalty at an emotional level, also support loyalty for cognitive reasons.

In an investigation focused on the correlation between bonds and loyalty, Choon et al. (2015) found that bonds can lead to greater loyalty among customers. As bonds grow in intensity between the customer and the brand, the attachment that the customer has for the brand deepens (Vincent and De Chernatony, 1999). However, it is important to note that Fournier and Yao (1997) believe that consumers have relationships with brands and not suppliers. They state that emotional attachments (bonds) form when a brand connects with customers in a deep and significant way. Bonds can range in intensity from superficial to liking, friendly affection, passionate love and addictive obsession (Fournier, 1998). Uncles et al. (2003), proposes that marketers must comprehend why bonds exist and attempt to develop them to intensify the strength of the consumers’ attitudes towards a brand and as a result, strengthen the loyalty that already exists.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) state that the quality of the relationship between the customer and brand is a helpful component to enhance the implementation and delivery of
experiential marketing. Kumar et al. (1995) depict relationship quality as a high-level concept. This concept suggests that good relationship quality could potentially reduce the levels of conflict between customers and brands, therefore, improving customers’ trust and commitment to the brand resulting in continuous trade and a long-term relationship. Through research conducted by Ming-yi (2004) and Fang-cen (2003), the relationship between experiential marketing and relationship quality is clearly defined. Ming-yi’s (2004) research results depict that there is an evident correlation between experiential marketing dimensions (sensory, emotion, thinking, action and relevance) and relationship quality. A further investigation by Fang-cen (2003) concludes that sensory experiences positively relate to consumer trust, depicting an apparent relationship between the two variables.

Although Berry’s (1995) classification of relationship marketing on the degree of bond with the consumer has garnered much academic attention (Joseph and Unnikrishnan, 2016; Chou, 2009; Hsieh et al., 2005; Lin et al., 2003; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000), Park et al. (1986) offers an alternative view. Park et al. (1986) classified relationship marketing by the degree of relationship involvement. Involvement is based on “needs, values and interests that motivate a consumer toward an object, for example, a brand.” (Schmitt, 2010: 64). Enhancing customer involvement is not only an objective of relationship marketing, but also experiential marketing and can apply to a purchase decision, product category, brand or a marketing communication (Shobeiri et al., 2014; Gordon et al., 1998). Effective experience management requires brands to continuously design cues to conjure joy and interest in customers (Haeckel et al., 2003). A consumer’s involvement with a brand is a function of the degree to which they identify how personally relevant a product or service is. This results in brands having different levels of involvement with different customers in a variety of situations (Shobeiri et al., 2014).

High levels of involvement reduce the value attributed to other alternatives and the customers’ reservation value. Customers portraying a high level of involvement are likely to be more satisfied or regard the quality of service to be of a superior standard than what is provided by competitors (Baker et al., 2009). Through an investigation conducted by Evans (1993), the result concluded that involvement inflates the length of time between purchase and repurchase, and decreases the likelihood of customers testing competing products or brands. Therefore, high involvement proposes that a greater cognitive investment is made in a brand (Baker et al., 2009).
When high consumer involvement is evident, Howard and Sheth (1969) believe that it contributes to greater perception of attribute differences, product importance, and stronger commitment to brand choice. Many academics and scholars alike have conceptualised methods of measuring involvement. Sheth and Venkatesen (1968) measured involvement in relation to products by product rank or ordering. Hupfer and Gardner (1971) appraised products using an eight-point concentric scale which measured product importance in the customer’s life. The measurement of the importance of a particular brand or product in regard to the level of involvement also garnered vast attention by Traylor (1981), Cohen and Goldberg (1970), Lastovicka and Gardner (1978). Zaichkowsky (1985) developed the Personal Involvement Inventory Scale which has been successfully used to measure the level of customer involvement as it meets the requirements for internal reliability, reliability over time, content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The level of customer involvement for product categories has also been measured by many researchers through the division of the brands of products by the various involvement groups (Zinkhan and Fornell, 1989; Zaichkowsky, 1985; Vaughn, 1980; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985; Tyebjee, 1979; Bowen and Chafee, 1974).

The level of consumer involvement in a product category is also relevant to a brands advertising and experiential strategy (Shwu-Ing, 2001). In relation to information processing, research has shown that the types of marketing campaigns that are deemed to be of optimal effectiveness are directly affected by levels of customer involvement. When levels of involvement are high, customers dedicate higher levels of attention to advertisements, exert greater cognitive effort to comprehend advertising and marketing campaigns, focus their attention on product or brand related information in advertisements, and retain more product information communicated in advertising (Celsi and Olson, 1988; Petty and Cacioppo, 1983). However, when levels of involvement are low, peripheral cues including advertising execution variables are of primary importance in the determination of how consumers perceive advertisements (Hawkins and Hoch, 1992).

Experiential marketing builds on the relationship established with customers through the medium of relationship marketing and incorporates this into a memorable experience. The experiential reaction of the customer is a direct result of their relationship with the brand (Chou, 2009). Research conducted by Shaw and Ivens (2005), found that the vast majority of
marketing professionals perceive superior, relatable, and memorable customer experiences as the next arena of competition among brands competing for market share. Experiential marketing creates an opportunity for marketers to create such memorable experiences through offering a series of experiential benefits which are strategically tailored to the target market (Mathwick et al., 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). The consumption experience and the relationship it generates with the consumer is the ultimate point of brand differentiation in an overcrowded marketplace (Schmitt, 2000; Holbrook, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Sherry, 1998).

The following section summaries the literature review in this chapter and presents the central argument of this thesis.

2.8 Summary of the Literature Review
This chapter has outlined the dominant relevant literature pertaining to experiential marketing. Section 2.2 identified that experiential marketing has garnered much academic attention throughout the years (for example, Pine and Gilmore, 2013; Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010; Tynan and McKechnie, 2009a LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 2003; Holbrook, 2000). Its origins are firmly rooted in Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) through their investigation of customer experience in the realm of customer behaviour and through research and literary investigation conducted by academics and scholars alike (for example, Pine and Gilmore, 2013; Li and Yang, 2010; Wolf, 2003; Holbrook, 2000; Schmitt, 2010, 1999a 1999b; Pine and Gilmore 1998) it has developed into the modern day practice of experiential marketing. These theoretical foundations have also led to the concept of Customer Experience Management which plays a fundamental role in the development of experiences as not only a marketing activity, but also a management process (Same, 2012; Hill and Hill, 2012; LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Verhoeef et al., 2009; Lenderman, 2005; Shaw and Ivens, 2005). Central to these theoretical foundations is Section 2.3 where the concept of experiential marketing and secondary components were discussed including customer experience, experiential value and return on experience, offering fundamental insights into the concept of experiential marketing.

Section 2.4 explores the implementation of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry. This section positions FMCG markets at the core of this study. Due to the growth and evolution
which has occurred in the FMCG industry, the current exchange process is considered an integrated series of events which result in an immersive and memorable customer experience (Backstorm, 2011; Arnould et al., 2005; Cox et al., 2005; Jones, 1999). To achieve this, brands have been implementing experiential activities (Pearlfinders, 2016). However, this section also provided much evidence that research in this area has mainly focused on the perspective of the customer. As previously stated, there is a lack of empirical qualitative data focused on experiential marketing in the FMCG industry. While some quantitative data exists, qualitative data pertaining to the FMCG industry is particularly lacking demonstrating a significant gap in the literature. As such, it can be argued that a limited understanding of the brands perspective in the FMCG market handicaps the domain.

Fundamentally, as explored in Section 2.5, experiential marketing is a practice which is growing globally across multiple business sectors, this is due to its support online and through social media to disseminate a message to a mass audience. Due to the Internet’s reach, WOMM is now being utilised to amplify brand messages to wider audiences than attendees of an experiential event alone as depicted through the Fiat case study. As a result, consumers can openly speak about brands and instantly share messages within their social network. However, although articles have been published on WOMM and message dissemination, there is no current research which depicts how social currency can support experiential marketing, virality and likewise, how this might relate to measurability of impact. Therefore, more research is needed to present the utilisation of this from the brands viewpoint.

Section 2.6 delved into the relationship between experiential marketing, consumption collectives and loyalty as a derivative. Through the exploration of consumption collectives, it became apparent that consumers can coalesce and ultimately experience together within market-mediated environments. However as previously discussed (Section 2.6.1), it is pertinent to note that although consumption collectives can account for a segment of market share, companies must not alienate other customers who are not as infatuated with your brand, but still account for a significant proportion of revenue (Sharp, 2010). As a result, through the facilitation of stages experiential marketing activations, brands must ensure that there are interaction points that interest the target market in its totality.
Lastly, Section 2.7 offers valuable insight into the role that experiential marketing can play in the development of relationships. Experiential marketing affords brands the opportunity to create memorable experiences and fosters emotional attachment among customers to the brand (McCole, 2004; Mathwick et al., 2001; Schmitt, 2000; Pine and Gilmore, 1998). These attachments play a key role on the development and nurturing of brand-customer relationships and therefore, links strongly to the measurability of the impact of experiential marketing.

Upon review and analysis of the current literature on the practice of experiential marketing, the researcher has identified gaps in the current academic literature. In summary, the gaps are as follows:

- There is a lack of academic literature on experiential marketing in the FMCG industry;
- Further research is required on the effective implementation of experiential marketing offering insight into how brands successfully create immersive brand experiences;
- The role that ROE plays in the evaluation process of experiential marketing requires additional research and potentially, an approach that evaluates the practice in its current form; and,
- Although the customer benefits are represented in academic literature, supplementary research is required to uncover the marketing practitioners’ perspective on the value of experiential marketing.

In summary, an investigation into the implementation and evaluation process of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry is required from the marketing practitioners’ perspective. This research is very timely as the utilisation of experiential marketing is growing in popularity, yet there is no framework guiding brands to its successful implementation. Thus, this current research aims to create an implementation framework and a calculation formula which will both enrich the academic literature on the practice and offer an effective structure for marketing practitioners in the FMCG industry.

Chapter 3 will present the methodology employed to answer the research question and research objectives.
Chapter 3
Methodology
3.1 Introduction
From the reviewed literature on experiential marketing as presented in Chapter 2, research objectives have emerged. Through the literary investigation conducted for the purpose of the literature review, it became evident that although the foundations of experiential marketing have been firmly paved, specific areas within the research realm lack academic investigation and theoretical foundations. Deriving from this observation, the topic of experiential marketing evidently requires further avenues of research. This led to the development of the following research objectives:

1. To investigate how companies implement experiential marketing in the FMCG industry;
2. To explore how companies integrate experiential marketing with traditional or alternative marketing activities; and,
3. To evaluate how companies in the FMCG industry who implement experiential marketing activities, measure the effectiveness of the outcome of the campaign through ROE and other methods.

With these research objectives in mind, this thesis will investigate the conceptualisation and implementation of experiential marketing to create a framework, directing both academics and marketing practitioners alike, in the successful implementation of an experiential campaign. In addition, this research also aims to develop a framework of calculation to evaluate the outcome of an experiential activation as part of an integrated marketing campaign.

In light of these objectives, a research methodology suitable to investigate the previously discussed subject matters - in depth - must be employed. However, designing a research study requires researchers to examine their own views of the world, rather than merely choosing data collection methods at random. As stated by Hart, “all research originates from some view of reality, which means that there are different ways of gaining an understanding of some aspect of the world and different ways of confirming our understanding” (1998: 51). Therefore, the selection of a methodology reflects a researcher’s ontological and
epistemological position, from which particular research philosophies and methodological considerations originate. In presenting an overview of methodological theory, the primary goal is to make explicit the researchers own decision making rational regarding this area of research.

The research methodology summary adopted for the current research is presented below.

Figure 3.1 Research Methodology Summary Adopted for the Current Research

As depicted in Figure 3.1, the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy and techniques are inherent components of this methodology. Section 3.2 will begin to expand on the aforementioned component of the research methodology employed.

3.2 Philosophy of the Research Design
Methodology is concerned with the research process and approach employed by the researcher to acquire knowledge about the world (Edwards and Skinners, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Punch, 1998). By selecting a methodology, a researcher indicates “the use of specific rules and procedures with different connotations and purposes, such as the logic used for arriving at insights and as a means of communication, so that other people can inspect and evaluate the research.” (Carson et al., 2001: 1). It is critical for an investigation of different
research paradigms to be conducted, as paradigms provide the foundations for theories, govern appropriate strategies for data collection and analysis, and specify the criteria by which empirical outcomes and emerging theories can be assessed (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Hence, as stated by Guba and Lincoln, a paradigm is a “basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 105), and encapsulates the researcher’s ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Essentially, social scientists employ a multitude of paradigms to construct how they investigate and comprehend social life (Babbie, 1998).

Ontology is reality, epistemology encapsulates the relationship established between the researcher and the reality, or alternative ways in which reality is acquired, and methodology is the approach used by the researcher to investigate and interpret reality (Carson et al., 2001; Perry et al., 1999; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). An ontology which accepts that individuals have direct, unmediated access to the real world, advocates that it is possible to obtain hard, objective knowledge about a single reality; this is referred to as positivism. Conversely, an ontology which states that individuals do not have direct access to the real world, but alternatively, their knowledge of their perceived world is of value in its own terms, forms the interpretivist view (Carson et al., 2001). It is imperative from the outset of the research, that the researcher states their views within these two opposing positions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) as it forms the research methodology decisions and guarantees rigour and consistency in the research being conducted. To this end, the following sections evaluates the opposing positions of positivism and interpretivism.

3.2.1 Positivism
Positivism is a paradigm which is comprised of “the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (Bryman, 2001: 299). It holds the view that the world is external and objective, therefore, its epistemology is formed on the assumption that observers are nonpartisan and that science is value-free (Carson et al., 2001). Positivism states that researchers can scientifically determine the rules guiding social life (Babbie, 1998), thus positivists attempt to limit investigation and belief to those phenomenon that can be conclusively proved (Hart, 1998). In terms of the current research, although there is merit to this approach, a key obstacle lies in the fact that marketing strategies can be tailored according to company or culture and therefore, is not completely non-partisan. This positivist
framework asserts that research should be conducted through the observation or manipulation of natural phenomena, often controlled by experimental means (Lincoln and Guba, 2005; Neuman, 2003; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Therefore, positivist researchers undertake a regulated and structured approach to conducting research by identifying a research topic, formulating an appropriate hypotheses and by implementing the appropriate research methodology (Carson et al., 2001; Churchill, 1996). They seek to be objective and implement a rational and logical approach to research (Carson et al., 2001; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Research of this nature seeks to preserve the distinction between facts and personal intuitions, striving for impartiality and justification while meeting the research objectives (Carson et al., 2001). Reflecting on the research objectives of the current research, difficulties lie in the division between fact and personal intuition as professional experience on the implementation of experiential marketing will play a vital role in the quality of the outcome of this research. From the perspective of social science, Neuman (2003) postulates that positivism is an organised method of the accumulation of deductive logic with accurate empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and validate a series of probabilistic casual laws that can be used to forecast patterns of human activity.

Positivism underpins quantitative methodology. The realist/objectivist ontology and empiricist epistemology which is encapsulated in the positivist paradigm necessitates a research methodology which is objective, where the importance is on measuring variables and the verification of the hypothesis which is linked to casual general explanations (Marczyk et al., 2005; Sarantakos, 2005). The positivist approach to research also advocates the adherence to scientific protocol (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). Ulin et al. (2004) state that researchers of the positivist approach utilise validity, objectivity, reliability, and generalisability to evaluate the accuracy of quantitative studies as they aim to describe, anticipate, and confirm empirical relationships in a controlled environment. Positivist researchers adopt experimental designs to assess effects. The data collection techniques concentrate on accumulating hard numerical data to permit evidence to be presented in quantitative form (Sarantakos, 2005; Neuman, 2003).

A defining feature of positivist research is that researchers of this paradigm remain detached from the research as they do not regard themselves as a significant variable. They also maintain an apparent distinction between personal and scientific experiences, judgement and
fact value (Carson et al., 2001). The philosophical foundation is that the world exists and researchers can utilise quantitative methodologies to uncover it (Cohen et al., 2000). The positivist approach adopts a deterministic view: human behaviour is discovered and exposed (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Therefore, through this orientation, knowledge is a basic premise and must be examined using objective methods (Mutch, 2005; Cohen et al., 2000; Bassey, 1995). Large substantial samples can be employed and the testing of theories permeated, where researchers utilise prior theories as a base for their investigation in order to land at hypotheses or research questions at the preliminary stages of research and are unlikely to further contribute to that prior theory during later stages (Carson et al., 2001). In essence, theory testing is a core component of the majority of positivist research. For the purpose of this research, positivism is not an appropriate research philosophy. This is primarily due to the fact that this thesis is comprised of qualitative research based on the lived experiences of business professionals and their professional opinions on experiential marketing.

3.2.2 Interpretivism
Alternatively referred to as the anti-positivist paradigm, interpretivism was developed out of resistance to the rigid nature of positivism in the field of the social sciences (Mack, 2010). Interpretivism rejects the core conceptuality of positivism and is characterised by a clear emphasis on analysing the nature of a specific phenomenon in contrast to the positivistic approach of hypotheses testing, exploring a limited quantity of cases in detail, and applying specific interpretations of functions and meanings of human actions in the form of verbal descriptions (Nudzor, 2009). A prevalent criticism of positivism on which the interpretivist theoretical perspective is formulated, indicates a developing interest and acknowledgement that scientific knowledge has limitations and boundaries (Nudzor, 2009). As concluded by Denscombe (2002), this does not mean that science has yet to uncover all the answers, but alternatively, that there are specific realms that science does not have the ability to provide answers to. Social order, correlations of social relationships and methods of thinking fall into this category as they do not conform with the belief that there is a single, absolute logic as positivism states (Hart, 1998).

Interpretivism is typically employed in qualitative research and views the social world as a construct which is open to interpretation. It also encapsulates the experiences of individuals
and their interactions with others in their social system (Maxwell, 2006; Bogdan and Bilken, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1985). This paradigm is based on the philosophical doctrine of idealism which preserves the belief that what we witness and experience is a creation of our mind, and that the only way we can participate in worldly actions is influenced by our own personal perceptions which are formed by our personal beliefs and preconceptions (Nudzor, 2009). The ontology and epistemology of this theoretical position propose that reality is relative and multiple (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). According to this paradigm, inquiry is interpretive and its function is to comprehend a phenomenon, not to make a sweeping assumption to a population (Farzanfar, 2005).

Interpretivism involves the consideration of multiple realities, the contrasting perspectives of research participants, researcher involvement, taking account of the circumstances of the phenomena being studied, and the contextual understanding and interpretation of accumulated data (Carson et al., 2001). This paradigm indicates that there are few truly universal principles of scientific adequacy (Anderson, 1983). There is an implicit assumption in interpretivism that one real world does not exist, through this perspective reality is an individual mental construct and is therefore perceived. As a result, individuals establish devices, including theories and categories, to aid them in formulating opinions on phenomena (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Along with the denial that one real world exists, reality is also socially composed in that “all human knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 3). Thus, in the analysis of data, researchers must acknowledge multiple realities, the interpretation of other actors and participants, the researcher’s own involvement, and the diversification of contexts of the phenomena being researched (Carson et al., 2001).

Contrasting to the views of positivism which emphasise the division of reality and the researcher, interpretivism states that the researcher and the research participant are innately linked and cannot be separated (Weber, 2004). Interpretivism involves the development of reciprocal relationships between the subjective participant and the researcher, who act as collaborators in the research process (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). The interpretivist view suggests that by building a relationship with the study participants, it can lead to more in-depth insights into the phenomena under investigation, contributing to the richness and depth of the data (Ulin et al., 2004). The emphasis on relationship building can be rewarding
for research participants in qualitative research, as they can be viewed as contributors to the
documentation of their own history rather than detached objects of research (Casey, 1993).
The roots of social action lie in people’s interpretations of the world around them. In order to
interpret social actions and phenomena, those phenomena must be appreciated from the
viewpoint of the research participants (McNeill and Chapman, 2005; Hackley, 2003).
Governed by this principle, a selection of philosophies and methodologies have come to the
forefront of social research which allow researchers to compose an accurate picture of
participants’ lives (McNeill and Chapman, 2005). Interpretative researchers adopt qualitative
research methodologies to investigate, evaluate and define social realities (Cohen et al., 2000;
Bassey, 1995). The interpretivist aims to gain understanding of a given phenomenon through
such qualitative methods as participant observation and open-ended interviewing. These
methods produce rich descriptive data, which allows interpretivist researchers to understand
the world through the research subjects viewpoint (Bodgan and Taylor, 1975). Qualitative
methodologies are inductive, that is, focused on the discovery and process of data which
veers from generalisability and is more concerned with an in-depth understanding of the
phenomena being researched and its unique context (Ulin et al., 2004).

As stated by Burrell and Morgan (1979), interpretivism is not a single paradigm; but a
collective of diverse paradigms. Within the interpretive paradigm and in response to the
resistance to the positivist philosophy, many theoretical positions have emerged which
encapsulate similar frameworks and characteristics. Among these perspectives, there is a
common belief which concludes that the study and analysis of human action is essentially
different from other methods of scientific inquiry, such as the study of agriculture and natural
sciences (Patton, 1990). It can be helpful to map the philosophies on a continuum, as seen in
Figure 3.2, denoted by positivism and interpretivism to illustrate their relationship with the
research paradigms.
Carson et al. (2001: 15) employ the term “post positive perspectives” to categorise the collection of philosophies outside of the traditional positivistic paradigm. Although philosophies which fall into this categorisation share commonalities regarding interpretive predispositions, distinctions can be defined regarding their emphasis and focus in their respective approaches.

Neuman (2011), differentiated between interpretivism and positivism philosophical paradigms; he stated that the positivist view of the world is objective, allowing behaviour, cause and effect to be measured along with human activity being predicted. Alternatively, an interpretivist approach allows for subjective values, where individuals form their own reality
and perception of the world in multiple contexts through interactions with others. Therefore, in the interpretivist paradigm, researchers do not have access to the real world (Carson et al., 2001). Individuals are understood to discern the world differently due to their own lived experiences and perceptions in differing contexts. Each philosophical paradigm has dominant strengths and weaknesses (Cavana et al., 2001). Therefore, it is important to evaluate each of these to make sure that the chosen paradigm will successfully match the research requirements and objectives (Cassell and Johnson, 2006; Cavana et al., 2001).

Table 3.1 A Comparison of Positivistic and Interpretivist Philosophies

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Uses large samples</td>
<td>Uses small samples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has an artificial location</td>
<td>Has a natural location</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is concerned with hypothesis testing</td>
<td>Is concerned with generating theories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produces precise, objective, quantitative data</td>
<td>Produces rich, subjective, qualitative data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produces results with high reliability but low validity</td>
<td>Produces findings with low reliability but high validity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allows results to be generalised from the sample to the population</td>
<td>Allows findings to be generalised from one setting to another similar setting</td>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from Collis and Hussey (2013).

While the current section will not attempt to draw clear lines between the philosophies occupying the phenomenological end of the continuum as it will be further discussed at a later point in this thesis (Section 3.3), the researcher identifies phenomenology as the most appropriate philosophical approach. The selection of this method was deemed appropriate in the current research as it fulfils the requirements of the research objectives by allowing research participants’ professional experience come to the fore and share how it has shaped their view of experiential marketing. Additionally, it is in line with the researchers ontological
and epistemological position. The key characteristics and epistemological emphases of phenomenology are thus henceforth discussed in Section 3.3.

3.2.2.1 Induction Versus Deduction

Within the research process, there are two approaches to reasoning which may lead to the procurement of new knowledge; these are inductive and deductive reasoning (Hyde, 2000). Within the positivistic approach, prior theories of generalisations derived from existing literature are conferred, examined and utilised to formulate hypotheses, which are then examined. This method of employing prior theory to see if it applies to certain instances is referred to as deduction (Hyde, 2000). A deductive approach encompasses the expansion of a conceptual and theoretical structure prior to its examination through empirical research methods. In this case, theory is used as a guide and basis for investigation (Carson et al., 2001). When evaluating the appropriateness of a deductive approach for the purpose of the current research, a key downfall of this approach lies in the lack of academic research available evaluating experiential marketing from the practitioners’ perspective. Also, as there is an apparent gap in existing literature, the researcher deems it of highest importance to investigate the research topic from a marketing practice perspective in order to formulate an outcome that is relevant to both academics and marketing practitioners alike.

On the other hand, an inductive approach is theory building and is guided by the data. This process commences with observations of specific occurrences or events, and seeks to formulate generalisations relating to the phenomenon being investigated (Hyde, 2000). The basic premise behind inductive reasoning is that knowledge is gained from experience (Tidman and Kahane, 2003). Cavander and Kahane further elaborate stating that “we notice patterns, resemblances, or other kinds of regularities in our experiences, some quite simple (sugar sweetens coffee), some very complicated (objects move according to Newton’s laws), and we project them onto other cases” (2013: 11). As a result, theory is an outcome of the inductive research process (Carson et al., 2001). However, despite this, it is imperative to emphasise that in line with the interpretivist approach, prior theory may still be employed as a means of a conceptual foundation and may be introduced at pertinent stages throughout the research study to guide and inform the research process (Carson et al., 2001). Considering the requirement to involve industry practitioners to meet the research objectives, using
induction allows the researcher to involve the relevant key stakeholders and uncover the related information that is required for the current research.

Figure 3.3 depicts the different ways in which inductive and deductive approaches direct the research process. In quantitative research, the intent of research is typically to test theories deductively, uncovering data to either support or contradict the hypothesis, while qualitative researchers gather information and data from research participants to establish themes which grants them to cultivate theories inductively (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

**Figure 3.3 The Wheel of Science**

![The Wheel of Science Diagram]


Essentially, deductive research is truth preserving, and the latter is truth seeking (Evans and Over, 2013), and this research identifies with the latter; induction. This was deemed appropriate as although there is existing theory on experiential marketing, further research is required to develop the concept of experiential marketing. To uncover this information, it
is essential to account for the industry practitioners’ perspective and leverage their experience on the practice on of the phenomenon. However, contrary to this statement made by Creswell and Planco Clark (2007), Trochim (2006) offers an alternative approach disputing this myopic categorisation of quantitative and qualitative research. Rather than specifically viewing quantitative research as deductive and qualitative research as inductive, Trochim (2006) concludes that qualitative research should be specifically categorised as exploratory, and similarly, quantitative research should be used to confirm specific deductive hypotheses. On a similar note in a previous study, Carson et al. (2001) state that despite the view that the deductive approach to prior theory is firmly rooted within the positivist position, it can also be applied to the interpretivist approach, where a deductive framework originates from the literature and is assessed empirically to permit new insights to arise.

3.3 Phenomenology
Phenomenology refers to a method of inquiry in twentieth century European philosophy, in particular, the work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), developed from the analysis of the concept of positivism and its inference of an absolute, objective reality (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). Husserl “sought to develop a new philosophical method which would lend to absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilisation” (Eagleton, 1983: 54). Consequently, phenomenology offers critical reflection upon a conscious experience, over the alternative of subconscious motivation. It is designed to expose the important invariable features of an experience¹ (Jopling, 1996). Although the initial origins of phenomenology can be rooted in literal investigations by Kant et al. (1997: 11), they regard Husserl as “the fountainhead of phenomenology in the twentieth century”. Husserl rejected the assumption that objects in the external world exist freely and that facts about objects are trustworthy. He theorised that people can be categorically certain about how things appear in, or materialise themselves to, their consciousness (Eagleton, 1983; Fouche, 1993). Therefore, realities are accepted as absolute phenomena, and the source of where data begins (Groenewald, 2004).

¹ The word experience is used in a different context in Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2, experience is referred to as the central component of experiential marketing, whereas in Chapter 3, the word experience is used as a core component of phenomenology.
Developing on from Husserl’s conceptualisation of phenomenology as a philosophy, Schutz (1967) adopted the concept as a methodology for conducting research. Schutz believed that human beings approach life with a bank of knowledge composed of common-sense constructs which are social in action. This supply of knowledge cultivates familiarity but is invariably incomplete and open ended. Phenomenology involves the interpretative application of a classification to the concrete detail of a situation (Holstein and Gubrium, 1994). While Husserl’s intention was to create a construct which depicts and classifies subjective experiences of life world experiences (Langenbach, 1995), Schutz (1967) developed a construct of phenomenology which is a method of research which involved details of experiences which often occurred in everyday life activities. The life world is defined as the world in which we as human beings reside among other human beings, experience society and culture, create subjective opinions, are influenced by them, and react to them (Schutz, 1967). In an investigation into the concept of the life world, Gregova (1996) distinguished between it and the social world. He proposed that the life world is composed of formal structures of which we as human being are explicitly aware, while the social world is comprised of everyday familiar actions and experiences. Therefore, the goal of phenomenology is to augment the understanding of the range of immediate experiences (Spiegelberg, 1982). This foundation paved by Husserl and Schutz was then adapted for various other branches of social research, including the concept of social constructionism created by Berger and Luckmann (1967). Their view holds that social reality is the process by which human beings come to represent, define or otherwise account for the world in which they reside. It endeavours to express common forms of understanding as they currently exist, as they have existed in the past, and as they may potentially exist should attention be so prescribed (Gergen, 1985). Essentially, social constructionism is an anti-realist, relativist stance (Hammersley, 1992). Despite the multitude of applications that have derived from the origin of the concept of phenomenology, the phenomenological emphasis revolves around lived experiences, or how social actors comprehend an experience of shared reality (Hackley, 2003). Therefore, according to this methodological approach, researchers isolate a component of the social world in which only the phenomena is of interest to the overall research problem (Costelloe, 1996).
3.3.1 Phenomenology in Marketing

Upon evaluating the philosophical stance of phenomenology, it is imperative to evaluate its suitability towards research in the marketing domain in which this research lies. An evaluation of the applicability of phenomenology in the marketing field uncovered that the suitability of this research stance is not universally held, however, there is substantial research endorsing its use also which will be discussed in this section.

Traditionally, marketing research predominantly fell into the positivist paradigm (Thompson et al., 1989). However, this traditional emphasis directed research to a quantifiable approach favouring realism, limiting the notion of perception and the view that marketing issues are socially constructed (Hirschman, 1986). Hirschman (1986) further concludes that marketing research requires a more humanistic approach to inquiry. Carson (2001) reiterates this viewpoint highlighting that the majority of marketing research focuses on comprehending why things occur and therefore the primary objective of the researcher is to acknowledge differing meanings that individuals place upon experiences. In research previously conducted by Thompson et al. (1989), they offer an alternative philosophical stance, phenomenology, and suggest that integrating it with existentialism classes it as a viable alternative.

Goulding (2005) classifies phenomenology as a humanistic method employed in consumer studies. In the current research, phenomenology is being applied to evaluate the practitioners’ perspective, however, phenomenology is traditionally applied to consumer-oriented studies. Bledstein (1976) states that there is a need for the practitioners’ perspective to be researched due to the rise of professionalism within the workplace. There is a fundamental requirement for marketing research to consider the processes created by marketing professionals which encompass their personal realities of marketing, rather than viewing it through the myopic lens of traditional marketing management theory (Ardley, 2011). An alternative perspective of marketing which the researcher draws on is the phenomenological technique of constructing reality through narrative. This approach has been dismissed in traditional marketing management theory although it offers a more in-depth analysis in both consumer and organisational behavioural studies (Ardley, 2011). In using this approach, the researcher will gain a rich insight into how marketing is actually handled in practice (Hopkinson and Hogarth-Scott, 2001). Phenomenological research also
lends itself to a story telling approach, reflecting on the fact that individuals typically live through the stories that they tell (Ardley, 2000).

Additionally, Wilson (2012) finds that the application of phenomenology offers structure to marketing research due to the data which emerges from it. As the data is a collection of life world experiences (Giorgi, 1997), it encapsulates how individuals see the world around them (Wilson, 2012). By obtaining accounts of marketing practitioners’ approach and understanding of the utilisation of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector, the researcher can subsequently establish themes and concepts. Therefore, in marketing research, phenomenology acknowledges implicit meaning in interactions with research participants (Wilson, 2012).

Despite the lack of discussion on the utilisation of phenomenology in marketing research from the practitioners’ perspective, as opposed to the vast amount of research conducted from the viewpoint of the consumer, some authors have explored and highlighted the potential data that phenomenology may uncover in this line of research. Gummesson (1999) states that there is a requirement for phenomenological research to be conducted in this realm to re-evaluate the marketing process and expose new ways of conducting marketing. Likewise, Svensson (2007) finds that marketing needs to redirect its attention from the view that it is the collective term for a predefined set of activities, tools, and goals where marketing is considered a social practice. He subsequently states that there must be an emphasis on the individuals who carry out the work and highlight the gravitas of their experience and values in the implementation of marketing activity. Hence, phenomenology is structured around the need to understand the softer experiential truths of the accounts of marketers, where the concept of reality is not structured by technocratic dialogue (Ardley, 2000).

Additionally, due to the lack of emphasis on research pertaining to the perspective of the marketing practitioners (Cornelissen, 2002), it can be argued that research investigating marketing planning activity is not represented in totality in present day literature. As a result, there is a distinct lack of lived experiences and perceptions of marketing professionals represented (Ardley, 2000). Studies which have attempted to capture the marketing practitioners’ perspective through the use of a quantitative, questionnaire based methodology include Dziubaniuk et al. (2020), Cleave et al. (2017), Hofacker and Belanche.
(2016), Gounaris (2008), Gray et al. (2005), Coviello et al. (2000), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Greenley and Bayus (1993), Verhage and Waarts (1988), and Greenley (1983). However, the issue which arises is that marketing decision making is subjective to a marketer’s personal beliefs, which are rooted in their individual interpretation of knowledge (Ardley, 2011). In a previous academic investigation conducted by Ardley (2008), he investigated this position conducting phenomenologically based interviews with Marketing Managers. In line with the sentiment communicated in Ardley’s (2011) paper examining marketing theory and critical phenomenology, Ardley concluded that marketing practice is not based on marketing theory but alternatively on human factors including institution and the influence of local contexts in decision making (2011). This position is also outlined by Knibbs et al. (1987) in an earlier paper, where the focus was on the premise of organisational analyses by Marketing Managers in an individual organisation. This research highlights how each of the participating Marketing Managers constructed dissimilar organisational analyses, despite the fact that they were all describing the exact same external environment. Therefore, in-depth perceptions, meanings and motives cannot be exposed through the isolated use of structured or semi-structured questionnaires (May, 1997).

Hackley (2003) similarly discusses the application of phenomenology for marketing research. In line with the views of May (1997), Hackley believes that the use of structured or semi-structured questionnaires does not bring all the required data to the fore and offers an alternative method; the phenomenological interview. He advocates for the use of interviews as it allows the research participant to reflect on an event or experience in ways that are not possible during or after it.

Through the evaluation of the views held by the aforementioned accomplished authors, some of who have been published in high ranking journals including Marketing Theory, European Business Review and Journal of Marketing Management, there is a distinct consensus that there is a fundamental flaw in traditional marketing theory as it ascribes non-partisan properties to issues of marketing practice. The primary objective of the present section is not to solely focus on the criticisms of traditional marketing theory, but to focus on the elements of phenomenology which evoke the subjective reflections of a research participant. Thus, this researcher identifies with the phenomenological approach to research.
3.4 Research Methodologies and Marketing
Research methodologies have a direct role in the potential validity and generalizability of a research study (McGrath and Brinberg, 1983) and therefore play an integral role in the development of knowledge in marketing research. Research is a multifaceted approach to examining culture, society and behaviour through an investigation of individual’s actions and behaviour (Hogan et al., 2009). Qualitative research methods encompass a diverse set of approaches including phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis and protocol analysis (Elliott and Timulak, 2005). Polkinghorne (1983) collectively defines these methods stating that they rely on linguistic methods and evaluate in a meaning-based manner rather than statistical forms of data analysis. Traditionally, qualitative research methods lend themselves to the marketing domain (Gummesson, 2005). This is due to the overwhelming requirement of marketing researchers to appreciate and comprehend phenomena relating to the premise of marketing. Qualitative research methods established within the interpretive philosophy serve the practice of decision making in marketing better than many alternative research methods (Carson et al., 2001).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that this approach to research is comprised of an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the social world. It involves the observation of research subjects in their natural settings, seeking to correlate or interpret a phenomenon in terms of participant’s response to the research topic being investigated. Burns and Bush (2008) offer a similar view stating that qualitative research involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting data by observing how people act, as well as what they do and say. Qualitative research is particularly efficient in acquiring culturally specific information pertaining to the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of targeted populations (Mack et al., 2005). Therefore, the observations and statements that are gathered are in a qualitative or non-standardised form.

Qualitative methodologies aim to analyse and uncover data on a particular phenomenon. Instead of aiming to uncover a general profile of a study population, qualitative studies seek to provide data and resolutions for the particulars of a given research study (Hyde, 2000). By employing qualitative methods, it affords the researcher the opportunity to investigate issues in depth as data collection in this form of research is not restricted to predetermined classifications. Therefore, research of this nature cultivates a wealth of rich data from a
relatively small number of research participants (Patton, 1990). An in-depth understanding is established on the researchers immersion in the phenomena being studied and the data gathered which details the description of situations, events or interactions between individuals, contributing depth and detail to the study (Patton, 1990).

In the case of qualitative research, Trochim (2006: 5) states that the “best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in context”. Trochim (2006) further elaborates that research of this form restricts a researcher’s ability to quantify as they are a limited portion of experience. The whole experience at hand cannot be diffused without diluting the importance of the phenomenon in its totality as each individual’s experience is composed of a different reality and unique viewpoint (Soiferman, 2010). Moreover, each researcher delivers a personal bias on the phenomena being studied. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005: 260) develop on this thought stating that “proponents of this school of thought rejected the positivistic use of the traditional scientific method to study social observations”. Alternatively, they identified with the practice of employing an interpretative approach to collecting data. This led them to believe that social reality was constructed and was therefore subjective. In line with the views of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005), Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that when investigating complex human and organisational interactions, qualitative methods are preferable over their quantitative counterpart as the data is not easily transferrable to a numerical format. Qualitative data by nature is rich and holistic, with the ability to reveal complexities rooted in real life context allowing the true impact of the data to emerge (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Therefore, qualitative data gathering techniques were deemed as a suitable approach to the current study. Considering the nature of the research question and research objectives, qualitative research affords the researcher the opportunity to gain the insight required overcome the key challenges and the research gap that is present in academic literature.

3.4.1 Interpretive Approaches and the Present Study
The research study being conducted at present can be categorized as interpretivist. This stance relies on an ontological assumption by the researcher that assumes that reality is socially constructed, relative to the situation at hand and exists in multiple realities, where the primary emphasis is on the comprehension and interpretation of the data collected. The researcher deems the interpretivist approach appropriate for the current research as in order to meet the research objectives and create a successful and suitable implementation and
evaluation process for the practice of experiential marketing, the input and experience of accomplished industry practitioners is of great importance. The interpretivist approach allows this knowledge which has been formed through socially constructed lived experiences come to the fore. This in turn, allows the researcher to formulate informed research contributions. This ideology is in line with the inductive approach where the emphasis is placed upon theory generation as opposed to the alternative, theory testing. Ultimately, the current research is modelled on the interpretive approach as the researcher is attempting to view the social world, that is, social relationships, divisions or labour and organisations (Goldkuhl, 2012), from the research participants viewpoint and appreciate their perspective of the social world (Edwards and Skinners, 2009). The participants viewpoint that the researcher is aiming to gain insight on is specifically relating to the previously mentioned research objectives as seen in Section 3.1. Experiential marketing practice in FMCG organisations plays a prominent role in this research. This experiential marketing practice is rooted in the social world and therefore, influences the research outcome. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) expand on this point stating that interpretive research relies on the collective view of both the researchers and research participants views of reality, in order for research to uncover the importance and significance of a given phenomenon.

Although the interpretive approach is comprised of a multitude of methodological options, the chosen method of qualitative data collection is the individual interview as it is most capable of addressing the research question. This selection was informed by the fact that for this research to be successful, in-depth conversations were important in order for the researcher to gain the imperative insight and knowledge required that would not have been available through other research methods. The researcher required dialogue with the research participant in order to probe and uncover valuable contributions from each research participant. Qualitative interviews evaluate the methods of questioning that “differ in the degree of emphasis in culture, in the choice of arena or boundaries of that study, and in the specific forms of information that are sought” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 19). Essentially, interviewing involves questioning and interpreting data (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Individual interviews are particularly compatible with interpretive research, as they afford the respondents the opportunity to present their thoughts and opinions on the research topic. There are a multitude of advantages of conducting individual depth interviews. They are the
most powerful method in qualitative research for descriptive purposes (McCracken, 1988), allowing for an in-depth understanding of another person’s experiences (Thompson et al., 1989), which is aligned with the research objectives pertaining to the current research study.

As the current research is concerned with investigating how companies in the FMCG sector conceptualise, implement and evaluate the outcome of experiential marketing, it is important to evaluate the suitability of the chosen methodology. Upon analysing the current literature pertaining to experiential marketing in Chapter 2, there is a requirement to adopt an inductive approach to the research in order to generate a new theory regarding experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. This is critical to enrich the theoretical development of experiential marketing in order for it to play a prominent role in modern marketing practice. Qualitative data are rich and comprehensive, and have the ability to reveal complexity; such data supplies holistic descriptions which are vivid and grounded in real lived experiences (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1981) propose that qualitative methods are the preferred method of research when studying phenomena relating to intricate human and organisational interactions as they are not easily translatable into numerical form. Therefore, the features stated by Oakley (1999), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Guba and Lincoln (1981) make qualitative data gathering ideally suited to the research at hand in the realm of experiential marketing.

Considering the researcher’s ontological and epistemological position, it is proposed that by allowing the research participants to raise their opinions and experience on the utilisation of experiential marketing, the research topic will evolve, and rich data will emerge. This is due to the nature of qualitative research which offers the researcher the opportunity to continually alter the research design according to observations, the developing theoretical perspective, or changes in literature in what is being studied (Babbie, 1998). This information is then used to direct the rest of the research in its quest for enlightenment and clarification on the issue under investigation. As qualitative researchers collect data, they revisit and alter their conceptual frameworks, leading to a more precise outcome. Furthermore, in-depth and rich data play an integral role in understanding and evaluating the phenomenon under investigation and offer an explanation to the objectives set by a research question (Khan, 2014). As the researcher’s knowledge improves, the co-ordination and collection of data
gathering continually improves as a result (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Therefore, it can be said that conceptual frameworks develop and evolve out of the conducted research itself (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.4.2 Justification of an Interpretive Qualitative Research Approach
The traditional approach to the acquisition of knowledge from quantitative or qualitative approaches derives from the positivistic tradition. However, in recent times, qualitative research based on an interpretive approach has grown in popularity and use in the realms of management and organisational sciences (Prasad and Prasad, 2002; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 1999; Zald, 1996), along with social sciences (Atkinson et al., 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Flick, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Advocates for the utilisation of the interpretive approach to research, claim that the methodological procedures and assertion for objective knowledge present in the positivistic approach merely create theoretical limitations limiting our understanding of organisational and human phenomena (Lincoln and Denzin, 2003; Prasad and Prasad, 2002; Sandberg, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This is due to the fact that qualitative research primarily focuses on capturing something significant in the social word in detail (Goodwin and Horowitz, 2002). The extent to which a qualitative research project can be deemed credible is determined by the level of trustworthiness it withholds with its research participants and readers of the research findings. Guba and Lincoln (1985) refine the topic of trustworthiness to four key properties, which are referred to as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The key purpose of these four key properties is to parallel the quantitative conventional assessment criteria of reliability and validity. The following sections analyse the prevalent properties pertaining to the use of interpretive qualitative research.

Credibility: Guba and Lincoln (1989) found that the credibility of a research study is developed when readers or coresearchers are faced with the experience at hand and they identify with it. Credibility addresses the “fit” between views of the research participant and the researcher’s representation of them (Tobin and Begley, 2004: 391). In order to address the issue of credibility, Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggest a number of methods including persistent observation and prolonged engagement. Additionally, they recommend peer debriefing as an
external check on the research process, which in turn may increase the level of credibility attached to the study.

**Transferability:** Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry. Carson *et al.* (2001) state that it is imperative that a qualitative study covers a multitude of respondents and settings to ensure that results are transferrable across that range, and more importantly, no study can be generalised beyond its own range, however it is essential to note that in qualitative research, this is only concerned with case-to-case transfer (Tobin and Begley, 2004). The most effective way to assess generalisability in qualitative research is to adopt that same criteria used in evaluating validity; the use of systematic sampling, an appropriate audit and documentation, constant comparison, and multi-dimensional theory (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). To ensure generalisability in the current research study, purposive sampling was employed in order to choose the twenty-three interviews, profiling fifty brands; and to evaluate this data, phenomenological reduction was conducted.

**Dependability:** In order to achieve dependability, researchers must ensure that the research process is traceable, logical and clearly documented (Tobin and Begley, 2004). When readers or coresearchers are able to review and comprehend the research process, they are better equipped to judge the dependability of the research at hand (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). To achieve this, the researcher ensured that they had both written and verbal documentation of all of the interviews that were conducted and logged the date they were conducted and their duration. Additionally, all codes and themes that emerged were also logged.

**Confirmability:** Confirmability relates to establishing the researcher’s interpretation of the emerging data and ensuring that the findings clearly derive from it. This requires the researcher to demonstrate how their interpretation of the data and findings have been reached (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Guba and Lincoln (1989) state that confirmability is established when transferability, dependability and credibility are all achieved. Further to this, Koch (1994) suggests that researchers should use markers including the reasons for the methodological, theoretical and analytical choices throughout the study in its entirety to ensure that readers can understand the rationale behind decisions that were reached.

To summarize, by ensuring that this qualitative research study can be deemed trustworthy, the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were employed.
It is essential that each of these properties are adhered to for this research to be accepted by scholars and marketing practitioners alike.

3.5 In-depth Interviews and the Current Research
As outlined in Chapter 1 and 2, this research is concerned with the implementation, integration and evaluation of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. In line with the ontological and epistemological perspective as outlined in Section 3.2 and considering the objective to discover industry practitioners’ perspectives and experience within the realm of experiential marketing, it was decided to use in-depth interviews for the empirical research.

3.5.1 The In-depth Interview
The in-depth interview technique is necessary to elicit a vivid description of the participant’s outlook on the research topic (Milena et al., 2008). This research technique is typically employed by a qualitative researcher to yield descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory data (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). In effect, the in-depth interview offers researchers the opportunity to converse with research participants about their personal feelings, opinions and experiences on a given topic under investigation in order to reconstruct the past, comprehend the present and predict the future (Milena et al., 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1985). It can also be viewed as an opportunity to develop an understanding on how participants interpret worldly phenomenon (Milena et al., 2008). Dexter (1970) expands on this stating that interviews can be viewed as a conversation with a purpose.

Gubrium and Holstein (2002) conclude that despite alternate views, interviews should not be merely viewed as a data gathering technique as they offer more pertinent data which contributes to the wider role that a phenomena plays in society. The authors believe that the interview offers a unique opportunity to present individual voices in society and in doing so, affords a researcher the opportunity to build a valid first-hand account of individual experiences. However, when comparing philosophical dialogues or everyday colloquial conversations, which view participants as having equal levels of control and dominance, the research interview can be distinguished by an asymmetry of power as the researcher takes control of questioning and the direction of the conversation, and the participant responds in a regulated manner (Hannabuss, 1996). This control on the researcher’s behalf is necessary as they need to harness enough information to gain an in-depth understanding on a
phenomena, and position it into the larger context of the interpersonal, social and cultural elements of the external environment (Erlandson, 1993).

In order for the researcher to collect relevant data through the medium of in-depth interviews, it is fundamental that one acquires as much knowledge on the relevant topic areas as possible to ensure that they ask informed questions to uncover data relating to the research objectives (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Regarding the interview design process, to ensure a positive research outcome there are many elements which must be considered. For example, the researcher must consider who to interview, how many interviews must be conducted, what type of interviews are to be utilised, and consider how the interview data will be evaluated (Doyle, 2004). Overall, interviews aid the researcher to interpret an individual’s actions and reactions (Patton, 1990). Therefore, researchers must have the knowledge in the subject area and ability to conduct interviews so that the required insights can be gained. As stated by Fontana and Frey (1998), when conducted correctly, interviews can be one of the most powerful ways to try and comprehend human activity.

The researcher recognised the investigation of industry practitioner insights as an imperative element to the research. In undertaking this avenue of research, the in-depth interview was deemed an appropriate research method for the current research due to its exploratory design and ability to focus on an incipient phenomenon (Hackley, 2003). By employing the use of in-depth interviews to uncover and accumulate industry practitioner insights in the current study, the researcher was afforded the opportunity to gain a reliable, authentic and in-depth insight into the current practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry. This allowed the researcher to make informed observations on the practice and informed contributions to the theoretical development of the practice for both academics and practitioners alike.

3.5.2 Planning In-depth Interviews

As the interview construct is a “complex and involved procedure” (Minichielle et al., 2008: 1), there is no common construct for effective interviewing and creating applicable and astute questions. However, there are some guidelines which may be considered. Carson et al. (2001) discusses three preparatory steps which are considered a commonly utilised structure to how most interviews are planned. Firstly, the overall objective of the interview must be established and be in line with the context of the research being conducted. Following from
this, an interview guide is written to act as a term of reference to guide the researcher during an interview. The interview guide is comprised of a range of general topics which are examined through open-ended questions which address the overall objective of the interview. Thirdly, within each of these general topics, there may be additional probe topics which typically are raised after the discussion of the topic (Carson et al., 2001).

Erlandson (1993: 91-94) offers an alternative perspective to the process of interview planning, suggesting the following steps:

1. Deciding on the research respondents
2. Interview preparation
3. Commencing the interview
4. Preserving productivity while conducting the interview
5. Concluding the interview

For the purpose of the research at hand, it was decided to plan the interviews according to the guidelines suggested by Carson et al. (2001), due to the prominent role played by Carson in modern marketing research and the suitability of his approach in the current research. Based on these tenets, the overall objective of the interview was to accumulate insights from brand representatives of leading FMCG companies on the implementation, integration and evaluation of experiential marketing, and ultimately, establish a framework for the practice of experiential marketing and a method of calculating the outcome of an experiential activation. To achieve this, a semi-structured interview guide was composed based on the prevalent issues which arose in the literature review. In line with the views of Benner (1994), the researcher ensured that all questions were asked in a familiar vernacular of the individual being interviewed. This was achieved by ensuring that the content of the interview guide was in tune with marketing practice and all questions were directly related to the utilisation of experiential marketing, of which the research participants had an in-depth understanding of. This ensured that the research participants answers would be unencumbered by theoretical terms and an accurate representation of their personal beliefs and experiences. The interview guide used in the interviews can be found in Appendix C.
3.5.2.1 Determining the Interview Respondents

As previously stated (Section 3.4.1), the primary objective of conducting interviews was to attain rich industry insight from industry practitioners with knowledge and experience in the practice of experiential marketing, and ultimately build theory around this evolving phenomenon. It was at this point that the question of who to interview was discussed.

In line with other steps in the research process, deciding who to interview was of primary concern to the researcher. As the research is of an interpretive stance, the researcher reflected on the premise of research of this nature. As stated by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) and Hackley (2003) the objective of the utilisation of interpretive data is not to create broad judgements that extend beyond sample and across social contexts, but to develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon which is primarily focused on meaning while exploring the why and how of a specific issue, situation or collection of social interactions (Dworkin, 2012).

As it is the researcher’s responsibility to produce the lived experience of research participants in a compelling manner so those who read the study can comprehend the phenomenon at hand and enhance their understanding of it (Siedman, 1991), it is critical to have the correct research participants involved in a qualitative study to ensure the collection of optimal and rich data. To achieve this, purposive sampling has been employed. Maxwell defined purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which “particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 1997: 87). Regarding the current research, this was linked to the judgement of which industry practitioners were best positioned to offer the information and experience required by the researcher. In this case, a selection of brands, which will be presented in Table 3.2, were selected due to their use of experiential marketing which was uncovered in preliminary research conducted by the researcher when investigating the present utilisation of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry. Additionally, these brands were then further investigated, and a judgement was made on their suitability based on the success and scale of the organisations. The success of the brands was employed as a judgement on the success of their experiential marketing utilisation in absence of method of evaluating the success of an experiential marketing campaign.

According to the most recent study conducted by Consultancy UK (2018) on the top fifty FMCG companies globally by scale, the following data emerged relating to the research pool.
• 3 of the top 10 brands are included in this interview pool
• 8 of the top 30 brands are included in this interview pool
• 10 of the top 50 brands are included in this interview pool

Out of the fifty brands profiled in this research:

• 8 brands have distribution in over 50 countries
• 2 brands have distribution in over 100 countries
• 11 brands have distribution in over 150 countries

To relay the information on behalf of the brands, the industry practitioners selected were stakeholders involved in creating and executing experiential marketing in one or more marketing communications campaigns for the brand or company that they are employed by. These functions span a multitude of roles represented by the selected research participants across levels of management. The diversity in marketing employment roles ensures that the research outcomes holds multiple perspectives and therefore, an extensive insight into the phenomenon. It is imperative to have brands and brand representatives who successfully implement this marketing strategy to take part in this research. This ensures that any recommendations that derive from the present research will be relevant and applicable to academics and practitioners alike.

From the outset of the research, the researcher’s intent was to secure interviews with leading FMCG brands who have employed the use of experiential marketing. It was also anticipated that the interview pool would have representation of all the product categories of FMCG to create a cohesive view of the practice of experiential marketing across the sector, however, as illustrated in Table 3.2, an alternative outcome was achieved. As the research developed, it became clear that there were certain product categories, including minerals, confectionary and alcohol, which offered a wealth of rich data due to their common use of experiential marketing and experience in comparison to their counterparts, including laundry and fresh produce. This observation identified with the induction approach to research. To ensure that the interview pool produced the most valuable data, the researcher decided to secure interviews that would offer the rich data in order to meet the research objectives. Resulting from this, the
Interview pool consisted of representatives of Irish and European subsidiaries of large multinational FMCG companies along with indigenous small and medium enterprises. This allowed for a more holistic view of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector and uncovers the strengths, opportunities and challenges it poses for a multitude of companies.

Further to establishing the identification of the most suitable research participants, the sample size also requires consideration. Based on literature by Minichielle et al. (2008: 1), the interview is considered a “complex and involved procedure”. Due to its complex nature, there is no defined rule which dictates how many interviews should be optimally conducted. However, many scholars have published guidelines for consideration. Patton (1990: 185) argues “the validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the case selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size”. In more recent times, Hackley (2003) and Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) share a similar position, rooted in the research of Morse (1995), concluding that “statistical significance does not mean theoretical significance” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006: 73). The researcher pursued the perspective established by Siedman (1991), who proposes that the optimal number of interviews are hit when saturation and adequacy occur. The interviews were conducted until the researcher was of the belief that “enough” respondents had been surveyed (Siedman, 1991: 45). This saturation and adequacy point was reached when twenty-three interviews were completed, profiling fifty brands, at which point no new information was being presented and research participants perspectives began to present themselves as repetitive.

Table 3.2 outlines the pool of interview respondents.
Table 3.2 The Interview Pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Date &amp; Duration</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.10.2017</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Richmond Marketing</td>
<td>Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Propercorn Sparkling Ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.10.2017</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Richmond Marketing</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Fulfil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>06.03.2018</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Heineken</td>
<td>Customer Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Desperados Orchard Thieves Heineken Murphy’s Coors Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.03.2018</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kerry Foods</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Smoke Meats Denny Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.03.2018</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company</td>
<td>Experiential Execution Excellence Manager</td>
<td>Fanta Deep RiverRock Coca-Cola Schweppes Monster Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.04.2018</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Britvic</td>
<td>PepsiCo Marketing Manager</td>
<td>7up Pepsi Max Lipton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.04.2018</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Britvic</td>
<td>Local Carbs and Energy Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Club Orange MiWadi Robinsons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.03.2018</td>
<td>42 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tayto Snacks</td>
<td>Senior Brand Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>04.04.2018</td>
<td>54 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Birds Eye</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.04.2018</td>
<td>50 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Nestle</td>
<td>Shopper Activation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.04.2018</td>
<td>47 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Barry’s Tea</td>
<td>Brand Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.04.2018</td>
<td>49 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mondelez</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.04.2018</td>
<td>40 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kerry Foods</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>08.05.2018</td>
<td>53 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kellogg’s</td>
<td>European Marketing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.04.2018</td>
<td>51 min</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kraft-Heinz</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.05.2018</td>
<td>1 hr 4 min</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unilever</td>
<td>Head of Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.05.2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Molson Coors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All interviews were recorded on a dictaphone with the permission of the research participant and fully transcribed afterwards. Notes were also taken throughout the duration of the interviews to assist in the process of transcribing and to act as a prompt of any thoughts which arose on behalf of the researcher during the interviews. The duration of the interviews varied from 40 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes.

3.5.2.2 Recruitment and Interview Setting
Developing a line of contact with potential interview participants can be considered a difficult task, thus, a given interview should not be taken for granted and sufficient time should be spent planning before the interview commences (Qu and Dumay, 2011). As stated by Ahrens and Dent (1998: 26) “once access is granted, the task of gaining interviews with busy managers, for whom time is at a premium, is nontrivial”. The interview pool respondents were recruited through two methods; firstly, through connections with Key Account Managers, Commercial Directors and Managing Directors that the researcher had developed, and
secondly, through direct contact with Marketing and Brand Managers. This encompassed the researcher directly contacting Marketing and Brand Managers primarily through e-mail, LinkedIn messaging and, in some cases, follow-up telephone conversations. In the first instance of contact the researcher took this opportunity to introduce herself, assure confidentiality, offer brand anonymity if required, ensure that the potential participant fully comprehended the purpose and intent of the research and the required information. In total, approaches were made to sixty-five brands which were primarily selected as potential interview participants, from which fifty brand profiles were conducted through twenty-three interviews. The primary reason why the interview pool decreased from sixty-five to fifty was due to brands either not responding to the invite or declining the opportunity to partake. At this point in the research, it is important to note that the access to potential respondents was facilitated through the researchers work which is in the FMCG industry.

The location and setting in which the interview is conducted requires additional consideration as this is an element of the interview process in research literature which is regularly overlooked (Herzog, 2005). As the physical space in which the interview is conducted has a strong impact on how the interview proceeds along with its outcome (King and Horrocks, 2010), the setting must be suitable. However, as stated by Siedman (2012), the researcher must approach the organisation of the interview setting with a sense of equity. There must be a balance between accommodating the interviewee and the set schedule of the researcher. King and Horrocks (2010) further develop this sentiment stating that interviewees should be asked their preference of where the interview should take place. For the purpose of this research, research participants were offered the opportunity to have the interview conducted through the medium of a face to face interview in their head office, video conferencing on Skype, or over a telephone call. By offering potential research participants the opportunity to choose an appropriate interview setting, the researcher felt that this may maximise the response rate. This belief was shaped by Hackley’s (2003) exploration into research projects in marketing, management and consumer research which notes that access to interviews in business practice cannot be presumed upon as organisations are complex and time is not a luxury. Therefore, the researcher must be accommodating to the requirements of the research participant.
Interviews of a qualitative nature are traditionally conducted face-to-face (Qu and Dumay, 2011; Novick, 2008). Traditionally, this setting has been considered as a fundamental requirement for the interview to build and maintain rapport with interviewees to ensure that the required information is gathered from the encounter (Gillham, 2005; Shuy, 2003; Hermanowicz, 2002). However, both telephonic interviews and the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies, including Skype and Facetime, have emerged as viable alternatives to the time-honoured tradition of face-to-face interviews (Cachia and Millward, 2011; Carr and Worth, 2001), with this practice growing in popularity (Trier-Bieniek, 2012).

Vogl (2013), compared the outcome of fifty six face-to-face interviews with fifty six telephonic interviews to determine the variance of the quality of outcome data. The outcome of this investigation concluded that there was no significant disparity in the length of the conversations, the accumulative amount of words spoken, the number of responses, the sum of pauses, or the requirement of clarification between the two modes of communication. It also found that there was no defined distinction in the level of rapport achieved. Alternatively, Vogl (2013) associates the differences in responses to the sensitive nature of some of the questions to the nature of the interviewee. Similar observations have been communicated by Trier-Bieniek (2012), Glogowska et al. (2011), Holt (2010), Stephens (2007), Sturges and Hanrahan (2004), and Chapple (1999) who have utilised telephonic interviews in qualitative research. Deakin and Wakefield (2013) also share a similar experience in a study investigating the use of VoIP technologies and telephonic interviews. They similarly state that they faced no issues while building rapport with interviewees and that the level of rapport was aligned with that of face-to-face interviews. Therefore, the researcher was confident that the utilisation of face-to-face, telephone and VoIP interviews would produce the same level of rich data and rapport. In this research study, the twenty-three interviews were conducted as follows; 13 face to face interviews, 6 telephone interviews and 4 Skype interviews.

3.5.2.3 The Interview Process

As stated in the prior sections, preparatory steps have been endeavoured to ensure the successful execution of the interview process. The conduct of the interview from beginning to close was shaped by qualitative research literature, and these observations were adhered to in the present study.
In broad terms, Kvale (1996: 1-2) asserts that an interview is “an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest”, where the researcher attempts to “understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples’ experiences”. Carson et al. (2001) offer suggestions on the structure a researcher should employ when commencing an interview. Prior to the interview commencing, the researcher welcomed the interviewee and engaged in general conversation with them until it was deemed appropriate to commence the interview. During this time, the researcher highlighted the purpose of the research to assure the research participant that the present work is of benefit to them. Subsequent issues including confidentiality, consent for using a recording device for transcribing purposes were also discussed. This is due to the fact that informed consent is an ethical requirement for research which must be adhered to (Carson et al., 2001). Along with the use of short-handed notes, as recommended by Carson et al. (2001), the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. Hackley (2003) advocates the use of voice recorders as long as the dictaphone does not pose as a distraction to the interview. By utilising it, it allows the researcher to transcribe the interviews verbatim (McCracken, 1988).

At the core of the phenomenological approach, the objective is to build an understanding of the phenomena in the research participants own terms in order to provide an accurate description of a given experience by the individual themselves (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998), and permitting the essence to materialise (Cameron et al., 2001). Building on this, it is valuable to consider that the interviewees are industry practitioners, typically falling into the realm of management. Benner (1994) elaborates on this advising that the interview questions must be presented in a manner where the language and vocabulary used must be familiar to the interview subject. Ahrens and Dent (1998) note that interviewing industry practitioners in management positions requires sensitivity and interpersonal skills on the interviewees behalf. An environment must be created where the interview participant can speak freely, as if the conversation was “off the record” (Ahrens and Dent, 1998: 26), despite the researcher actively taking notes and recording the conversation. It is fundamental that the researcher actively listens, understands the context of comments and permit pregnant pauses without discomfort (Ahrens and Dent, 1998).
During the interview, questions were delivered in an open and projective manner (Oppenheim, 1992) in an effort to encourage the interview participant to express their personal ideas and experiences pertaining to the research topic. This is in line with Oppenheim’s (1992) non-directive approach, allowing the interview to run itself where possible. This also ensured that the respondent was relaxed and comfortable throughout the interview. Erlandson (1993) acknowledges that informal or open-ended interviewing hold similarities to informal conversations, but yet may also be viewed as different.

When conducting a semi-structured interview, researchers are required to prepare an interview guide outlining questions which are primarily influenced by previously identified research themes in a systematic approach, arbitrated by probes devised to elicit a more detailed response from the interview participant (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The interview guide collates broad themes to cover during the course of the interview, offering the researcher an insight into specific research areas (Qu and Dumay, 2011). In line with the phenomenological approach, the questions in the interview guide are typically broad by nature and open ended, affording the research participant the opportunity to express their own point of view (Giorgi, 1997). In the phenomenological scenario, the questions evoke interviewees own personal beliefs, experiences, convictions and feelings on the research topic (Welman and Kruger, 1999). This offers the researcher the ability to cover a multitude of research areas during the duration of the interview with each participant (Polit and Beck, 2008).

Although adequate preparation prior to the interview is essential, one must also consider the professionalism displayed during the interview also. Hannabuss (1996) identified four skills that researchers must possess:

1. Firstly, the interviewer must establish a relationship and rapport with the interviewees;
2. Next, the interviewer must be equipped with methods to encourage further discussion of topics, yet also, have an awareness when the interviewee is not comfortable answering or elaborating on certain questions;
3. Thirdly, the interviewer must know when to interject and refocus the interview; and,
4. Last, the interviewer should be non-judgemental at all times and not portray personal bias.
Developing on these skills, Shensul et al. (1999) elaborates implying that the quality of an interview can be preserved by strictly applying the following three principles:

1. Maintaining the flow of the research participants answer to a given question;
2. Maintain a positive relationship with the interview subject; and,
3. Avoid any personal bias

For the purpose of the current research study, the researcher took the following action to avoid any personal biases occurring:

- Additionally, the researcher adhered to the aforementioned (Section 3.4.2) concepts of validity, reliability and generalisability to ensure that the research could be deemed credible.
- Upon analysis of the research data, the researcher continually re-evaluated the findings of the interviews and the categorisation of themes and sub-themes, which reduces the possibility of assumptions being made; and,
- The resulting contributions towards academia and marketing practice were shared with FMCG industry professionals with the aim of the researcher receiving constructive feedback and recommendations to further enhance the models.

When concluding the interview, the researcher asked each of the respondents if they had any additional comments they believed could contribute to this research and briefly summarised the key findings that arose throughout the interview. At this point, any additional comments were documented, as it is frequently the case that interview respondents depart additional key information “perhaps out of relief that the interview is over (Oppenheim, 1992: 75). After the interview subject left, the researcher took a few moments to reflect on the interview and note a few suggestions that derived from the interview.

3.6 Analysis and Interpretation of Data
There are a multitude of methods available to researchers to analyse and interpret qualitative data, which at times, may be complex to articulate (Jones, 1985). However, it is valuable to note that different approaches specifically relate to different research philosophical assumptions. An approach to analysing and interpreting the current data deriving from the interviews, which is cohesive with the researcher’s ontological and epistemological position, must be selected. By employing phenomenological reduction, the researcher has aimed to
always depict the experience of the research participants in an accurate and relevant way, which ensures an essential level of validity.

This research identifies with Mintzberg’s (1979) view that in the interpretation of qualitative data, the active role of the researcher is emphasised rather than the passive role. Mintzberg (1979) suggests that raw data cannot materialise into theory; but rather, a form of “creative leap” occurs (Mintzberg, 1979: 584). This highlights the imperative role the researcher plays in the interpretation and evaluation process in research. While an interview is being conducted, Kvale (1989) points out that data interpretation occurs, resulting in the emerging data being co-authored rather than being simply collected. As previously stated, once the interview participant exited the room, additional notes were recorded regarding the main points that emerged. It is important to take this time and initiate data analysis as the researcher has an onus to accurately depict the participants’ experience and interpret them accurately with integrity (Hackley, 2003). Building on this, Daymon and Holloway (2011) suggest that novice researchers typically tend to place too much time and emphasis on the literature review when conducting a research project. They argue that this emphasis would be better placed on the analysis and interpretation of research data, as it is during this stage that researchers tend to conceptualise their own creative insights into the meaning of the outcome of what was found.

The process of analysing data requires intellectual rigour and the researcher’s full attention (Patton, 1990). The aim of this activity is to evaluate the assumption, experience and relationships that shape and inform the research participant’s view of the research topic. This process is undertaken with a knowledge of what literature says and the contents of the interview itself (Piore, 1979). The researcher reviewed current literature and the contents of Chapter 2 multiple times throughout the process of interpreting data to help focus on the analysis of data and to review what was learned during the data collection process.

After the transcription process, initial reading and evaluation of the transcripts takes place. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) refer to this as data exploration and reduction. During this phase it is recommended that researchers take note of ideas that arise from reading the transcripts; to highlight diverging elements of data or to act as a prompt for problematic areas. Mintzberg (1979) categorises this as detective work where the research attempts to
extract themes and patterns (Carson et al., 2001). All of the interview transcripts were read and evaluated individually in a bid to retain contextual meaning, while interpretation across all the transcripts was essential in order to extrapolate the overarching themes (Thompson et al., 1989).

In line with the inductive approach applied to this research and to preserve the interpretive stance, the researcher allowed for themes, ideas and concepts to emerge from the data, rather than employing a prior coding system which involves prematurely finding and identifying data to fit into the codes (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). In this case, an open coding system process was identified as the appropriate approach in order to identify relevant experiences. An open coding system involves the researcher developing a deep understanding on not only the emerging data, but also the existing literature in order to make informed judgements about what is considered significant data (Carson et al., 2001). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) state that coding is an analysis strategy used to identify key themes, ideas, patterns and concepts that arise from research data. Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that coding is an important component of data analysis; one that affords researchers the ability to identify meaningful data and pave a foundation to interpret and draw conclusions. Hesse-Biber and Leavy further state that coding affords researchers the ability to identify “chunks” or “segments” (2006: 349) in the data and give each of these a code. In a previous publication, Miles and Huberman (1994) characterise such codes as labels for designating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information accumulated during a given study. Daymon and Holloway (2011) build on this stating that the purpose of these labels is to uncover and continually compare commonalities and differences in order to formulate and highlight categories of interest.

While discussing phenomenological research methods, Moustakas (1994) discusses the utilisation of open coding through horizontalization, whereby the possibilities for new discoveries of experiences occur with each correlation with the existing literature, which treating each phenomenon that emerges as having equal value. This was further enhanced using Doll’s (1993: 176) description of richness alluding to “layers of meaning...and multiple possibilities of interpretations”. Additionally, I used constant comparison to cultivate new categories or move data into existing categories where necessary, incorporating an iterative process of phenomenological reduction to reorganise data that were not classified as horizons.
of experience. Similarities can be found between this process and that described by Doll (1993) as recursive, whereby the research continuously returns to the horizon of experience to create new meaning.

The process of data analysis commenced with the researcher analysing the illustrative quotes while codifying and chunking as common key themes, analogies and concepts emerged. This stage was conducted on Microsoft Word and the researcher cut and pasted the data into a document where a clear structure to the research findings became apparent. Further progressing in this task, the document with the categories was then printed out and the researcher further analysed the document to identify subthemes by colour coding them as they arose with coloured pens. While colour coding the illustrative quotes, the subthemes were documented on a separate sheet to ensure consistency. This process resulted in many subthemes emerging with all of the relevant quotes assigned to the given subtheme. The themes and subthemes were then analysed in detail and the researcher then formed a collective understanding of the direction that the findings of this thesis would take.

By integrating phenomenological reduction with emergent complexity theory, new phenomena emerges (Gilstrap, 2007). The coding and thematic clustering of data did not happen in a single occurrence, which Osberg and Biesta (2004) would refer to as weak emergence. As I organised the themes and categories that arose, I returned and modified them with each addition in the process. Following on from this, these phenomena were developed into themes that span the breadth of experiential marketing narratives, affording the researcher the opportunity to document rich descriptions of shared meaning for the interpretive framework of this thesis, while still grounding it in the methodological frameworks of the main experiential marketing scholars.

Overall, the researcher agrees with McCracken’s (1998) view of the research process. He states that the exact approach to which a researcher will move from data observations, conclusions and scholarly assertion cannot be stated as there is not a prescribed approach. Therefore, the challenge is to comprehend the comprehensive amounts of data, reduce the amount of information, uncover significant patterns and generate a framework for communicating the outcome of the research project (Patton, 1990).
3.7 Summary of the Research Methodology
From the outset, this chapter has endeavoured to detail the nature of research and, within that realm of discussion, express the researcher’s own stance and substantiate the methodological decisions arrived at therein. It was highlighted that the researcher maintains the belief that reality is relative and is socially constructed, and uncovering the nature of that reality is entirely reliant on the involvement of the researcher, the research participants’ understanding of the research topic and their ability to make sense of and communicate their own reality.

This resulted in an interpretivist, inductive methodological framework. The adoption of this position is in line with the marketing domain where theory generation and the utilisation of emic data\(^2\) are essential to illustrating and interpreting the marketing landscape and the actions of consumers. By conducting research through the inductive approach, it allows for a continuously evolving framework where the research participants govern the direction of the research and where there is continual interaction between the researcher, the participants and the existing literature.

Through the use of semi-structured interviews, brand representatives who played an integral role in the implementation of an experiential campaign shared valuable contributions on the effective implementation of experiential marketing. These theoretical contributions which directly arose from the interviews resulted in the theoretical advancement of experiential marketing as outlined in the present research. This was notably advantageous in the context of the present study, as the research participants offered insight into the implementation of experiential marketing, an opportunity to probe to uncover key information pertaining to gaps in the current literature as discussed in Chapter 2, and spontaneity in the responses given. This research method generated rich data pertaining to peoples’ experiences, aspirations, opinions and feelings. This approach is in line with the interpretivist’s aim of identifying how people discern their experiences and make sense of their own frame of reference. The qualitative research methods applied afforded the researcher the ability to understand the responses, in context, which resulted in rich descriptive data.

\(^2\) Emic Data: Data deriving from the perspective of the research participant.
The researcher commenced each interview with an objective to uncover the modern marketing of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. This formed the basis of the semi-structured interview guide used through the interview process to ensure that all questions relating to the research objectives were asked and relevant information was collated. However, due to the interpretivist nature of the research, the researcher allowed the interview participants to shape the discussion, ensuring that each interview provided key information relating to the brand’s product category and the marketing culture in the company.

Analysis of the data that emerged from the interviews resulted in the use of an open-coding system, which was useful when extrapolating theory from the pool of data. These codes were then linked back to the research objectives the existing literature, true to an inductive approach.

Once the first interview finished, the data analysis process commenced and continued until the concluding interview was completed (Maxwell, 1997). Thus, a continual revaluation and refining of the data and emerging themes and codes proceeded, ensuring that excess data was not collected. This resulted in the researcher maintaining control of the research at hand, rather than “drowning in data” (Morse, 1998: 75).

Accordingly, the relationship between the researcher, the research subjects and the existing literature constantly evolved. The application of theory at disparate stages of this research is reflective of an inductive approach, allowing for theory pertaining to the practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector to emerge, while always remaining true to the researcher’s ontological and epistemological beliefs. Furthermore, a framework for the implementation and measurement of experiential activations in the FMCG sector emerged from the findings.

The following chapter presents the findings from these interviews.
Chapter 4
Research Findings & Analysis
Chapter 4
Research Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction
The primary objective of Chapter 4 is to present and synthesise the findings deriving from the interviews that were conducted with industry practitioners. As detailed in Chapter 3, this research is focused on the perspective of practitioners on the implementation of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. Section 4.2 presents the findings from the in-depth interviews conducted with industry practitioners who have been involved in the execution of an experiential marketing activation and therefore, can offer insight on the phenomenon in a professional capacity. Further to this, Chapter 5 will then analyse these research findings in the context of the literature review and the research objectives and will present the contributions deriving from this research study including the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model and the Return on Integrated Experience Formula.

4.2 The Practitioner Perspective: Findings from In-depth Interviews
Chapter 3 explored the purposive sampling approach adopted in order to analyse the perspective of marketing practitioners who have applied the practice of experiential marketing, therefore, offering insight into the phenomenon. The aim of the research is to analyse the knowledge of industry representatives who have been involved in experiential activations with a view to establishing an evaluation methodology. This accumulation of knowledge and insight into this marketing practice is of value to several divergent avenues, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The contents of each semi-structured interview were framed by the interview guide as previously discussed in Chapter 3 and illustrated in Appendix C. It is critical to reiterate that a phenomenological approach was adopted to the semi-structured interviews, meaning that the interview guide served to direct the discussion. Conversation threads which diverged from the prescribed discussion topics were allowed to resolve themselves while they occurred, in order to comply with the principles of the interpretive paradigm in which the research is positioned.

Therefore, the findings presented in the following sections are not in chronological order of when the questions were asked, but rather they are categorised according to the fundamental
issues raised by each research participant and arranged together thematically. The following themes and subthemes were identified through the analysis of the findings where the researcher coded the data. During this process, clear themes emerged.

Table 4.1 Themes Emerging from the In-depth Interviews

| Theme 1: There is a lack of consistency in how companies use/ design experiential marketing | Theme 2: There are difficulties in calculating the return on experiential marketing |
| Subtheme 1: Lack of Consistency in the Experiential Marketing Process | Subtheme 1: Difficulties in Calculating the Return on Experiential Marketing |
| Subtheme 2: Factors Driving the use of Experiential Marketing | Subtheme 2: ROI Vs ROE: Which is the Best Approach? |
| Subtheme 3: The Implementation Process of Experiential Marketing | Subtheme 3: Key Factors Leading to Experiential Success |
| Subtheme 4: Effective Budget Allocation for the Practice of Experiential Marketing | Subtheme 4: The Process of Evaluating the Outcome of Experiential Marketing |
| Subtheme 5: Internal Vs External Experiential Marketing Activations | |
| Subtheme 6: The Digital Amplification Process: A Time Phase Approach | |
| Subtheme 7: Experiential Marketing and Responsive Target Markets | |
| Subtheme 8: Experiential Marketing and the Product Lifecycle | |

Emerging from the analysis of the in-depth interviews, the first theme represents findings related to the differing approaches as to how brands utilise experiential marketing. The strategic utilisation of experiential activations in order to successfully execute and analyse an experiential marketing activation is a fundamental consideration regarding the present research. Therefore, the following thematic discussions presented in this chapter encompass multiple issues and findings, as depicted in Table 4.1. Each interview conducted included a detailed discussion relating to the issues concerned with the application of experiential marketing. The emerging findings are presented next in Section 4.2.1.
4.2.1 Lack of Consistency in the Experiential Marketing Processes

Resulting from the in-depth evaluation of the interviews, multiple subsets of thematic discussion emerged. In order to present the findings in a logical manner, each subset of findings will be presented individually while allowing for overarching ideas and themes to emerge.

4.2.1.1 Experiential Marketing and Brand Consistency

When discussing the strategic mechanism of creating a successful experiential activation, a consistent theme that arose was the importance of integrating an experiential activation with an overarching marketing campaign. In line with the findings of Smilansky (2009), many participants agreed that in order for experiential marketing to offer the optimal return for a brand, it must be integrated into the larger marketing strategy.

*It is always integrated. I don’t think that we have ever done experiential without putting up generic point of sale alongside it and weaving it into a larger campaign. The experiential is always dictated by the campaign. (Coca Cola, Experiential Execution Excellence Manager)*

By employing multiple communications tools and strategically combining them, brands have the ability to amplify a brand message through the application of multiple touchpoints (Keller, 2016).

*I think even if you do an incredible experiential, be it in Dublin city centre or where ever it is, even if it is something totally mad that people love, you are not going to get the reach to impact enough people to change your brand performance without using traditional media channels. For me, it is all around creating something with a really good idea but blasting it out through every channel possible. (Denny Meats, Marketing Manager)*

*I think you have to integrate them to get the most out of the money that you put in and the effort you put in on the ground. I think that if you are doing something that you want to alert people to, you have to tell them in advance and the easiest way to do that is digital marketing. (Ballymaloe Foods, Sales and Marketing Manager)*
I think having it fully integrated into the comms plan\(^3\) to drive scale around it is the right way to go. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

Although the majority of research participants identify with the importance of integrated marketing communications, a key finding that emerged was that although experiential marketing may not be a chosen communications mechanism in an integrated marketing campaign from the outset, on occasions where opportunities arise, brands may need to utilise experiential marketing as the campaign develops to effectively immerse consumers in the brand. Upon analysis of the interviews, this observation was representative of two thirds of the participating brands. For example;

Now and again we might do sampling on its own, for example, if we saw a lapse in people not buying our product and we need to reengage with them. (Nestle Cereals, Shopper Activation Manager)

Although experiential marketing can be used as a central component of an integrated marketing plan, this research identified that it also has the ability to be used purely as an engagement tool to maintain or regain mind or market share in a reactive approach. However, it is important to note that experiential marketing should always be used in a controlled and structured manner where there is a consistent brand message in line with the brand plan. The alternative approaches to using experiential marketing outside of a planned communications campaign will be further discussed next.

An example of the utilization of experiential marketing outside of an integrated marketing campaign is industry events. These are not typically hosted by the showcasing brand but by an event organiser. Experiential activations used in this scenario pose difficulties as the brand does not hold as much control given that they are not hosting the event. However, it is still critical that the experiential activation is in sync with the central brand communications message.

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\(^3\) Comms Plan: Abbreviation for Communications Plan
We have used it as a standalone tool for some campaigns where we don’t have the budget to go above the line. For launching some NPD\(^4\), we might look at going to different events around the country where it is more cost effective. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

As discussed in this section to date, integration of communications is not always a universal approach as experiential marketing can meet many campaign objectives. Emerging from this research, an additional priority has been brought to light. Although experiential marketing should be practiced as a planned component of an experiential marketing campaign, this is not always the case. When brands employ experiential marketing outside of a planned marketing campaign, it is important that brands identify with the importance of communicating a marketing message that is in line with the present marketing campaign. This introduces a key finding of this research; although it is important for brands to use experiential marketing in an integrated approach, this is not always how it is used in marketing practice. This research identifies that when brands plan an experiential activation outside of the outlined campaign, they must ensure that the core purpose, campaign objective and messaging ties in with the coinciding brand messaging for the integrated campaign which is being activated.

Often, they [communications tools] don’t integrate as such but what you should be doing is making sure that you have a consistent message and you will only really get to that if you are clear on the brand proposition. For example, Brand\(^X\), at the same time as having an experiential, we had an outdoor and a TV campaign that had the sour then sweet tagline. So, although it was not the exact messaging it complimented it. When I worked at Brand\(^X\), we used to say, it is not matching luggage; it’s not the exact same but the core premise and ideas are the same. Yes, you should be using them at the same time to have a compound effect and the awareness, but they don’t necessarily have to be the exact same message. (Sparking Ice, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

Brands must critically analyse experiential marketing and distinctly identify the purpose of an activation and ensure that it ties in with the brand messaging. Regardless of whether

\(^4\) NPD: New Product Development
\(^5\) Anonymising the brand name for confidentiality purposes
\(^6\) Anonymising the brand name for confidentiality purposes
experiential marketing is being used as a component of an integrated approach or otherwise, brand consistency should be the primary concern for a marketer.

Captain Birdseye [the brand mascot] is hosting [an experiential activation] and will immediately tap into all those memory structures that customers have in terms of the recognisability of the brand and the distinctiveness of the brand. I think if you have distinctive brand assets, be it your logo of your symbols like the captain representative kind of imagery you need to use that as much as you can. Language as well, language must be consistent with what is on other platforms on other channels. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

It is essential that the campaign that is being executed has close affinities to the memory structures that have been previously built through strategy, marketing campaigns and brand activations in the past. As stated by Sharp (2010: 132) “It is only when there is discipline in this consistency that distinctive brand assets build”.

The series of quotes presented in this section express a collective mind set among industry practitioners concerning the importance of integration in the modern practice of experiential marketing. All participants unanimously agreed that there has to be a strategic approach adopted when utilising experiential marketing activations. This involves the development of brand structures and the creation of narratives/ marketing campaigns around them.

To reiterate, although experiential marketing is commonly employed as a planned component of an integrated marketing campaign, it can also be used as a reactive technique to respond to brand concerns, or at industry events where the brand is not fully in control of the activation, but it still ties in with the overarching brand messaging and narratives. If the branding and key messaging is consistent with the core values of the brand, strong brand resonance will be built. Acknowledging this, the following section explores the multitude of factors driving the use of experiential marketing by brands within the research pool.

4.2.1.2 Factors Driving the use of Experiential Marketing

Building on the previously presented findings, the following section explores the factors driving the use of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. When questioned on the relevance of experiential marketing in modern marketing practice, all participants indicated an explicit requirement for the practice. Brands including Fire and Smoke Meats stated that by using experiential marketing over some traditional marketing counterparts, they are in a
position to be nimbler and to create more authentic interactions with their customer base and brand communities. Developing on this observation, a key finding shared in the PWC Retail and Consumer Report was that there has been a change in power and autonomies where “the power has very much shifted from those who make and sell products to the consumers who buy them” (Dillon and McFeely, 2018: 2). The sentiment behind the aforementioned quote by Dillon and McFeely (2018), is clearly shared in the following quote.

But with something like this [experiential marketing] you can be a lot nimbler which allows you to reach people and have a conversation with them in a real time way which is how people want to interact with brands. They don’t want to interact with brands where they see the same ad a million times over and over again, it needs to be nimbler because that is the way people want to live their lives as well. (Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)

Although the utilisation of experiential marketing is predominantly driven by consumer demand, research participants identify a benefit to utilising the practice and are satisfied with this marketing direction.

I think for me the idea of driving a behavioural change, getting consumers to do something and immersing them in your brand is really valuable. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

With experiential marketing, one of the key things that it does is it helps with trying to build that emotional connection with people and the brand. We know from research that it depends on the category and it depends on the brand. It is not the same for all products. If you look at something like alcohol or food, over half of the brand power, what makes people purchase a brand, is driven by emotional engagement. We know that if we can establish that strong emotional tie, we are much more likely to get picked up. (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)

It is now about the experience and what you can connect to the brand and having that memorable experience. It is about connecting a memory, a tangible kind of emotional feeling with the brand, along with sampling the brand if it is a new brand for example. It is a memorable experience really, that is how I would define experiential marketing. Also, you are tasting, touching and feeling the brand. (Fruit Shoot, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Consumers, they love experiencing things, they love being rewarded, they love being made special or being made part of something and particularly where it is really relevant to them at that point in time. (Ben & Jerry’s, Head of Marketing)
The core common denominator among the above quotes is that although consumers have created demand for brands to utilise experiential marketing, brands feel that they, along with the consumer, benefit from the practice as it builds brand love and awareness. However, despite the predominant view of the practice been driven by the evolving needs and wants of consumers; this research has found that this practice is also influenced by industry competition.

*I think that the pressure is on to deliver more cut through experiential because more people are doing it. Also, your competition is not just your own category, it is the likes of other categories doing other things like Cadbury. That raises consumers expectations and then if you do it, you have to make sure that you are delivering on that expectation.* (Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)

*What we are seeing within that is, we have a lot of big global brands and we are being attacked from all sides from smaller more nimble competitors. They are not going in and running huge TV advertising campaigns, they are being really adept through digital, through social and through experiential marketing to get to their core target audiences and build it from there and build as rapidly as they can.* (Lyon’s Tea, Head of Marketing)

Driven by these influences and objectives, there is a multitude of ways that brands can activate this marketing practice. However, each campaign must be crafted individually due to differing brand and campaign objectives.

*We would create experiences that align with the personality of the brand. Carling is our football brand if you want to call it that, Molson Canadian is more kind of life experience with action and adventure; a Tough Mudder\(^7\), sort of outdoorsy, more activity focused brand. Franciscan Well, well we have associated this a lot with food experience, Archway Larger which we have just launched will be across food, music and culture.* (Miller, Customer Marketing Manager)

*For Coke we are quite lucky because we are on a world stage and we have massive sponsorships. So, for example, this summer it will be around the Fifa World Cup and obviously, experiential is going to be connected to football. Then at Christmas you have the whole Santa Claus experience*

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\(^7\) Tough Mudder is an endurance event series in which participants attempt 10–12-mile-long obstacle courses that test mental and physical strength.
with the trucks and that does come to play every year so that ticks that box. Then if you look at Schweppes which is completely different, we do tasting events and experientials around the garnish walls at pubs. (Coca Cola, Experiential Execution Excellence Manager)

With this in mind, the most commonly utilised method of experiential marketing was experiential event marketing with every research participant referring to it in their interview. 

I think sometimes that events are probably better because people are probably in the mindset that they are not working and ready to chill and they have chosen to be there rather than somebody whamming a green tea down their face because they are running to get their lunch. (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)

Research to date views experiential event marketing as “a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company’s marketing messages by involving the target groups in experiential activity” (Drenger et al., 2008: 138), and focuses on its ability to create authentic experiences that generate high levels of audience engagement (Tafasse, 2016). However, although the outcome is clear, the mechanics of delivering this result has not been adequately represented in academic research. A key factor that results in the successful outcome of an activation of such sorts, is the effective utilisation of sampling to enhance an experiential marketing activation. When questioned on the return to the brand of experiential event marketing, respondents primarily focused on the importance of incorporating sampling into an experiential marketing event to yield a high return. Two methods of sampling were prevalent; instore sampling and external activations with each sampling format leading to a different use. A brands selection of either instore sampling or external activation is typically influenced by the campaign objective and the available budget allocation.

You always start from the store back so if you can only invest in one thing you invest closest to the point of purchase as possible. If you are doing in store sampling that is kind of the bread and butter, the core of it, but when you get to the scale that you can afford to invest more, you would still keep the instore stuff but bulk up more on the experiential which is probably more out of store sampling. You can do things in the likes of a car park with the Sparking Ice truck. If you can then add more on from there, it would be the likes of Taste of Dublin 8 and those events where you can

8 Taste of Dublin is an annual food and drink festival that takes place in Iveagh Gardens, Dublin.
have a broader presence, be more creative and engage more with consumers on a broader basis.

(Sparkling Ice, Healthy Beverages & Snacks Marketing Manager)

Considering FMCG products have risk attached to the product in the eyes of the consumer, as you cannot test it before purchasing it, sampling reduces the perceived risk. Therefore, while allowing the consumer to participate in a brand activation and develop a relationship with it, it is important to enhance that moment by allowing the customer to test the product. This must act as an extension to the activation. Interview participants discussed different methods of doing this. Although a common method was to give away full products, there can be downfalls to this as people will not go instore and immediately buy the product as they already have it in a substantial quantity. By offering a small sample, it allows people to test the product, decide if they like it, mitigate the attached risk and then purchase it if satisfied. However, sampling methods do differ according to products, in particular when sampling condiments.

We have also moved away from the kind of small standard little taster, we tend to try and do half a hamburger that we give away or a full meal because we want consumers to really engage with our product, learn about the product, really taste the product and really understand what we are doing. So, for us we feel that the sampling part works well, and we are obviously a food company as well so at the end of the day, we need to make sure that consumers are tasting our product on a host food. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

Therefore, from the outset, it is essential for a brand to have a defined campaign objective and strategy to ensure that the experiential activation, and in particular in this case, the sampling technique, is relevant to the brand, the experiential activation and how the product is consumed. This observation can also be extended to the selection of the location of an experiential activation. For the activation to directly penetrate a specific target market, the brand must make sure that they are in the right place, at the right time. By ensuring this, a brand can reinforce the brand ethos and usage situation.

Personally, I feel that if you are in a place where people are more at a disposition to engage with your brand, then fantastic. You must understand what role you are playing at the event, the relevancy of it for your brand and the importance of creating a memorable experience for the consumers. We have all seen brands in the middle of main street or wherever they are just handing out samples. That it just very random versus I've just finished a race and a Lucozade
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brand, or an energy bar brand is there, and the product is meeting my needs in that moment in time. Then that fits and the consumers understand why they are sampling that product in that moment in time. (Breyers Ice-cream, Head of Marketing)

Resulting from this, it is evident that sampling plays a significant role in experiential marketing with 41 of the brands profiled referred to the practice and deem it to be their preferred way of ensuring that the activation yields a return. Traditionally, experiential marketing focuses on the experience at hand. Pine and Gilmore (1999: 2) conclude that “when one buys an experience, one buys a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way”. Wolf (1999), who has also referred to experiential marketing as the *entertainment economy*, states that “it’s about stories that move us; characters we can root for, ideas that transform the cultural landscape, special effects that take us to a world we’ve never seen before, situations and lines that make us laugh, and ideas that are universal, they forever change the way we live” (1999: 295). However, these definitions do not fully explain the benefits and return of experiential marketing as seen in the current research. Although experiential marketing does offer a source of engaging entertainment for the customer, this is not the core objective of the practice, nor the primary reason for its success. This is achieved through sampling. According to the findings from the interviewees, through sampling, experiential marketing (i) allows the consumer to reduce the risk of purchase (ii) allows the brand to conduct market research and (iii) allow consumers build memory structures and develop brand recall. This constitutes a major finding in this research, pertaining to the importance of sampling in FMCG experiential marketing activations. Findings from Section 4.2.1.8 will further complement this emerging perspective on experiential marketing.

Although the use of experiential event marketing generated much conversation, it is of great importance to note that brands use experiential marketing in many other aspects of the business including customer experience, instore flow and layout, point of sale communications and email marketing.

*I do think also that your experience does not have to be a physical experience, it can be something that you experience online, almost a virtual experience. But it must feel relevant to you as a consumer. If you can give them something, not even something physical but an experience, there*
has got to be value in that. Experiential marketing is so broad there are different activities for each market. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

One of the principles of how we approach experiential marketing is that we do not only do it on physical things. We like to focus on how you talk to people over email for example. For us, that is an experience. There are sentiment, feelings and personality that we want to get across to the person that we are talking to. All of this is done by the tone of voice, it is always friendly, always open and we always put it in a way that we come across as your friend and that we are here to help you. This creates an experience. (Strong Roots, Marketing Manager)

As outlined by the research participants experiential marketing is a valued communications tool by both brands and consumers alike. The predominant reasons that were shared by research participants are as follows:

- It allows brands to be nimbler, an action which is not afforded to them with other methods of communications;
- It drives behavioural change by generating brand love and awareness;
- It affords brands the opportunity to stage authentic interactions with their target market, which inevitably immerses them into the brands culture, essence and ethos;
- It builds emotional connections and bonds between brands and their customers; and,
- It creates memorable experiences which in turn, build memory structures and brand recall.

Although there are a multitude of methods of employing experiential marketing, the most common application is experiential event marketing. This observation shaped the findings to follow and the focus of the research findings. The interviews portrayed that the use of experiential marketing is employed in many facets of their business, and this reflects the fact that experiential marketing is a fluid practice as depicted in the multiple categories of experiential marketing definitions in Section 2.3.3. Building on this, the next section discusses the process in which experiential marketing is implemented.

4.2.1.3 The Implementation Process of Experiential Marketing

Throughout the interviews, participants alluded to a specific process of activating experiential marketing. Key authors who have contributed to the theoretical development of the research topic have not investigated the practice in this way to date. However, deriving from the set
objectives, a key finding from the present research relates to the importance of strategically timing the use of experiential marketing according to the application of a brand campaign or rebrand in order for a brand to reap the reward of investing in this type of marketing activation. Although as stated by Smilansky (2009), experiential marketing should not be used in isolation, more importantly as earlier identified (Section 4.2.1.1), this research suggests that not only should it not be used in isolation, it should not be used without the support of traditional marketing activities throughout the lifespan of the campaign. This is primarily due to the fact that it does not have the ability to communicate key messages in a controlled manner. Experiential marketing must not be used in isolation at the beginning of the lifecycle of the marketing campaign, but preferably after the utilisation of traditional marketing activities. These are key findings deriving from the analysis of the interviews with seventeen of the profiled brands and accounts for significant contributions towards the theoretical development of experiential marketing.

So, I think in terms of a new brand campaign, I would probably take the direction still of traditional marketing tools, but I see opportunity in the next stage of execution of that campaign being experiential. I suppose experiential gives you the opportunity to flesh something out and engage with your audience at a closer proximity than TV or outdoor could ever do. But, for a new campaign I still think that you need TV or outdoor for everyone to see it and that is important for awareness. To further get your key messages out there, what you can do from an experiential point of view is really engage with people and have fun with it to get more cut through. I think what experiential marketing does, is it gets cut through and that is so important in the FMCG market when there is so much going on and it is really competitive. (Flahavan’s, Brand Manager)

We are actually repositioning really soon and that will hit the market in May/June time. So, I would say in the short term while we are positioning the brand, the type of content that I want people consuming is probably that TV ad polished content, that is 100% on brand throughout. It explains our values and what the brand is and stands for. The role of experiential here will probably grow over time. Once people know what the brand stands for, we can then, not compromising on delivery, but doing experiential where you are not always totally in control on the message because it is in the hands of PR etc. Over time it will, but for me it is important to get the fundamentals of your brand right on big channels like TV and radio, all of your signed off one-way content and then once people know your brand, experiential can have a great role in building it and adding in a little bit of a personality. (Denny Meats, Marketing Manager)
This suggests that it is in a brand’s best interest to build a clear foundation through traditional brand building methods so that when experiential marketing is employed, the target market is already aware of the brand. This increases the possibility of enhanced message penetration with the target market and consumer tribes. However, although traditional marketing should be utilised in advance of experiential marketing, once the basic brand message has been disseminated, experiential marketing can bring the brand to life in a new dimension.

But then, how you drive that to get the maximum benefit around the subtle messages that are difficult to communicate and elaborate on with above the line media like TV, radio or outdoor or any of those traditional media, that is where the experience comes in similar to digital. You can expand on those subtle messages. So, for example, we use our simply made messaging in the ad but that is not enough to explain it. So, the experiential side of it, along with social and digital gives us the opportunity to expand on that message and really help consumers to understand and make it compelling for them. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

In order to create an experiential campaign that adds a new dimension of consumer interaction to the brand, marketers must be clear on the objective of the campaign at hand and then, decide the reach mechanism which accomplishes the campaign objectives. Deriving from the analysis of the interviews, a key finding that came to light suggests that experiential marketing can be categorised in two dominant reach mechanisms: 1) an experiential activation for a small amount of people that is amplified extensively, or 2) a mass marketing experiential activation where a brand interacts with as many consumers as possible.

For me there are two different ways you can go about experiential and this was very much at the forefront of my mind when I was creating the Pitmaster Academy. You either create an event that hits a small number of people but has a really clever idea and you amplify the crap out of it or you pick an idea that will get lots of people to go to the experiential, so loads of people going through the doors. (Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)

Let’s say for Coke, at Christmas you have the whole Santa Claus experience with the trucks and that is created to interact with as many customers as possible. Then if you look at Schweppes, we do tasting events and experientials around the garnish walls at pubs. We have a number of garnish walls that travel around the country and sometimes we would offer a free gin and tonic and sometimes the bar owner themselves don’t want to offer a free product so we would subsidise a gin and tonic and they get to go to the garnish wall and choose their own garnish that they
Another key observation that arose from the analysis of the in-depth interviews was on the utilisation of technology in experiential marketing activity. As previously discussed and mentioned in the literature review, the use of augmented reality (AR) was predicted to increase in utilisation levels as it adds an incremental layer onto real-world experiences and allows a participant decide how involved they want to be in an experiential activation (Zaveri and Amin, 2019; Arrigo et al., 2016; Event Marketing Institute, 2015). This observation was not prevalent in the interviews conducted with the industry professionals. In fact, there are two predominant barriers which impede its utilisation which will be discussed in more detail next.

Firstly, a key barrier to utilisation of AR is the cost to implement it. For augmented reality to be employed as a component of an experiential activation, substantial investment is required. This investment is twofold; there is the initial investment in the AR technology and also in the additional cost of amplification when it is not a shared experience but an individual experience.

Yes, we did actually look into AR for this micro volunteering event. It was a way of bringing the experience on to pack. Not necessarily part of the actual experience, but a way of amplifying the experience. In the end we did not do it, it was more of a content creation thing versus the cost of it. (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)

We actually have thought of using them, there was a campaign that one of our agencies had worked on for beans where we were looking at creating AR. When we reviewed the cost and everything that we had looked at we felt that maybe it was just too soon to use it. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

Another key barrier which is pertinent to FMCG food and beverage brands, is that by creating the experience virtually it removes the taste element of the experience. For food and beverage brands, this proves to be a key obstacle when the core premise of them employing experiential marketing is to appeal to the senses (Schmitt, 2000).
I suppose our brands are more about sensory experiences as people want to eat them rather than
the likes of watching a video about them. We have looked at it and looked into what we can do
from a point of purchase instore as well, it is just another way of bringing the message to life. It
is quite expensive for the return that we would get. (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)

There is no way that you can experience virtual reality in a sensory way. For us, we might stay
away from virtual reality and have people have a taste of our products and take a bite out of
them. We are not against it, but it just has to make sense with what we do. (Strong Roots,
Marketing Manager)

By using technology like AR and VR\(^9\) you are losing the tangible thing that is so important.
(MiWadi, Family & Kids Marketing Manager)

Consequently, this research suggests that although the use of technology may be increasing
in other industries, this observation is not prevalent in the FMCG industry. Brands of this
nature are more interested in creating tangible, engaging, and sharable experiences rather
than ones that would involve customers imagining what something would be like to taste,
feel or touch a product of this nature.

Equipped with this new contribution enriching academic theory on experiential marketing,
academics and marketing practitioners alike can expand their knowledge on the topic and
ensure that experiences are effectively implemented and capitalised on. In summary, for
experiential to be successful, the brand infrastructure and key messaging must already have
been established and disseminated. Experiential marketing should not be utilised unless a
brand has a healthy level of brand penetration and consumers are aware of the brand that
they are interacting with. Through this staged interaction, consumers then build a deeper
understanding of the brand due to their immersion into the brand values as previously
discussed (Section 4.2.1.1). The relationship between traditional and experiential marketing
will further be discussed in the following section, in line with the budget allocation of these
two core elements of a modern marketing campaign.

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\(^9\) VR: Virtual Reality
4.2.1.4 Effective Budget Allocation for the Practice of Experiential Marketing

A topic which has garnered much academic attention in recent years is the optimal allocation of financial resources to marketing budgets (Agency EA, 2019; Alon et al., 2012; Huang, 2012; Berger and Bechwati, 2001; Fischer et al., 2011). However, it is essential to note that experiential marketing budget allocation has not been efficiently researched to date to uncover the optimal process. Through the research process, it became clear that despite the fact that research participants state that experiential marketing is imperative in modern marketing practice, a slight contradiction arose to this point when the topic of budget allocation was discussed. As illustrated in the following quotes from the semi-structured interviews, traditional and mass market communications are prioritised, and remaining funds are typically allocated towards experiential activations.

We look at point of sale, how much point of sale is going to be, and if we can afford an experiential at that end of it, that is how it would go, and we just see what happens. But, what tends to happen is that the budgets tend to be cannibalised because we do place a lot of importance on just activating the campaigns, but you do need your standard point of sale kit, FSDUs\(^{10}\), posters, wobblers, barker cards, the list goes on. (Monster Energy, Experiential Execution Excellence Manager)

There is a lot that would come before experiential in budget allocation. If we have enough budget, we will do experiential. Instore POS, secondary siting, FSDUs and online tend to come first, then experiential would be done if we have the budget. (Purina, Shopper Activation Manager)

There would not be a distinct experiential allocation. It comes out of the overall brand budget and would be funded from within that. The experiential supports the brand campaign rather than trying to find ways to execute experiential. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

We would look at what assets are available to us from a media point of view, we would then identify the spend that we need in order for us to hit the metric that is set for us in terms of awareness. Then we would look at the spend in the budgets for the activation and look at what is left over that can be set aside for experiential, social, PR and all of that. It is not a case of where we have a possible budget that we will have specific allocations. It is more around an objective

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\(^{10}\) FSDU: Free Standing Display Unit: These are standalone display units that would be used instore to display product with key messaging on the unit relating to a specific campaign or promotion.
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where we need to hit a certain coverage for a media perspective and then we revisit the budget after that and see what is available to us in terms of experiential and all of that. (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)

However, although research participants clearly stated that experiential marketing is not a leading method in modern marketing, they all appreciate its ability to build genuine and engaging communication channels with their target market and therefore, do see value in employing it in an IMC plan. This is reflected in the average budget allocation which has been identified in the interviews in the current research, where it is allocated somewhere in the range of 10 – 40% of the total campaign budget, depending on the marketing campaign and its specific objectives. This finding contradicts the view of Wood (2009) and Event View (2006) where research led to the belief that organisations are reallocating the majority of their budget from traditional marketing methods to experiential activations. Evidently, according to this research, brands are not reallocating their funds towards experiential activation, but rather are using experiential marketing as an additional way to communicate and build authentic connections with consumers.

The following quotes, as presented in Table 4.2, offer an insight into how brands are allocating budgetary funds towards experiential marketing.

Table 4.2 Commentary on Experiential Budget Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Commentary on Experiential Budget Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heinz</td>
<td>We are obviously a food brand as well, so I think when it comes to a food brand it is really important for consumers to actually interact with your product and taste your product. For us, it could sometimes be 40% ATL\textsuperscript{11} and 60% BTL\textsuperscript{12}.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{11} ATL is an abbreviation for ‘Above the Line’ Advertising. ATL is when brands use mass media to promote a product or service through media such as television, radio, out of home advertising etc.

\textsuperscript{12} BTL is an abbreviation for ‘Below the Line’ Advertising. BTL is when brands use other forms of advertising outside of the tradition mass media methods. This typically includes experiential marketing, direct mail marketing, tradeshows etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heineken</td>
<td>If it is a NPD, an XP stunt for awareness, or an XP in individual stores, it would probably get a weighting of around 30% and then after that [when a product is not classified as NPD anymore] it would probably be slightly less at 20%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle</td>
<td>It is kind of hard to say how we would divide it, but experiential would be significantly smaller, less than 10% I’d say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribena</td>
<td>Ribena would actually be far more socially driven and for this brand the experiential budget for this year will be as high as 40/45% and that is what drives Ribena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucozade</td>
<td>With a newer product, it is harder to bring that above the line, so it is all about the experience. But, even for the established brands like Lucozade Energy, about 15% of the budget will be going towards experiential this year which would be quite low for experiential, but actually, last year would have been higher and it will go higher again next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfil</td>
<td>That is a lot of what we are working on at the moment and experiential is a good 30-40% of that, it is huge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Roots</td>
<td>We would see online as being part of our traditional marketing. I think it would be 40% experiential and 60% traditional. We like to have really rich content to support traditional marketing and experiential has played a key part of the strategy since the very beginning. It really is how people got to know us. We do spend a lot of tastings and being at events with the food truck as part of our brand activations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flahavan’s</td>
<td>Traditional media is more expensive, so it would still take up a chunk of our spend. But, then the thing is with experiential, PR and social media, it is a smaller budget which you may often use for smaller products within your portfolio to get a big return in terms of reach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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13 NPD: New Product Development
14 XP: An abbreviation for experiential marketing
and engagement and all of those KPIs. We would use a lot of budget also to support our entire portfolio. I would say it is still about 60% traditional, 40% experiential without the exact information at hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruit Shoot</th>
<th>If I look at the family and kids budget this year, I would say that experiential would be around 10% of the overall budget, but that could be very different next year, it could go up to around 30%.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propercorn</td>
<td>I think that depends on the size of the budget. Say for example, if you had €1 million, you might say that you want 30% experiential and 70% ATL, but the smaller your budget, the harder it is to keep the same split. You want to make sure that you get to a big enough scale with any one advertising medium before you move onto the next one. It is not like you have the same percentage split for every brand or every size of budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>It shifts and moves across the other brands and it really comes back to the jobs to be done. On some brands it could be as much as 70/30 and visa versa. Take Lynx last year, we actually took most of our budget away from traditional media and put it into this experiential campaign and we amplified in a completely different way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayto</td>
<td>I suppose it depends on if you include Tayto Park on as experiential or not. If you do include it, it would be 40% experiential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important finding which arose during the analysis of the content of Table 4.1 was that these brands do not have a structured approach to how they allocate their budgets for marketing campaigns but rather base their decisions solely on the campaign objective. Alternatively, other companies who took part in this research employed a different approach, where some companies employed a uniformed budget approach across the marketing expenditure for all of their brands. Upon analysis of this finding, this research finds that brands should aim to structure their marketing spend in order to optimise the outcome and the return on the investment.

*We have a policy here in Kerry where we use the 70/20/10 rule. So, we use 70% media that is completely tried and tested which is typically TV where we know we can deliver x amount of*
To conclude, experiential marketing evidently plays a part in modern integrated marketing communications. Although it does not account for the majority of marketing spend, it is still an essential communication tool due to its ability to facilitate authentic and memorable interactions between brands and consumers. Deriving from this research, the optimal budget allocation of experiential is between 10-40%. The exact allocation of budgetary funds will derive from the set campaign objectives and KPIs. Depending on how prominent a role that experiential marketing will be required to play in an IMC campaign, the allocation will be at the higher end of this percentile range if experiential is a main component of the campaign or at the latter end if it is a supporting communications tool. However, it is also worth noting that both companies and brands should identify a uniformed budgetary approach where they identify how budgets should be allocated towards integrated marketing campaigns. Evolving this key finding, Section 4.2.1.5 evaluates the relevance of locations of experiential activity in modern marketing practice.

4.2.1.5 Internal Versus External Experiential Marketing Activations
Enhancing the conceptualisation of the application of experiential activities in modern day marketing practice, research participants commonly alluded to methods of conducting experiential activations, predominately categorised as 1) internal experiential activations and 2) external experiential activations. Internal experiential activations refer to experiential activity that is confined within a retail outlet and its external counterpart refers to experiential activity that happens in alternative environments including carparks, festivals, events and public places. Although the effectiveness of the location of experiential marketing activations has not been a predominant focus in academic literature, this topic was a prominent theme that arose from the interviews, and therefore, further reasoning was required to investigate the critical nature of location analysis in experiential marketing. Different perspectives of these two themes arose throughout the interview process.

For brands that prioritised external experiential activations over its internal counterpart, there was an overwhelming response as to why. A predominant reason which arose from
discussions on this topic was the lack of control that brands have when activating instore experiential marketing.

Where you may have a brand and you want to portray it in a certain kind of way, you may not have control on the look and feel of the brand in a particular retail outlet because of the agency that they use. (Ben & Jerry’s, Head of Marketing)

You are also limited space wise. You really only have a small amount of space in that aisle, the store manager does not want you to take up space. (MiWadi, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Instore sampling can be quite a challenge because you want your brand to come across in the best way possible and quite often when it is instore sampling you have to use the staff of the retailer. So therefore, you cannot often profile the staff and make sure they are in line with your own brand. Often you cannot provide your own stands, it is a case of them providing a standard stand. Quite often the execution instore in retail is not as good as if you did it yourself. So that is why a lot of people opt for carpark sampling because then you can have the whole bells and whistles which can be incredibly expensive. You have to balance do I want consumer sampling, or do I want to support the retailer, and often there is a compromise there. (Sparkling Ice, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

You really have no control of who is going to walk into the store that day. You don’t even know that the person that you are sampling is your consumer or your shopper, in fact, they can be two completely different people. Our Breyers shopper and consumer can be different consumers on that particular day and then you need a different message depending on the person that you are talking to. (Breyers Ice Cream, Head of Marketing)

Although the lack of control in retail outlets presents difficulties for brands, there are other key issues which must also be addressed. Depending on the key performance indicators which measure the success of a marketing campaign, this research suggests that instore activations tend to under-deliver on brand health and awareness metrics according to the interviews conducted. The following quotes from interviews with research participants present the benefit of exclusively having experiential events that are not instore but typically on a larger scale externally.

I would say for brand health building, external. It is so difficult to get it the way you want it to go in store. (Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)
I would say experiential events are more effective. Personally, I feel that if you are in a place where people are more at a disposition to engage with your brand, then fantastic. You must understand what role you are playing at the event, the relevancy of it for your brand and the importance of creating a memorable experience for the consumers. (Lynx, Head of Marketing)

Instore we stay away from. We have done it and everything, but I suppose experiential has led us down the path where we know that big events suit us. We know that it gives us coverage, content and a huge platform to speak to masses. (Barry’s Tea, Marketing Manager)

This research finds that for brands who exclusively activate experiential marketing outside the setting of a retail outlet, it is essential that they develop a clear call to action which directs a participant to their nearest store to purchase the product. Without this, experiential marketing is merely an overpriced entertainment endeavour.

If you want something that is really about brand immersion, it is hard to do that instore because you can be kind of limited on how you can execute that. The Hyde Park Marathon example [sponsorship of the Hyde Park Marathon] that I gave you is obviously a long way from the stores, but I think that it is really important to have what we call ‘closing links’ in the sale. There is always something as part of your activity that brings it back to trying to get a sale. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

As discussed, there is an apparent disposition by certain brands to favour external experiential marketing activations. However, some brands offered a contrasting perspective on their preference. Although instore activations may present some issues for brands, they also can bring a brand to life on a smaller, more economical scale. In addition to this, it has a clear call to action with an evident correlation with sales.

Instore works for us. This is because it has been at the moment of truth where the person would have the opportunity to experience the brand and taste the product, but also buy it. Based on what we spend at tastings, promotions are also a way for us to say, ‘look at this’ and the return is always bigger than another activity. (Strong Roots, Marketing Manager)

I think that the life stage [growth phase] that a lot of our brands are at, instore sampling has the best return and that is because it has a double effect; you are getting product and communication with consumers, but you are also demonstrating to retailers that you are supporting them. (Propercorn, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)
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I guess when you are instore sampling, you can have an experience, but it is usually at a smaller scale that can have an effect there and then because of that, 7 out of 10 consumers will actually pick up your product if they have the opportunity to try it instore. So, it can actually help being at the point of purchase. (Fruit Shoot, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Another benefit of conducting instore activations is the association that is built with that retail outlet and the memory structures that can be attached to that activity. Research conducted by Rao et al. (1999) suggest that when a lesser known brand is partnered with an established one, shoppers extend their associations of the known brand with the lesser known brand. By featuring the brand in a retail outlet through an experiential activation, it increases the shoppers familiarity with the brand and reduces the perceptual threshold, making the brands easier to process and recall (Pechmann and Stewart, 1990; Guerreiro et al., 2015), therefore building memory structures.

Even with the Taste Challenge\textsuperscript{15}, we will be doing it in retail outlets but while making sure that you have those memory structures. We will have POS in the aisle to remind them again and there will be digital screens instore as well. It is all about us trying to get that level of connection as well and as much as you can, while being as close to the point of purchase as possible. (Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)

Therefore, by implementing experiential marketing instore, this research suggests that there is a more controlled outcome for a brand which typically correlates to sales.

However, despite some brands identifying with either internal or external experiential activations, 44% of brands profiled (as seen in Table 4.3) stated that both are essential when implementing experiential marketing, and both play an integral role.

I think both, I mean, they both have a place. When you are instore it is great to have them at the point of purchase. So, in that case, you would have a promotion personnel or a brand ambassador at the door really driving your product and that is an opportunity for the consumer to put it directly into their shopping basket. If they are at the aisle or if there is product placement with the girl or boy doing the sampling then that can be an easy win, but also, there is a need for the

\textsuperscript{15} This is a marketing campaign which has been run by Pepsi Max many times over the lifespan on the brand. It asks consumers to taste the product and also taste a competing cola and choose their favourite.
pop-up shop which is away from the store. It is an experience. Consumers can still enjoy the product, but again, you are educating about your product, your brand, and its usage. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

If you are going for something like immediate sales then I would say activities that are closer to store are probably a little more functional, like sampling in a shop. But then if you are looking to create a bigger brand building piece, then it would probably be something like a central prominent location. I think the methods that really worked for me are the ones that you can scale up. (Denny Meats, Marketing Manager)

An ideal sweet spot is that you have a combination of the two because you want to generate the demand and you do that by getting people to try the product and having the brand top of mind while having it in their consideration set but you want to follow that up to make sure that next time you go instore that you have a strong presence there. I would say a combination of the two if possible. (Propercorn, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

I think that there is a role for both. I think if you have a new product and you are trying to get trial going, I think sampling instore at the point of purchase is absolutely key. Whereas, if you go wider than that, it is more of a general brand experience that you are trying to bring to life. So again, I think that there is a role for both. I think it depends on what the objective of the activation is. (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)

Table 4.3 summarises the approach adapted by brands in this research study.
Table 4.3 Categorisation of Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Events</th>
<th>External Events</th>
<th>Combination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairygold</td>
<td>Barry’s Tea</td>
<td>Carling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Chocolate</td>
<td>Sparkling Ice</td>
<td>Cadbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowntrees</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Coca-Cola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Cereals</td>
<td>Franciscan Well</td>
<td>Tayto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Chocolate</td>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>Flahavan’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds Eye</td>
<td>Purina</td>
<td>Fanta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Roots</td>
<td>Ballymaloe Foods</td>
<td>Deep RiverRock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingle Gin</td>
<td>Breyers Ice Cream</td>
<td>Pepsi Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucozade</td>
<td>Lyon’s Tea</td>
<td>Lipton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Shoot</td>
<td>Ben &amp; Jerry’s</td>
<td>7up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribena</td>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Smoke Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propercorn</td>
<td>F fulfil</td>
<td>Orchard Thieves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Orange</td>
<td>Robinsons</td>
<td>Desperados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mi Wadi</td>
<td>Coors Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kellogg’s</td>
<td>Murphy’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heinz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heineken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Denny Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schweppes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monster Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>O’ Donnell’s Crisps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hula Hoops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed, there are apparent benefits to using both types of experiential methods with each offering alternative outcomes, of which both play a role in the successful implementation of a marketing campaign. Therefore, when utilising experiential marketing, this research would suggest that a combination of both internal and external activations would be advised. Clear benefits to this approach have been discussed. However, although they should be used in tandem, it is essential that this is implemented with a defined objective and in line with a coherent process to ensure success.

*It probably depends on your objectives. We would look at what we are trying to do at that time and also what it is part of because sometimes we might have it as part of a bigger campaign and we might have it instore. In that case, you might have all elements together and that is probably the most effective for us. (Hula Hoops, Senior Brand Manager)*
The key learnings from this section can be determined by the scale of a brand. For established brands that have substantial campaign budgets that utilise experiential marketing as a communications tactic, they should have a strong instore presence with small investment experiential sampling initiatives as previously discussed (Section 4.2.1.2). This allows them to drive brand awareness in store and as a result, drive sales. Following on from this, brands of this nature should invest in larger experiential campaigns that can deliver on brand health metrics and immerse both shoppers and consumers into the brand ethos more intimately. This allows them to establish a deeper understanding and connection with the brand, further building memory structures.

Section 4.2.1.6 develops on the key learnings on experiential marketing in the FMCG sector. Here, the research focuses on the relationship between digital amplification through social media and experiential marketing.

4.2.1.6 The Digital Amplification Process: A Time Phase Approach
As previously discussed in this chapter, research participants identified with experiential event marketing as the primary method of employing experiential marketing. Therefore, in this chapter to date, there has been a clear emphasis placed on this form of experiential marketing. The focus on experiential event marketing is also pertinent to the discussion on the amplification process. Considering that research participants placed such emphasis on the digital amplification of experiential event marketing to transcend the physical barriers of the event, this topic garnered much discussion in the interviews. When questioned on the amplification process of experiential marketing, respondents focused on the amplification of experiential event marketing and the importance of approaching the matter from distinct time phases. In line with the views of O’Dell (2001), the amplification of an experiential event was not considered to occur in one calculated swoop, but over three distinct time periods.

It is before, during and after that it is important to amplify it [an experiential event] through digital channels. (Miller, Customer Experience Manager)

However, building on the work of O’Dell (2001), this study identifies that each of these time periods must have their own specific objectives. The dominant attitude expressed by brand representatives was that by strategically adopting a time phase approach, marketers have the opportunity to ensure that the message is effectively amplified to the mass market.
Planning for the *before* phase is essential as the volume of attendance at the experiential event is closely linked to how it is activated during this *before* phase.

*If we have an event that is happening and you try to use your social channels, they are fans that are already there and following you and your conversation and if we are going to be in UCD*\(^{16}\) *Freshers Week*\(^{17}\) *or we have a pop up cinema coming, it means that you have got people who are already open to being there.* *(7up, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)*

In the interview process, twelve out of the fifty brands profiled referred to this activity as *pre-seeding*. Utilising social media in the *before* phase, allows a brand to communicate with their target market ensuring that there is no wasted media spend on individuals that do not identify with the brand or do not fall into the target market.

*What we do in PepsiCo is we would usually geo-target. So, if we have events, there is no point in telling the country if they can’t go.* *(Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)*

It is important that the *before* phase is utilised to inform the target market about the experiential event and also to generate interest and conversation. In the second phase of experiential event amplification, brands are required to utilise social platforms to ensure that the experiential event does not merely exist in the moment but can be experienced remotely or even post the event.

*...we made a video of it and then we amplified that through our social channels so you might not have necessarily been at the experiential or seen it but you had the moment where you realised that the whole experience actually took place.* *(7up, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)*

However, this is the phase that brands typically find the most challenging due to the fact that they cannot actively control it.

*Often during experiential, you are too busy to even be promoting it massively but pre and post is where the magic happens.* *(Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)*

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\(^{16}\) Abbreviation for University College Dublin

\(^{17}\) Freshers Week is a week-long event which takes place at the start of the Academic Year in Irish universities. An assortment of events take place to welcome students during this period.
In this *during* phase, brands typically will have to rely on event participants or as previously stated by Smilansky (2009), digital, PR, advertising or live broadcast to amplify the activation to reach the mass audience. Typically, brands will primarily rely on event participants to amplify the event, however, in order to encourage this participation, multiple brand representatives noted the importance of creating a *hook*.

*You have to have some sort of hook on the day that encourages them [event participants] to do it [amplify the event]. Social currency is evolving and even if the hashtag is a must for your event, encourage them to do it [amplify the event] by giving them an incentive so they might win something.* (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

As previously stated, not all brands are necessarily actively promoting their event while it is live so in order for content to be created, it is of grave importance to ensure that the activation is still being amplified. The content created and disseminated in this phase can effectively be employed in the *after* phase. Although the event itself is where the content is created to populate this last phase, the *after* phase tends to have the most impact on the potential success of an experiential event.

*It is definitely about the experience you are creating on that said night, weekend or whatever it is, but the real power is afterwards.* (Carling, Customer Marketing)

During the *after* phase, the content showcasing the experiential event can be amplified typically in the form of a video. When shared on social media, this allows the activation to transcend the physical barriers of the offline event and share it with the mass audience. During this phase it is also important for brands to interact with event participants who engaged with the brand online, particularly through social currency mechanisms which have been previously discussed in Section 2.5. Table 4.4 summarises the objectives of the time phase approach as presented here.
Table 4.4 Objectives of a Time Phase Approach When Amplifying an Experiential Marketing Activation Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-seed content</td>
<td>• Transcend the physical barriers of experiential event marketing</td>
<td>• Sum up the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertise the upcoming event to a targeted audience</td>
<td>• Crowd source content</td>
<td>• Promote future events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adopt social currency</td>
<td>• Interact with individuals who participated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarise, for a brand to capitalise on an experiential event activation, it is essential to apply the previously discussed three phased approach, as seen in Table 4., to the communications process. This ensures that the activation transcends the physical barriers and reaches a mass audience. This research acknowledges that implementing an experiential marketing activation does not simply occur in the moment and therefore can be laborious. The strategic implementation of experiential marketing much be considered, and brands must capitalise on every opportunity possible in the during phase by creating content to fuel the after phase, ensuring its success. Also, by investing time in the during phase to optimise the after phase, it also optimises the ROI of the experiential marketing activity. The following section further expands on the time phase approach, offering critical success factors to the amplification strategy.

4.2.1.6.1 Critical Success Factors to the Amplification Strategy

As discussed earlier, Smilansky (2009) identified that brands should utilise digital, public relations (PR), advertising and live broadcast in order to amplify an activation to reach the mass audience. Although advertising and live broadcast are still relevant to modern marketing practice, they are deemed not to be cost effect amplification tools and are not generally used
for this purpose by the FMCG brands included in this research. Although these two communications tools are not deemed relevant to the amplification of experiential marketing, they will be discussed in more detail with an alternative use (Section 5.2). The empirical findings to this research indicate that Smilansky’s (2009) offering should be updated to include four Critical Success Factors (CSF), necessary for the amplification process. These CSF are as follows.

i. Digital
ii. PR
iii. Media Partnerships
iv. Influencer Marketing

In order for a brand to effectively amplify an experiential event to the mass audience in the FMCG sector, there must be multiple media streams utilised. Although this can prove costly, the combined potential reach of these media streams, allows for the activation to reach the mass audience, which in turn contributes positively to the overall financial return.

*The cost per contact or the conversation per contact is quite high and expensive. But, if it is wrapped up in a big communications plan that you can then drive reach on, then a much larger group of consumers get to see the content and are influenced by it. Then your ROI becomes a lot more efficient.* (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

This sentiment was shared by the majority of brand representatives. In line with Smilansky’s (2009) finding, digital and PR were identified as the two factors which have traditionally being used to amplify the experiential event.

*If you think about the experiential activity, it is about the engagement piece and I think what social media and PR do then is give it scale. It allows the campaign to appeal to a slightly wider audience.* (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)

Indeed, research participants discussed how the application of digital and PR resulted in the doubling of attendance at an experiential event on a daily basis. Although the previously aforementioned digital and PR can be viewed as mass market amplification tools traditionally used to amplify marketing messages, the second two critical success factors (media partnerships and influencer marketing) identified in this research, offer brands the opportunity to specifically target certain audiences.
We do this [amplification] through social but also through media partnerships and influencers, they would be really key. (Lyon’s Tea, Head of Marketing)

Influencer Marketing, has been developed as an addition to word of mouth marketing (WOMM) discussed in Section 2.5, where brands interact with consumers through the medium of influencers who have a large number of followers on social media platforms (Khamis et al., 2017). Through their large social following, influencers have the ability to amplify an experiential event to their audience, contributing to interactions with the mass audience.

Across the day, we probably had less than 100 people between the event in the morning and the event in the afternoon. By having Vogue Williams and Rob Lipsett there and by having them do Insta stories and posts, having media there as well to cover it and our own social media, we ended up reaching about 22 million consumers. (Breyers Ice Cream, Head of Marketing)

By combining the critical success factors with the time phase approach, this research presents a framework for brands to effectively amplify experiential events. The proposed model, (Figure 4.1) builds on the network coproduction model developed by Kozinets et al., (2010). The framework presented below depicts the role of the critical success factors in the time phase approach.
4.2.1.7 Experiential Marketing and Responsive Target Markets

Building on the approach to relationships, it is essential also to evaluate the target markets that companies are implementing this communication tool for. As little research has been conducted on the responsiveness of specific target markets to the practice of experiential marketing, this section pulls relevant research from differing schools of marketing research. In line with the generational marketing concept as presented by Chaney et al. (2017), Debevec et al. (2013), Williams and Page (2011), and Himmel (2008), eleven of the fifty profiled brands believed that experiential marketing should be used to specifically target consumers in the Generation Y and Z cohorts as it is believed that they are the most responsive to the practice.

_They want you to be real and talk to them in their language through real life events, person to person. They are the hardest to target, but they are also the most responsive to experiential. The great thing is that that is organic and natural rather than a brand being shoved down your throat, it is your friend telling you about the brand._ (Orchard Thieves, Customer Marketing Manager)
I think that it is a younger cohort that it appeals more to, I don’t think older people are as engaged with it. I think that is how society has changed and it is just what people are used to. Even at that, that market is getting younger, it is probably about a 12-year-old to a 25-year-old that experiential appeals to. Saying that, you will always have a small amount of younger and older that will then dip in as well. (Tayto, Senior Marketing Manager)

A predominant reason for the selection of these generations toward experiential marketing by research participants was due to their receptiveness towards digital technologies and social media which has been previously studied by academics and practitioners including Duffett (2017), James and Levin (2015), Mc Crindle and Wolfinger (2009) and McKenzie et al. (2012).

There is an understanding that there is a sophistication around 12 - 14-year olds and what they expect regarding involvement with brands through digital devices. Brand culture now needs to be connected to what is going on around them. But, the age group of 16-24 is where we would primarily be targeting with experiential marketing. That is not to say that you are not going to fall outside those target markets. (Lucozade, Regional Business Manager)

However, despite the willingness of these generation cohorts to interact with brands through not only experiential marketing but also other marketing mediums, brands must actively ensure to advertise within the realms of the law and social norms. As previously stated, some research participants stated that consumers are most responsive to experiential marketing between the ages of 12 and 25, however this segment forms a minority of the research participants. Despite this finding, there are rules and regulations in place pertaining to the advertising of products to children (ASAI, 2016; ICC, 2012) which prevent brands from advertising to children typically under the age of 12. Companies in the FMCG sector, including Nestle (2018) have also formulated their own code of conduct on this practice. As a result, these brands cannot directly target children in their marketing but alternatively target the gatekeeper or the family unit.

Overall, we would be targeting all adults but with how we activate, it can be your young adult, which would be Crème Egg, and then a lot of what we do is really targeting the family through the gatekeeper. (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)
A counterpoint to some findings, some research participants offered an alternative perspective on the responsiveness of target markets in relation to experiential marketing. In contrast to the previously discussed views of Chaney et al. (2017), Debevec et al. (2013), Williams and Page (2011), and Himmel (2008) towards the practice of multi-generational marketing, the following offers an alternative viewpoint on this segmentation practice. Multi-generational marketing occurs when cohorts are not necessarily selected due to the unique needs of individuals belonging to a generational group, but rather by identifying consistent characteristics among generations and applying them to a marketing campaign (Chaney et al., 2017).

I think it can appeal to everybody, but it depends on what the experiential objective is for your brand. If you are trying to recruit new people into the brand it depends on who is the target for the particular brand. For example, if we were doing something on our fibre portfolio it would have a broad demographic reach, so you would target a broader target. I mean, I have not seen any evidence to suggest that you get a better response from groups of people. I think the response that you get from people relates to how well you understand your brand strategy and whether that brand is meeting the needs of that target right rather than anything else. So, I think it relates to the brand strategy targeting rather than the actual tool itself. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

I guess in terms of experiential marketing, people may say that it might engage a younger audience more so and I think the reason for that probably is that younger audiences are probably more aware of marketing, marketing tools and are probably bombarded by a lot of marketing. So, anything relevant that reaches out to them that is authentic, they react quite well to. But I would see it that if you are doing something for your target audience and it is relevant to them, it is something that you can do across audiences. (Flahavan’s, Brand Manager)

Adopting the practice of multi-generational marketing and questioning the key point of relevancy to the target market offers an alternative perspective. This research identifies that marketing practitioners should adopt multi-generational marketing practices by identifying the consistent characteristics among generations that apply to their key campaign messaging and ask themselves, how relevant is the campaign or product to their consumers lives. Building on Simms (2008) concept of an ageless society where people do not define themselves by their age, but rather the activities they are involved in, experiential marketing
has the ability to appeal to a multitude of target markets as long as it is relevant to them. When targeting college students, marketers must further breakdown this target market as college students are multi-generational and could be 20, 30 or 60 (Simms, 2008).

*You need to be mindful of what event is coming and what part of your target market does it hit and making sure you are not talking to one segment too much and alienating another. I think events have become really important over the last couple of years and they will only get bigger. That is where your consumers are, that is where you have to be. It comes down to relevance and if they think you are relevant because you are here, that is them linking the two together.* (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

Resulting from this discussion on the responsiveness of target markets to experiential marketing, this research suggests that for a brand to create an experiential campaign they should firstly ask themselves ‘how relevant is this to our target market?’, and secondly, they should adopt a multi-generational approach and make it applicable to all that it is relevant to without categorising or alienating others. Therefore, being aware of your target market and their responsiveness is a critical element of making informed marketing decisions. However, it is also essential to evaluate which stage of the product lifecycle the brand is currently in to activate the right type of experiential marketing. In this context, the following section discusses the application of the product lifecycle of experiential marketing.

### 4.2.1.8 Experiential Marketing and the Product Lifecycle

In the findings discussed to date in this chapter, a key observation is that there is no unified approach to implementing experiential marketing. In the interviews conducted, discussion arose when prompted by a question around the relevance of the product lifecycle (PLC) to experiential marketing. Given the potential of product lifecycle, and its prominence in the findings, it is worthy of further exploration.

When evaluating the data which arose from the interviews, it was evident that firstly, brand representatives believed that experiential marketing lends itself to different stages of the product lifecycle, and secondly, that there are different ways of activating it according to the applicable lifecycle stage.

* I think that it depends on the brand and it depends on the life stage of the brand. We have taken new brands to market, for example Estrella Damm is one that we took the distribution of a couple
of years ago. I suppose the reason that I say the life stage is it has got to be done in the right point in time. If you jump into a deep experiential activation very early on, you could just lose people. There is definitely a certain phase of generating a certain level of awareness and interest in the brand and then the next step is experiential and deeper engagement. All the brands that we have are on a slightly different lifecycle. (Molson Coors, Customer Experience Manager)

This observation shared by Molson Coors is in line with the previously discussed finding (Section 4.2.1.3) that experiential marketing should follow mass media marketing for it to be effective. Therefore, throughout the discussions in this section, it is imperative to keep this new observation in mind as experiential marketing is applied to different stages of the product lifecycle. To evaluate the findings in this section, the product lifecycle will be discussed methodologically according to the two key stages, followed by differing perspectives.

A clear and common application of experiential marketing is during the introduction phase with a third of the brands profiling referring to its utilisation in this scenario, typically when the product falls into the category of NDP or product relaunch. During this time, experiential marketing facilitates brands in building brand awareness, typically through strategic sampling mechanisms.

I think when an NPD or a relaunch comes out it really works there. But, for something new like the Azera Nitro, that is certainly something that experiential worked really well on purely because people just don’t really know what it is. With our new shoppers, NPD education is really important because it does come with a significant cost associated with it. (Nescafe, Shopper Activation Manager)

When launching a new product, there is nothing quite like getting it into the hands of the consumers and letting them try it. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

I think it is great for that beginning and starter side of things just getting people to try the product for the first time. I would say that we are still in that stage at the moment. With both of our products, people are trying them for the very first time, but I reckon over the next few years that might be less and less. There might be more spent on other things over experiential I would think. (Dingle Gin, Business Development Director)
However, it is important not to underestimate the duration of time that products are in the introduction phase. In order to have consistent positive growth in brand awareness, brands must not merely treat this as an *introduction* but keep using experiential to support the growth over a sustained period of time.

*It is very important for launches, but the first two years to create impact is really important. We did this with Orchard Thieves and the brand just absolutely took off.* (Orchard Thieves, Customer Marketing Manager)

For FMCG brands that are in the initial introductory phase, experiential marketing activations that revolve around sampling mechanisms are common. For brands using experiential marketing to effectively launch a brand, it is valuable as already discussed (Section 4.2.1.1) to firstly implement mass marketing activity in order to create brand awareness and build brand memory structures. However, without the platform of existing awareness it can be difficult to reap the full potential of implementing the marketing activity. Thus, for brands that are being built by an established company, it allows them to leverage existing brand awareness and sentiment.

*You can also merge a new sub-brand with a big brand in order to get your message across. So, for example, Fruit Shoot is a kid’s juice drink, but we also have Fruit Shoot Hydro which is a flavoured spring water drink. What we have done in the past is that we have merged the two together for a big brand campaign that is linked to thirsty occasions.* (Fruit Shoot, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Another stage in the PLC that it is essential for brands to implement experiential marketing is during the mature phase when although brand awareness is high, consumers can become complacent and without continuous marketing interventions will test and use competing brands.

*I think that the more established the brand is, the more experiential you can do as such. We are launching Club Lemon Zero in June and that is much more focused on brand in hand and getting people to taste the liquid, whereas, in year 2 of sampling you could go bigger on the experiential piece. With the likes of Club Orange Super Split, it is limited edition and it has that emotional connection, definitely we went with experiential big as well as getting brand in hand.* (Club Orange, Local Carbs and Energy Marketing Manager)
I think it can work in different stages because we do it at different timings. For instance, with what we are currently doing now with no added sugar and salt which has just launched on the market, we need consumers to trial the product. We need them to taste the product to convert them to a sale but then if you look back at what we did with Beans Means Heinz, obviously we are an established brand, we have been around since 1886 so we are a very established brand. We are not the number one brand in the Irish market, obviously we have a competitor which is an Irish owned brand. We are a completely different tasting product to our competitor, but yet we still feel that there is an opportunity to do an experiential campaign and get consumers back in tasting our product and tell us why they love the Heinz Beans brand so much. I think that we have converted a lot of people who may not have bought Heinz Beans and actually got them to buy Heinz Beans. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

Although these findings identify with two stages where experiential marketing plays a significant component in a brand’s development, it is important to note that it still has a role to play in other PLC stages also.

It is great for new products, brilliant and really important. But also, watching a product on its lifecycle and coming to the mature stages is when you really need to act to keep that product relevant and cool. So, I think it applies at all stages really and always serves a purpose. (Ballymaloe Foods, Sales and Marketing Manager)

Although experiential marketing can aid with specific objectives in the introductory and mature stages of the PLC, the predominate reason why brands utilise experiential marketing is due to its unique ability to activate the brand in a relatable method which allows consumers to build stronger bonds with the brand.

I think it can work at any stage, whether or not it is about making people aware or experience a physical product or even something like Peroni which is much further down its product lifecycle and it is really using experiential to bring the brand values to life, it is all important. (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)

Evidently, for brands to successfully implement experiential marketing, it is pertinent that they evaluate their position in the PLC and also identify the most suitable and beneficial methods of implementing an experiential activation. With this information in mind, along with the findings overall presented in this section, marketing practitioners will be more equipped to successfully implement a successful and rewarding experiential activation.
Overall, Section 4.2.1.8 has offered an insight into the importance of considering PLC placement of brands when implementing experiential marketing. What is prevalent in these findings is that although there is an unmistakable understanding as to what the benefits of experiential marketing are, there is no unified approach as to how best use or design an experiential marketing campaign. Therefore, there is clear requirement for a framework illustrative of best practice when utilising this marketing tool.

The findings in this section offer new insights pertaining to the practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector that have not yet been previously discussed in research by academics and practitioners alike. Next, Section 4.2.2 offers detailed findings pertaining to the difficulties in calculating the return on experiential marketing.

4.2.2 Difficulties in Calculating the Return on Experiential Marketing

The findings pertaining to the topic of the return on experiential marketing build on the findings presented in the preceding section. Throughout Section 4.2.1, experiential marketing has been presented in detail in line with the academic literature and the findings which derived from the interviews with industry professionals who have been previously involved in the implementation of an experiential marketing activation. Next, this section will discuss the analysis of experiential marketing and how brands measure the outcome of this communications tool. As previously discussed, (Section 2.3.6), there are many methods used to evaluate the return on experiential marketing as follows:

- Frawley’s (2014) ROE\(^2\) (return on experience x engagement);
- Kehrer’s (2015) MROI (Marketing Return on Investment);
- PWC’s (2019) ROX which focuses on the accumulative effect of the customer experience and the employee experience; and
- Lastly, reflecting on the semi-structured interviews pertaining to the current research, which will be further discussed in Section 4.2.2.2, ROI is also employed.

However, through the findings of this research it is evident that ROE\(^2\), MROI or ROX are not considered by respondents as the best approach to evaluating the return of an experiential marketing campaign. Although ROI was referred to as an employed tool, many brands felt that by focusing on this traditional metric, the whole benefit or return of the experiential activation was not captured. In fact, this research suggests that the primary issue with the
previously discussed methods of calculation is that they measure the impact of experiential marketing in isolation of the other marketing communications tools used by the brand. This poses a challenge for the majority of brands, as they cannot isolate the output of the practice as it is, in essence, a component of an integrated marketing campaign and not used in isolation.

As I say, we would very rarely do something on its own, it is usually in conjunction with something else that we are doing and where we can get a return on investment or a measurable form of it. (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)

The following sections evaluate the findings of this key research theme from the practitioner’s perspective.

4.2.2.1 Issues with Calculating the Outcome of Experiential Marketing

While discussing experiential marketing, Wood (2009: 250) states that “the effectiveness is related to individual emotional response, to the influence of other communications, both marketing driven and in a wider social context, and to the previous experience and expectations of each individual participant or spectator”. Although there is a clear correlation between experiential marketing and individual emotive responses which can be difficult to quantify, the brands included in this research identified additional issues including a lack of clarity as to what the benefit is outside of consumer interaction and two-way communication.

Yes, as I say it is hard to put more money into experiential marketing when you can’t prove what experiential marketing is doing for you. We are always being pushed by the business to ensure that we are getting the biggest return on investment on our marketing activity which is the right thing. (O’Donnell’s, Senior Brand Manager)

That is so true [the difficulty of calculating the return on experience] and I even brought it up at a meeting recently when we were talking about doing something with a range of teas that we have and because you are spending a big sum of money out of the marketing mix and you can’t quantify any experiential campaign that you do, there is a question mark there. You have to ask what have we got back in return? (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)

It is very hard. We measure every campaign that we do so it is normally rolled up into a campaign KPI sheet that we would do. Before we kick off a campaign, we make up a KPI sheet of what we are looking for and then at the end of campaign we put in how we scored against it and we try to give a return on marketing investment. But, when you are doing something like a roadshow like
we did two weeks ago and you just have people tasting flavours and that flavour is not going to be launched until September, it is hard to see a sales uplift while that campaign is on. (Hula Hoops, Senior Brand Manager)

However, it is important to highlight that for experiential activation that takes place instore, there is a much clearer call to action than a staged experiential event. As brands who conduct instore experiential activations have controlled the activity to a confined area where consumers can also purchase the product, there are more defined metrics available. Although metrics are gained through EPOS data, it is worth noting that they only measure a sales uplift and not the consumers’ emotional and attitudinal response towards the brand.

But instore, keeping it simple gets you the best return. Listen, off trade\textsuperscript{18} XP\textsuperscript{19} although it is expensive, you know if it worked or not because I can just ask for an uplift for a store where we did XP so I know for sure if it worked or not. (Orchard Thieves, Customer Marketing Manager)

Although the metrics available for instore activations may incentivise this form of experiential for some, the significant cost of this must also be considered.

If you are really ruthless on it and you sit down with the accountants and they say ‘okay, you ran an instore sampling campaign. How many units did you sell on a day?’ and you say ‘50 units’. They then ask, ‘What was the cost of running the sampling on the day?’ and you reply ‘Well it cost €500 because of the person, the printing of the product, the samples you gave away, the cost of the promotion on the day etc.’. The next question on their behalf is ‘What was the cost of the product?’ and it rarely ever washes its face. And also, what it boils down to is if you take tonight [Darkness into Light was taking place at this time, of which Lyon’s Tea was the title sponsor] and we will sample 50,000-70,000 consumers with a cup of Lyon’s Tea tonight, can I truly say how that will convert into sales over the next 6 weeks? I honestly probably can’t. It really does pose a difficulty when you look at it like that. (Lyon’s Tea, Head of Marketing)

While discussing the performance and measurement of experiential marketing, Smith and Hanover (2016) declare that one of the biggest challenges that brands face is in rationalising the perceived cost and investment that is required to employ experiential marketing, due to

\textsuperscript{18} Off Trade: Off Licences that exclusively sell alcohol

\textsuperscript{19} XP: Abbreviation for Experiential Marketing
its theatrical nature. Thus, when planning an experiential campaign, it is essential to gauge the amount of event participation required for there to be a brand effect that is proportionate to the investment. With each event participation interaction, the cost of experiential marketing rises due to the growing scale of the event.

One of the challenges with experiential marketing is that it is really expensive because you can only afford to net a certain number of people to have that experience. So, the cost per contact or the conversion per contact is quite high and expensive. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)

Cost per interaction can certainly act as a barrier to implementation. Additionally, the lack of availability of long-term brand effect data and consumer tracking acts as another barrier when calculating the return of experiential marketing that must be considered.

I will influence you for quite a number of months after that XP and I don’t know how many more times you would have purchased the product. So, it is a little bit of guess work and a little bit of statistics for it to work. (Orchard Thieves, Customer Marketing Manager)

You just don’t ultimately know if you are sampling an on the go product, we have no way of knowing if they came back. You can spend the money; it can be a great experience and they can go away feeling brilliantly but they may not have come back to your brand. In that case, the only thing you can use is your share, your volume of sales or your value of sales. But you don’t know that’s how they came back. It definitely is a challenge but that does not mean you don’t do it because of the challenge, you just need to be mindful that it is not a perfect science. (Lipton, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)

In conclusion, although there are prescribed calculations as formerly discussed (Section 4.2.2) to evaluate the return of experiential marketing at present, what can be gathered from this research is the observation that they are not currently used by marketers as they are simply do not fit the requirements of marketers in the FMCG industry. This is because they do not account for all of the individual components that they consider important to evaluate. There are a multitude of other factors and risks that must be taken into account for experiential marketing to be accountable.

We always are looking for the optimum way of measuring all the activities that we undertake, whether that is shopper activations or activations in pubs. (Molson Coors, Customer Marketing Manager)
Although key issues have been highlighted briefly, the following sections will further discuss the contribution of this research towards the development of experiential marketing and present the key findings.

4.2.2.2 ROI Versus ROE: Which is the Best Approach?
Building on the key findings in Section 4.2.2.1, the current section specifically relates to a question which was asked in the interviews to all research participants. The question asked research participants which was their primary concern, return on investment (ROI) or return on experience (ROE). At this stage, it is important to reiterate that ROE represents a long-term measurement of consumer satisfaction comprising of consumer experiences, interactions and reactions (Lenderman, 2005).

Through the evaluation of the present literature in Section 2.3.6, although there were prescribed formulas for calculating the return on experiential marketing, each of them offers a different perspective on the importance of evaluating ROI and ROE metrics. Therefore, it was essential to address this in the interviews with the brand representatives in order to grasp the industry perspective of this. The following findings, as summarised in Table 4.5, clearly portray that there is no unified answer, however, there are certain influences which must be accounted for.
Table 4.5 Categorisation of Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROI</th>
<th>ROE</th>
<th>Combination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carling</td>
<td>Ballymaloe Foods</td>
<td>Dingle Gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadbury</td>
<td>Birds Eye</td>
<td>Lucozade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coca Cola</td>
<td>Strong Roots</td>
<td>Fruit Shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayto</td>
<td>Breyers Ice Cream</td>
<td>Robinsons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry’s Tea</td>
<td>Pepsi Max</td>
<td>Ribena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flahavan’s</td>
<td>Lipton</td>
<td>Mi Wadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairygold</td>
<td>7up</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Smoke Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Chocolate</td>
<td>Lyon’s Tea</td>
<td>Propercorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparking Ice</td>
<td>Ben &amp; Jerry’s</td>
<td>Club Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>Orchard Thieves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franciscan Well</td>
<td>Fulfil</td>
<td>Desperados</td>
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<td>Rowntrees</td>
<td>Fulfil</td>
<td>Coors Light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>Murphy’s</td>
<td>Heinz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nestle Cereals</td>
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<td>Heineken</td>
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<td>Nescafe</td>
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<td>Denny Meats</td>
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<td>Fanta</td>
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<td>Deep River</td>
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<td>Rock Schweppes</td>
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<td>O’ Donnell’s</td>
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<td>Skips</td>
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<td>Kellogg’s</td>
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When discussing the relevance of ROI and ROE to ascertain the outcome of an experiential campaign, this research uncovered that there are pressures from a management level which may influence the selection of metrics.

*I think it depends on a company’s culture as well because if you were in a company that was very ROI led, obviously that would influence things. (7up, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)*

In companies who primarily identified with ROI as their chosen metric of evaluating success, through the analysis of the interviews it became clear that this was influenced by a company’s culture.

*We are here to make money. At the end of the day my sole objective as a marketeer is to deliver on the numbers and drive the business. So, delivering a nice, warm, fuzzy experience for the consumers that makes me feel nice and a couple of hundred consumers feel nice is not going to wash it if the numbers don’t look good. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)*
I would say that we would be targeted with return on investment. We would have to demonstrate that the budget that we spent has got a return or at least some level of return whether it is from a commercial perspective, whether it is a pickup on social media and digital that you can demonstrate a return. So, for that reason, I would be more in that camp more so because I know what it being demanded of me. (Franciscan Well, Customer Experience Manager)

Definitely the return on investment. We are not going to invest money if we feel it is a bad investment. It has to be sales driven from our perspective anyway but that may be different for Coke company. They may be slightly more focused on experience. (Schweppes, Experiential Execution Excellence Manager)

In certain cases, research participants who identified with the importance of tracking the ROI metric portrayed a belief that by witnessing an experiential marketing activation, they could make an educated observation on the experiential effect.

I think if it is done really well, you know quickly the experience part while it is measuring the return on investment. Especially because experiential is all about experience and if you are trying to quantify the return on experience for your business or your Board of Management who may have not necessarily been at your event and didn’t experience that, well how do you quantify how customers have reacted to something. (Flahavan’s, Brand Manager)

The thing about the return on experience, if we are any good at our jobs and the agencies that we employ are any good at their jobs, that it almost a given. If it is not, then we are all crap at what we do. So, we take that as it is a given. That might sound a little arrogant, but it is what we get paid to do, so therefore we need to be good at it. You can’t just pour €100,000 into an event without being able to demonstrate a return on. (Miller, Customer Marketing Manager)

I think investment. A big part of that is having the right people there and you being there yourself and being able to think on your feet. If you do this, you will have a good event. We are not serving caviar; we are serving tea. It is not rocket science. If we do the basics right, I am always confident that we will pull it off. (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)

At this point it is worth reflecting on the findings of Binet and Field’s (2013) report titled The Long and the Short of It. Although the previously discussed brands are focusing on what the duo refer to as measures of effectiveness. Essentially, this category of measures evaluates scale of effect. Put simply, “they are a simple measure of what is achieved and do not relate the effect to the level of investment made to drive the effect” (Binet and Field, 2013: 10).
However, measuring **effectiveness** alone does not act as an indicator of success and brands should also be considering **efficiency** metrics which are comprised of a measurement of achievement per unit of investment. When discussing these metrics working in tandem, Binet and Field found that “efficiency and effectiveness are clearly related in practice, but efficiency is more data-hungry than effectiveness and is based on only one measurement of effect, so it does not reveal the entire pattern of response under examination...both measures are needed” (Binet and Field, 2013: 10).

Accordingly, as depicted in Table 4., there were also many brands who focused on the measurement of both ROI and ROE metrics also.

*Well ROI is obviously going to be the most important for us, the consumer experience is obviously going to be number two because if the consumer does not have a good experience then that just damages your brand. So, I suppose it is as important as return on investment, but as a company we probably focus on return on investment a little more than what we do on the consumer. But yes, they are probably the top two that are important to us. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)*

Despite the prevalence of brands identifying with ROI, there are also barriers to consider with it. As further discussed in Section 4.2.2.3, a key issue with calculating the return on experiential marketing is the lack of consistency of available data affording brands the opportunity to effectively evaluate the outcome of experiential marketing activations.

*To be really purist about it, we look at it in terms of return of investment and the numbers that we can reach in terms of direct sampling or whatever. If you are to be purist about the return of investment, you are looking at Econometric Modelling and that is something that we don’t look at here in the Irish office, they look at it in the UK. That is a real detailed way of looking at it, but from our own perspective, the way we would look at it in terms of the potential numbers that we can reach. So, for us it is more of a numbers game, but we would also look at the campaign in totality as well. (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)*

*In the UK you have a lot more access to store data and you have very apt and able consumers. There is a tool where you could take the stores in a 10 km radius of a point and choose test stores, or a test area and it was just phenomenal to see the results. But I’ve never been able to do anything like that based in Ireland. (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)*
Relating to the findings as presented in Section 4.2.1.8, another consideration that was highlighted was that brands must be aware of the stage of the brand in the Product Lifecycle and what is available to them to be able to measure and gauge a return. As brands progress through the aforementioned stages of the product lifecycle, sales increase resulting in a growth in profitability (Pride et al., 2013). This allows brands to invest more when analysing campaign success.

*I would say that if that was an established brand, we absolutely would be looking at the return on investment, it is only that we are new [a company within the introduction stage of the product lifecycle].* (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

Maybe motivated by the stage in the product lifecycle or the company’s culture, a large amount of research participants specifically identified with the importance of being able to calculate ROE over its traditional counterpart.

In a discussion pertaining to the importance and difficulties of measuring ROI on social media, Grewal (2018) concludes that it is difficult as the metric can only measure an isolated moment in time. Building on this viewpoint, the researcher suggests implementing a similar approach to evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing. Marketers must identify with the ROE measurement as it transcends beyond the physical barriers of time and takes into account the holistic growth of a brand and considers the importance of the two-way relationship development between a brand and a consumer.

*I think it is experience for me because we are not just a brand that is here to jump up sales aggressively every year. I always think of the saying ‘if you are just focused on growing things really quick, they fall down twice as fast’. We are about building a brand that people know, 1) we have a high-quality product, 2) they are decent people, and 3) we are Irish and independent. That is the kind of thing that we need to get across. I want you drinking Dingle Gin or Porterhouse beers for life, not just for the couple of months in the summer. So, yes, the experience is more important there.* (Dingle Gin, Business Development Manager)

*Return on experience, 100%. We say this because of the long-term benefits. However, if you don’t get the benefits over the long term, you can’t keep banging on that door.* (Ribena, Regional Business Manager)
I would stand more at the ROE element, that it is building the experience for the consumer because we can have a percentage of what we are doing towards building that connection and it does all link back in, so it is hard to stand on one side of the fence with it. (Robinsons, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Although benefits have been identified from a brands perspective for identifying with one of these metrics over another, there is a cohort of the research pool who felt a need to not isolate their benefits but harness both metrics and employ them both. There is still a place in modern experiential marketing practice for ROI, however, it is not the only measurement of campaign success.

Both. For the simple reason that if you are giving an amazing experience but it is costing an arm and a leg, it does not stand up. Then the flip side of that is you might have a very cheap experience that doesn’t amplify the brand or go against the values of the brand, then that will not work. So, I think you need to look at both hand in hand. (Cadbury, Marketing Manager)

Thus, although ROI is an important measurement component, rather than focusing on the balance figure solely, this research suggests that brands should focus on whether the implementation of an experiential campaign was conducted in a cost-effective manner.

To me, there are two ways of looking at it and they are blatantly obvious. There is no point spending a whole heap of cash on something that you are not going to get any sort of return on, but equally, if you put a shoddy experience together, that can actually be worse for your brand than not putting any experience together at all. So, for me, I’m balanced. It absolutely has to be about the return on experience. As I would look at it, you have to take it that the brand has recognised that they have a certain amount of budget to spend, so whatever they do with that budget, they have to absolutely maximise it to the peak degree. Which then comes down to asking, ‘How do I maximise my budget to the experience that they are going to get?’. Your budget is your budget but then you have to be really creative on how you can deliver a fantastic message and a fantastic brand experience on the back of that. (Unilever, Head of Marketing)

I think ROI is what we ultimately want but awareness is probably the key metric. If you can drive awareness and consideration and your product is fulfilling the needs of the consumer then in theory, they should keep on coming back and if they are not, there is something wrong with the product or proposition. So, I would say driving awareness and consideration in a cost-effective
way is the most important thing and if you can do those then you will get a good return on investment. (Propercorn, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

Therefore, brands can measure the long-term effect of experiential marketing and consumer sentiment, dismissing the importance of implementing it in a cost-effective nature. In addition to this, it is worth highlighting the importance of consumer driven metrics. Gentile et al. (2007) duly note the importance of not evaluating consumers merely on financial metrics but on the following components; sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle and relational. Similarly, research participants specified the crucial nature of amalgamating a cost-effective approach with consumer metrics to evaluate the true success of a campaign.

Ultimately, you always have to return on investment, but you can never look at that in isolation of one experiential activity. It has to be part of a much larger campaign. For me, it is all around the return on consumer, your consumer scores and how consumers think of the brand. You are not going to do well in those if consumers don’t have a good experience. But you can have a really good experience and not drive anything for the brand if you don’t have attribution to the brand. You almost always have to have a good experience, but it is then about how you are able to link that back to the brand and keep that relationship growing with the brand, not the experience. (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)

Although the current section clearly depicts the importance of not using the ROI and ROE metrics in isolation and employing a hybrid of both, at present, there is no method of evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing that identifies with this approach.

There almost should be something in the middle that factors in both of these. They are both important in their own right. It is all a journey where you are trying to keep consumers interested in the brand, for instance, keep them in our brand versus going to private label or a discounter brand or something like that. That is the return. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

I think I would have to say both. I think that they go hand in hand because if you are delivering the experience, but it is at a massive expense, then it has not delivered on its objective. But if it is done in a way that it is so cost effective that consumers don’t get an experience at all then there is an issue there too. (Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)

While identifying with Binet and Field’s (2013) ideology where both effective and efficient metrics are required, this research suggests that it is vital that a new approach is developed,
where the scale of a company and stage in the PLC is not a defining factor. The following section discusses the key success mechanisms which may contribute to this framework as many have emanated from the primary research.

4.2.2.3 Key Factors Leading to Experiential Success

As previously discussed (Section 4.2.2) at the beginning of this section, a predominate issue with the methods of experiential evaluation examined in Section 2.3.6 is that they isolate experiential marketing to identify the return of the activation. Wood (2009) also identifies with this sentiment concluding that the value of an event may be difficult to separate from the overall effect of a campaign. In addition, this research identifies another key metric which is impeded due to the integrated nature of marketing. As experiential is predominately used as a secondary component of an integrated marketing communications plan, it is extremely difficult to isolate the brand effect of this marketing activity.

Yes, so it is quite a challenge to measure, but we have some key measures that we will always measure campaigns on. So be it through market share, market penetration or brand health, we have key measures that we set at an overall campaign level. But, attributing them solely to one element of the mix is very difficult. (Lipton, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)

It is very difficult to isolate out. What does media deliver? Because we can’t drive down to what support the media may have had or was it when the consumer went in store and saw it at half price that that made the decision for them. (Birds Eye, Marketing Manager)

True to the nature of IMC marketing, in order for a campaign to optimally amplify a message and generate two way communication, the marketing message should not be isolated to specific elements of the marketing mix, but rather consistently shared for maximum brand penetration (Smilansky, 2009). Therefore, as you share a common and consistent message, brands have significant difficulties defining the brand effect specifically from experiential marketing.

So, you can’t say that experiential grew your brand by x because you could have advertising, digital and other elements. Ultimately you want it to go up and that is your objective and yes experiential would account for a part of it, but what is that saying, ‘I know 10% of my marketing budget is working but I don’t know which 10% it is’. There is that bit of it where you don’t really know how much one individual element of the campaign is doing, but that doesn’t mean that you would not do it as a result. (Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)
Therefore, it is essential that a method of calculation for evaluating the success of a marketing campaign including experiential marketing is conceptualised. There are many data sources that can actively contribute to this, predominately Kantar Millward Brown and Nielsen and Dunhumby.

*To be honest, what we have tended to do is evaluate more so in the totality of campaigns rather than specific elements. Traditionally, it is commercial data coupled with consumer data that we buy from Millward Brown for each of our brands. But it can be very hard to distinguish different activations and experiential kind of falls into that category. They will typically tell you your trial and awareness scores, your affinity scores, but it can be very difficult to get into specific activations and how they have performed. (Miller, Customer Experience Manager)*

Evidently, isolating the brand effect is a source of much difficulty for brands in the evaluation process. However, a larger barrier that most brands have to overcome is the vast nature of investment required in an experiential activation. Due to the nature of experiential events there are significant overheads, especially in the case of external experiential activations.

*Unfortunately, events will never pay us back, it will always be an investment, we will never be anywhere that we will sell enough or do enough to make money. That is never the intention, it is just being there, being interested and being present. (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)*

*Even thinking about it with the Castlepalooza festival there, we would very much just write that money off because the way we would do it is we would pay for the festival [sponsorship] and then sell stock into them. So, the more stock that they buy, the better it is for us. But we would write that money off and treat it as a marketing budget expense. We do this purely because it is something that we don’t see ourselves getting back straight away. There is only so much people can drink over three days. But it is all about that person coming back to their local bar or off licence the next week and buying it then. (Dingle Gin, Business Development Manager)*

*That for me puts a big health warning on experiential when budgets are not big, and you are expecting a huge amount from it. (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)*

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20 A music and arts festival that takes place in Co. Offaly.
However, this is where the advantageous nature of IMC marketing comes to the fore where multiple communications tools that complement each other are utilised. It is essential to not see experiential marketing as a marketing campaign in isolation but rather a component on an overall integrated campaign. There are specific objectives and KPIs that it fulfils that traditional mass media marketing could not. Accordingly, the findings of this research propose that marketers should refrain from evaluating experiential marketing in isolation. From the perspective of a success metric, brands should always view it holistically.

Events are expensive, if people only saw it as that day and we presented that to the board in here they would think we are bananas. But we never present it as the cost of the day, we say it is the cost of the reach of the social before and other elements, so you bring it into the total cost of a mini campaign. You never present it on its own and if it was that we would just not do it, it would be not be worthwhile because it would be too expensive. (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

Although this budget allocation may be deemed as a risk and difficult to calculate a return, there is an apparent benefit to the practice as portrayed by all research participants.

Often one of the biggest barriers to purchase is that people are not willing to take the risk to spend money on something that they are worried that they may not like. If you can get someone to try the product then that is one of the biggest barriers overcome if you have a nice product. If you don’t have a nice product, then it is not going to really work. (Sparking Ice, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

An additional dominant success metric is the availability of post analysis data. It is critical that brands consider this as important as the pre-planning phase and execution of an experiential campaign.

Yes, we try to keep hold of whatever information that we have but, if people don’t come asking for it then the guys just tend to glaze over it. We struggle to land the experientials on time never mind going through the evaluation process. It is a real shame to be honest because it would help, and we really should step back and evaluate things in depth. (Fanta, Experiential Execution Excellence Manager)

As with any marketing activation, experiential is not the exception and should be subject to evaluation. There are a multitude of approaches which can be employed.
You need a lot of information and tools to be able to do the analysis. So, for example, when I worked for Brand X in the UK we had a full shopper marketing team. We always did a post analysis for every single campaign. They work with the finance team and worked on the return on investment for example, on instore sampling. (Propercorn, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

This research identifies with the importance of benchmarking and A/B testing in order to identify a methodology that suits the brand at question.

We have tried in the past where we have gone back to a location three times, we did this actually with Robinsons Squash. We went a first time with the super concentrate to Stephens Green and were there as people got off the Luas and gave them product in hand to test with a bottle of Ballygowan water. Second time then, they just got the product and then third time, they got a voucher. The hope would then be that their €1 off or 50 cent or whatever it was would be used instore, but the redemption of vouchers were so low. So that was a way we tried to test it and crack it. (Robinsons, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

Although there are unmistakable identified barriers to the application of experiential marketing activations, as previously discussed they also act as success mechanisms; it is essential that brands identify with experiential marketing as an integrated marketing tool and not one to be used in isolation with a clear and consistent key message. By subscribing to this concept, marketers of brands in the FMCG sector will be able to convey a multitude of benefits and data pertaining to the outcome of the marketing investment. Additionally, in order to achieve experiential success, it is important that brands identify with the importance of post analysis to convey the true outcome of the campaign. In the next section, the relevance of ROI and ROE from an experiential marketing perspective will be evaluated.

4.2.2.4 The Process of Evaluating the Outcome of Experiential Marketing
As discussed in the literature review, although there are many calculations available to marketers to evaluate the outcome of experiential marketing, they do not include the evaluation of key metrics that have been deemed valuable to measure by the research participants. It is essential to note that through the evaluation of the interviews, it became

21 Anonymising the brand name for confidentiality purposes.
clear that research participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that all key metrics are measured. Thus, this research identifies a gap in the literature considering that current experiential marketing evaluation tools only measure a component of the success of this communications tool. Alternatively, rather than a calculated return, there are variable tools that determine the value of a campaign that are not typically directly correlated with the experiential activation but rather an output. In line with the views of Wood (2009), this research identifies with the belief that there are a multitude of factors which must be taken into consideration when measuring success.

Before discussing these additional success metrics that are commonly evaluated by brands, it is of great importance to address the calculations used to calculate the return on experience in modern marketing. Offering an alternative perspective than the published contributions by PWC (2019), Ruchi et al. (2017), Harris (2016), Farris et al. (2015), Kehrer (2015), Frawley (2014) and Young and Aitken (2007), there is no generally accepted method of evaluating the success of experiential marketing among participants to this research, as each campaign is bespoke, created to fulfil specific objectives and success is influenced by key performance indicators (KPIs). Therefore, the first step is to identify objectives.

*It probably depends on what our objectives are going into that campaign.* (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)

*I think that depends on the objective. For example, if it is a broad scale experiential campaign your main objective might be word of mouth and you want to know how many people are aware of it so you might do an awareness test to see how many people are actually talking about it, whereas if it is a very simple instore sampling campaign, it might be cost per sample. It is horses for courses depending on the objective.* (Sparking Ice, Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager)

*In terms of experiential on its own, there are some key things that we would look at. The number of interactions would be one, so setting your objective in the case of a competition, it might be that you want a certain number of competition entries per event or in totality or it may be around the number of samples that you want to get out to people during that time and that helps you define what and where you will be doing it because it gives the agency a little more scope.* (Pepsi Max, PepsiCo Marketing Manager)
By setting these objectives, brands are equipped to agree on KPIs which contribute towards the evaluation of an experiential campaign. These KPIs are the cornerstone of what this research presents as the *functional return* of an experiential event as they are prescribed, and targets set in the performance indicators have either been met or not. The *functional return* is comprised of metrics pertaining to social media, the experiential event and public relations metrics.

*When you enter into experiential marketing you set your KPIs and they are absolutely what you are aiming to hit, because otherwise you are operating in a vacuum and there is no goal other than getting the brand out there. That is unquantifiable. So, yes, we do measure it, KPIs are set and they are endeavoured to be reached. (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)*

It is pertinent that brand teams have a clear vision of what must be achieved from an experiential marketing campaign as it can be an expensive method of marketing communications (Supovitz, 2013). Strategic planning, management and implementation are cornerstones of modern experiential marketing practice.

*I think it is absolutely imperative that you put KPIs around everything that you do. We have a number of different ways that we set that. We have media KPIs so we know that we are obviously going to be going out shouting about this activity. We will have very scientific ways of saying that we will hit a number of people and things like with our TV ad, we will have the ability to take to 75% of our target audience market, that they will see the TV ad three times or more, we look at frequency and coverage and lots of media KPIs that would drive it. (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)*

Also falling into the category of the *functional return* of experiential events, is the data that organically emerges from digital marketing and technologies. This typically may correlate to the prescribed KPIs and reach mechanisms identified at the campaign’s conception.

*I think digital has made it easier to quantify something and actually determine how much you are spending for a particular action that you need from the consumer, but I think you need to have that in mind. I don’t think you can execute something without knowing what you want the consumer to do. (Flahavan’s, Brand Manager)*

As previously discussed (Section 2.5) which brings the concept of WOMM to the fore, the accessibility, reach and transparency of the digital realm has offered marketers a new avenue
of communication where they can influence and monitor a captive audience (Kozinets et al., 2010; Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Although the digital amplification component of an experiential marketing campaign may not take place during the physical experiential realm, it still contributes to the total brand experience (Shim, 2012), and therefore should fall into the campaign KPIs.

We would lean on the metrics that we can get from social media, which doesn’t necessarily mean that somebody has been directly in contact with the experience itself, or maybe they have. But whether or not they are giving you a thumbs up or not with regards to the experiential that you have planned or has already taken place is important. (Molson Coors, Customer Marketing Manager)

When we ran our Beans Means Heinz activation, we did a full return on investment on that. For the digital part of it we ran a very strong digital campaign and we actually reached 22 million [impressions] over the period of time. We also did the Beans Means Heinz pop up café and obviously there are not 22 million people living in Ireland but over the timeline that we did the activation, that is how many people we engaged with through our social platforms. We also saw our market share grow which is pretty important. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

Although by employing digital marketing and representing it in the campaign KPIs, it is essential that brands consider the vast amplification abilities of digital marketing and define how brands view and analyse this data.

Our challenge around that obviously is that it could actually be 1 million consumers a few times. The bit that you are challenged with, you know yourself, is internal people saying ‘what do you mean 25 million people, sure there are only 4.5 million people in Ireland’ but you have to explain that that is the potential reach that we have. It is harder for us to break that down. (Ben & Jerry’s, Head of Marketing)

It becomes millions and at that, almost unbelievable. We are constantly questioned internally here about that questioning the validity of those figures and because the figure is so large, we just look at engagement figures. So, I might have engaged with it and you might have seen it because you are my friend and I liked it, but did you engage with it? No, you just saw it. It is just wallpaper to you. So, because of that we just look at engagement figure now. (Barry’s Tea, Brand Manager)
Although reach through digital marketing is a key metric, there are a multitude of other KPIs that derive from digital streams.

*I think social has so many elements and covers so many things like if you have a specific kind of hashtag for an event, you are obviously looking at that. Then you are looking at, as I said, we try and bring influencers with us, so we have them there and have a look at what they generated. I would also look at content captured on the day and understand how that did afterwards. So, if you decided to film on that day and you used that as content, you would track how that is.* (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

*It would be social engagement, digital engagement is probably a big one, it really depends on the activity. It could easily be something like competition entries, it could be opportunity to see the campaign, it could be impressions on digital.* (Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)

*If you are able to track the consumer, say it is an online piece, they have accepted, and you are able to talk to them again and see if they have repeat purchased the product on the back of the purchase. If it is online and you have done sampling through an online mechanic, well, have they come in and repurchased again? If this a mechanic you can use and review their data, then that is fantastic.* (Lynx, Head of Marketing)

In the research presented to date on the *functional return* of an experiential campaign, campaign objectives, KPIs and metrics deriving from digital marketing have been discussed. However, there is one other key component to also be evaluated; event metrics. This research defines event metrics as any data that is collated on the day or any observational research conducted within the realm of the experiential activation. Before delving into different methods of how this is conducted, it is essential to identify that brands will predominantly have multiple event metrics under evaluation during the course of an experiential event. The following quote illustrates the multifaceted approach that brands predominantly will use.

*We use a number of different things. So, the most basic piece is how many people have we spoken to, not just the people at the event but what was the wide coverage that we got from it. Take Pieta House with World Mental Health Day, we run a pre and post survey with people to understand are people aware of the message, do they get the link, what it means from a Lyon’s Tea perspective and the relevancy and all of that. Then if we see any drop offs it’s great, we know we have something to look at.* (Lyon’s Tea, Head of Marketing)
Although the majority of brands will comply with this multifaceted approach, it is valuable to discuss each of these core components individually. Firstly, a critical component to measure is the footfall at the activation. This alone has the ability to influence each of the other event metrics individually.

Footfall would depend on the activation for sure. So, the amount of people who would sample the product. (Breyers Ice Cream, Head of Marketing)

However, depending on the scale of the experiential event, footfall figures may not be a metric which can be quantified, however, this does not stop brands from estimating. There are many ways in which they can get an estimate.

What I would say for shows is that we can judge with visitor numbers to the stand and at certain events you get the entrance figures and in Bloom\textsuperscript{22}, Love Irish Foods\textsuperscript{23} will know how many people came around the Love Irish Food tent and from there we would make a little estimation. (Ballymaloe Foods, Sales & Marketing Manager)

We would track footfall if there was some instant gratis item, so like a freebie on the day. We obviously know that we have 500 t-shirts or whatever it is and if all the t-shirts are gone, well we know that we have reached 500 people. (Coca Cola, Experiential Excellence Execution Manager)

You can get the basic information straight away like how many samples you gave out, what consumers were saying because we always get nuggets from agencies to say what people were saying both good and bad. (MiWadi, Family and Kids Marketing Manager)

In addition to tracking footfall, another important component of metrics which can be tracked at events is consumer feedback. In fact, in this research the ability to gather customer feedback is an apparent driver for brands to implement experiential activations.

Trying to get feedback and data is really important for us. That even goes back to instore sampling, and as much as getting the samples out into hands, you want to know what people thought of it. What is the good, bad and the ugly of what they thought of the product and when

\textsuperscript{22} Created by Bord Bia, Bloom is Ireland’s largest showcase event which celebrates the best of Irish horticulture, food and drink.

\textsuperscript{23} Love Irish Food is an organisation created by Irish food producers to aid customers in making informed choices about making informed choices about buying Irish manufactured foods and drinks.
they tasted it? That helps you pivot, change, do and improve and that is what you need to be constantly to be looking at. So, feedback is key for me. (Breyers Ice Cream, Head of Marketing)

For us, having a survey to see what people thought of the event and then looking at what they thought of everything else like an exit pole or what have you works well (Lynx, Head of Marketing)

In Section 4.2.2.1 to date, the variable tools that contribute to the functional return of experiential marketing have been discussed. This research also identifies the financial return to be comprised of the financial metrics pertaining to the marketing campaign. The subsequent variable tools that arose from the research findings fall into this categorisation.

The predominant variable tool that falls into the category is the measurement of sales figures. Given the perception that experiential marketing is an expensive practice that can have adverse effects on marketing ROI (Supovitz, 2013), it is essential that brands actively link the success of experiential marketing with nominal sales figures.

It is the link to sales for sure. At the end of the day we are all just trying to sell stuff. You have your brand health and your softer metrics, and they are great but they are not what you’re keen to see or really care about. That is the biggest one here. (Denny Meats, Marketing Manager)

Because I work in customer marketing and I am off trade specifically focused, that has a direct link to purchase. (Coors Light, Customer Marketing Manager)

Also, due to the nature of the distribution of these brands, they do not have access to the sales figures as their product is not sold directly to the consumer but through a chain of intermediaries who may or may not disclose the sales data.

Similar to a lot of people who don’t trade on ecommerce platforms, we are never going to be able to see the sales conversion, so we don’t even try to do that. Some companies will try and link to sales but there are too many variables. (Fire and Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)

In addition to sales figures, market share growth is an additional key metric to consider.

It pretty much boils down to sales and our market share. If we are driving a market share then we know people are picking it up and then we obviously look at penetration frequency, all that type of stuff. But I mean the bottom line is that if you know you are selling more product, then you know that you are creating a return. (Heinz, Marketing Manager)
Although sales figures and market share are key components to consider here, one must also recognise the importance of strategically implementing these metrics in order for an increase or decrease in sales to be recognised.

*Instore for example, you would look at the sales on the day and what you would often do is try and pick bench stores versus another store in the network you are going to. Then you look at them and see the two stores as being equal, one with the instore activation and one without the instore activation, what was the relevant uplift of the activation with the one that had the sampling and the one that didn’t.* (Breyers Ice Cream, Head of Marketing)

...we would monitor the sales of the shops in that area and in a 10 km radius of that shopping centre for let’s say 10 weeks beforehand, the 2 weeks that you were in that shopping centre, and then for the weeks after it just to see did our sales actually go up long term in that area. If they see you in the shopping centre or if they bought them from you in the shopping centre, it brought the brand back to front of mind. We have seen consumer sales go up for 36 weeks after we had left the shopping centre with that pop-up campaign. But that was in the UK where there is more data on sales figures and information available and we were able to use some location work that we had done as well. (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)

For sales figures to accurately act as a benchmark for the potential success of an experiential event, strategic markers must be implemented to recognise the influence of the activation. However, a key finding in line with this is the lack of availability of retailer electronic point of sale (EPOS) readings.

*It can sometimes be because obviously you are aligned to getting sales from other retailer and in Ireland, not all of them share their EPOS data with you. That can sometimes put a restraint on having a full review of the campaign. There is one retailer in particular who is quite a large retailer and they don’t share any data with you, so it is very hard to see if your sales are growing. If you are supporting them whether it is instore at an instore sampling, or if you are out in their carpark doing a big experiential activation, it is very hard to gauge whether or not you are selling.* (Heinz, Marketing Manager)

*It is hard to get the retailers to leave their EPOS data more readily available. We can get sales data, but it is very hard to get it by stores. Whereas, in the UK, we would have bought it for the top 4 or 5 retailers so it was much easier. We were also able to look at TV and the effect of TV and say ‘Okay, we are on TV this week, what did our sales go up by?’ and see if there was a lag*
effect as well. There was a much easier way to report back to the business on how your marketing activities were performing. (Tayto, Senior Brand Manager)

The remaining factor which contributes to the financial return on experiential marketing is the availability of valuable data through marketing intermediaries. Upon evaluation, this in turn influences the succession of future experiential mechanisms.

We use all the metrics that we can grab whether it is research through Millward Brown which we invest in every quarter, or whether its beer sales or engagement on social. Then we try and add it all up to give us a view of whether we engaged in a certain experience on a year to year basis. That is how we make decisions. We take all those metrics, put them into the pot and then we will assess whether it is a good idea or not to do it the following year. (Franciscan Well, Customer Marketing Manager)

Synthesis of these findings in this research also identified a third category of evaluation metrics that contributes towards the successful evaluation of an experiential marketing campaign; the holistic return. The holistic return accounts for the brand health metrics which brings the true essence of experiential marketing to life through its ability to aid brand health and the development of emotional ties and two-way communication with consumers. Essentially, the primary measurement tool in this category is brand health. Brand health refers to a collective of measures including brand awareness, brand usership status, brand sentiment, brand recall, brand image and brand relationships. It is important to note that brand health scores are volatile and regularly change and therefore, should be tracked on a continual basis (Mirzaei et al., 2015).

Yes, so we would look at sentiment to the brand and relevancy with our target audience and try to see how people feel towards the brand. We do brand health checks and try and see what consumers think of the brand every year to make sure that we are not losing touch. (O Donnell’s, Senior Brand Manager)

I would say for me, it goes back to the case of the Fire and Smoke activation, it would have been brand health. That would have been a brand health tracking score where we have a company called Millward Brown who track what our consumers think about our product and how they rate it every month. I would have been looking for a noticeable increase in that. (Fire & Smoke Meats, Marketing Manager)
Similar to the strategic approach adopted in the previously discussed financial return metrics, it is essential that brands benchmark their brand health scores to actively track any peaks or falls in their current market presence.

*I would probably look at consumers awareness as well for four weeks beforehand to see is it in the minds of the consumer and then test during and after. I would do that a lot and especially for NPD.* (Club Orange, Local Carbs and Energy Marketing Manager)

*Over the course of a year we would look at what people are saying about Dairygold. Some of the key phrases are ‘is Dairygold a brand that people love?’ You have the brands that people know but that they really don’t love. Love scores would then look at emotional engagement. We would have very specific KPIs around driving a brand love score from before the campaign to a target then for after the campaign and lots of other different brand tracking measures.* (Dairygold, Marketing Manager)

Lastly, although it is a prime opportunity for brands to gather valuable feedback from their target market, it is also an opportunity for observational studies to take place in order for brands to further identify with the key drivers of their target market and identify alternative ones. In line with the views of Wood (2009), it is of importance to note that there is no unified approach to a consumer’s emotional response and it is a result of their own individual experience. The effectiveness of an experiential campaign from a consumer’s perspective is driven by a vast social context which encapsulates previous encounters with the brand, their expectations of the event and the collective touchpoints that they interacted with. Therefore, it is vital to account for individual consumer experience in the evaluation of an experiential marketing campaign.

*We would just very much be looking at what is going on. You can judge to a certain extent, it may only be the 1 in 20 that they do, but you can judge by the people that are there and how they are reacting and know they are getting the same, if not similar experience.* (Dingle Gin, Business Development Manager)

*I am a firm believer in talking to customers. That includes the detail, the research and the feedback that you get from talking to customers from what products they like, don’t like, what they want to see more of, NPD ideas, and availability issues.* (Ballymaloe Foods, Sales and Marketing Manager)
By adopting the three pillars of variable tools as illustrated in Table 4.2, brands have a collective view as to how best employ all their available data sources when evaluating an experiential campaign.

**Table 4.2 The Three Pillars of Variable Tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Return</th>
<th>Financial Return</th>
<th>Holistic Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Marketing Metrics</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Brand Health Metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Metrics</td>
<td>Market Share</td>
<td>Third Party Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Retailer EPOS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Party Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these three categories of metrics have been discussed individually, it is essential for brands to utilise all three pillars in order to encapsulate all factors that comprise an experiential marketing activation.

*Market share is a big one for us, but also the likes of Google hits, spikes in activities around our brands, talkability, hashtags all of that. They are all very important to the relevance of how a campaign has worked. You must understand the strategy for your brand that will dictate what is the right way of measuring it. For Lucozade Energy right now, it has to be about bottom line sales because of the journey that we have gone on. (Lucozade, Regional Business Manager)*

*At the moment we look at it based on volume lift and ROI. But, increasingly we are doing more of what we call Media Mixed Modelling where we breakdown all elements of a campaign and look at them in isolation and assess what impact that they have had on brand perception and look at whether they have actually changed consumers behaviour as well as just looking at it from a straight forward sales volume point of view. But it is very hard to find programmes like that and there are not many companies at this stage which are prepared to invest in that type of activity because it is a lot higher risk. I could say that the easier thing to do is spend your money in traditional media where you get a pretty solid return on your investment. (Kellogg’s, European Marketing Director)*

*In our case in terms of the Office Oats, one of the objectives we had was we wanted for people to come in and visit us. It was about how much engagement was generated online and what they
meant in terms of people coming in. But on a larger scale as well was, we wanted more people to hear about the product, see it and know about it, and that is where all the additional media came in in terms of articles, impressions and reach. (Flahavan’s, Brand Manager)

The evaluation definitely has to be based on the cost, well that is a huge thing, the overall social footprint coming from different sources, consumer feedback and then your own feedback on the engagement that you had with people on the day and whether it was relevant in retrospect, but again, that is a post analysis. That was in it, people wanted hot food. I just don’t know if the bars were particularly relevant. The mindset must be right of the people that are there. So, I think post event analysis in terms of relevance for the event and then if it can be relevant the next year if you amend your concept. And then lastly, did it make sense? (Fulfil, Marketing Manager)

A key observation throughout the topic of evaluation metrics in the interviews was that each campaign, according to its campaign objective and KPIs, will require different metrics from both ROI and ROE which are accounted for in the *functional return, financial return* and *holistic reward* categories. By employing these three categories, brands will be afforded the opportunity to ensure that all aspects of the experiential marketing activation are considered and accounted for.

### 4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings from the interviews with twenty-three industry practitioners profiling fifty brands. These findings were presented in two distinct sections:

1. The lack of consistency in experiential marketing processes; and,
2. Difficulties in calculating the Return on Experience.

Both of these topics offered key insights from the perspective of industry professionals on the implementation and analysis processes of experiential marketing enriching the academic literature on experiential marketing while also offering marketing practitioners key models and formulas to enhance their experiential marketing activity.

In summary, Section 4.2.1 offered insight into the collective approach as to how brands in the FMCG industry effectively implement experiential marketing. This section of the findings commenced with the first key contribution deriving from this research suggesting that although the optimal approach for brands to implement experiential marketing as part of an integrated communications plan (Smilansky, 2009), brands do use experiential marketing
outside of planned communications campaigns, at times as a reactive marketing technique. However, for this to be a good investment, it is crucial that additional experiential activations must tie into the overall brand strategy and employ the same key messaging and narratives as the pre-existing IMC plan. Building on this finding, the succeeding sub-themes offer key insights into the implementation process of experiential marketing, offering insight from the interviews on the correct approach to sampling as part of an experiential marketing activation, reach mechanisms, budget allocations, the correct timing of experiential marketing in an IMC plan, activation mechanisms, target markets and how experiential marketing should be approached during different product lifecycle stages of a brand.

Section 4.2.2 focused on the return on experience as a marketing metric and uncovered a key finding of this research; there is no method of evaluating experiential marketing that allows brands to calculate the return on an experiential marketing activations which evaluates all the key metrics required to determine campaign success. Research participants identified that it is essential to consider ROI and ROE metrics when evaluating an experiential marketing activation through the *functional return*, *financial return* and *holistic reward* metric categories. In order to determine if it positively contributed towards the overall success of an integrated marketing campaign. Deriving from this observation, this research identifies that there is a requirement for a formula that accounts for ROI and ROE metrics when evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing.

In summary, the research findings and analysis as presented in this chapter set the foundations for key contributions that are presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5
Discussion
5.1 Introduction
Chapter 5 will analyse the findings that derived from the interviews, which are presented and structured in the preceding chapter. Emerging from the synthesis of these findings and the existing literature as presented in Chapter 2, is the development of the frameworks proposed in this research. It is worth reflecting on the role that experiential marketing plays in marketing brands in the FMCG industry. Experiential marketing plays an integral role in an integrated marketing communications plan as it grants customers the ability to interact with brands in a unique and dynamic way, which typically leads to stronger brand affinities and aids the articulation of brand values and brand personality more efficiently than any other platform (Chopra et al., 2019). To date, there has been a lack of empirical qualitative data available on the implementation, integration and measurement of experiential marketing. While some data exists on the benefits of engaging with the customer through experiential activities, qualitative data pertaining to the implementation of the practice in the FMCG industry is particularly lacking. Currently, there is no framework or guidelines to support the design, implementation and measurement of experiential marketing. It is a trial and error process. In order to gain insight into the implementation and evaluation process of experiential marketing, interviews were conducted with twenty-three industry practitioners profiling 50 brands. These interviews uncovered consequential and major issues that relate to the implementation and measurement of experiential marketing. As presented in Figure 3.1, the fundamental issues emerging from the interviews can be grouped into two key themes;

1. There is a lack of consistency in how companies use/design experiential marketing; and,

2. There are difficulties in calculating the return on experiential marketing.

Through the analysis of these findings and the extant academic theory on the topic of experiential marketing, this research has resulted in two fundamental contributions pertaining to the application of experiential marketing. These contributions will enrich the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing among practitioners and importantly
Discussion

will add significantly to the academic research in the area. These contributions will be presented in the form of the following two models while encapsulating the multi-faceted and rich nature of findings presented in the previous chapter:

1. The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model; and,
2. Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE) Formula.

Identified through the interviews conducted with industry practitioners, in line with the prescribed research objectives, the following sections constitute an in-depth analytical discussion which offers insight into both of these contributions and their application in modern day marketing practice. Further contributions encompassed within the major models are discussed and reflected in the contributions to academic literature and marketing practice.

5.2 The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model
In recent years, the academic development of the literature on experiential marketing has been a key focus of many authors with Smilansky (2018, 2009), Kailani and Ciobotar (2015), Pine and Gilmore (2013, 1999), Schmitt (2011, 2000), Yuan and Wu (2008) and Lenderman (2005) contributing significantly. However, this development has provided little shared understanding, with a multitude of opinions on its theoretical foundations and the application of the practice. Although there is rich literature available on relating fields to experiential marketing including customer buying behaviour process models, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, relationship marketing, customer relationship management, customer centricity, customer focus and customer engagement, this focus has not been shared in academic research specifically on the topic of experiential marketing. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) point out that there is limited work available which directly relates customer experience and the customer journey in relation to other constructs. The duo state that “there is a strong need to examine how existing marketing constructs, such as service quality, commitment, and customer engagement, relate to customer experience and interact with one another, resulting in the overall customer experience” (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016: 85). Additionally, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) point out a gap in the current literature on the subject stating that there is a lack of guidance for practitioners on the utilisation of experiential marketing, which this study is addressing. Research to date views experiential marketing as “a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company’s marketing
message by involving the target groups in experiential activity” (Drenger et al., 2008: 138), and focuses on its ability to create authentic experiences that generate high levels of audience engagement (Tafasse, 2016). However, although the outcome is clear, the mechanics of delivering this result lack meaningful, cogent and accepted academic research. Little thought has been given to the application and activation of the practice, besides Smilansky’s (2009) contribution suggesting that it should not be used in isolation but rather as an element of an integrated marketing campaign. However, the exact manner as to how this should be achieved has not been examined and thus constitutes a significant gap in current academic literature. It can be argued that without an accurate approach to the successful implementation of experiential marketing, the practice will remain ineffectively utilised. To date, research into the following components of experiential marketing is lacking and this research aims to uncover fundamental knowledge which is presently lacking on these subject matters:

- Effective targeting of market segments when implementing an experiential marketing activation for a brand;
- The optimised timelines which experiential marketing should be activated in an integrated marketing campaign;
- How to approach budget allocations for experiential marketing activity in an integrated marketing campaign; and
- How to measure the outcome of an experiential marketing activation while incorporating all the relevant metrics.

Substantiated by the interviews, the following section presents the first major contribution deriving from this research - The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model. As previously discussed (Section 4.2.1), there is a lack of convergence in methods of implementing experiential marketing employed by companies in the research pool, resulting in this marketing tool being difficult to measure. Through the analysis of the interviews, six fundamental steps became apparent when conducting a marketing campaign that employs experiential marketing, which act as to the foundation to the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model. This framework, as illustrated in Figure 5.1, offers theoretical structure to experiential marketing for both academics and marketing practitioners alike.
Figure 5.1 The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model

Source: (Barry, 2020).
Before delving into a detailed discussion on each stage of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, its application in modern day marketing will firstly be discussed to contextualise this contribution.

5.2.1 The Application of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model

As evidenced in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, the theoretical development of experiential marketing has garnered much academic interest including Smilansky (2018, 2009), Kailani and Ciobotar (2015), Pine and Gilmore (2013, 1999), Schmitt (2011, 2000), Yuan and Wu (2008) and Lenderman (2005). However, as this communications tool becomes more prominent in modern marketing practice this research argues that there is still a lack of a universal theoretical approach as to how experiential marketing should be implemented among both academics and marketing practitioners alike. The lack of theoretical development of experiential marketing was apparent in the interviews which offered a clear outlook on the practitioners’ perspective. Although Chapter 4 offers an insightful view into the modern practice of experiential marketing in the FMCG sector, an apparent issue is the lack of uniformity in the application of this marketing tool. Throughout the discussion of the key themes, each of these allude to the differing perspectives as to how to successfully implement an experiential activation despite the brands all being in the same sector. At a practical level, it can be argued that without an accurate approach to the successful implementation of experiential marketing, the practice will continue to lack clarity and not be recognised as an established method of marketing communications.

Through the development of this new significant contribution to academic literature on the practice of experiential marketing, marketers in the FMCG industry are equipped with a unified approach to successfully implement a marketing campaign utilising experiential marketing. As evidenced throughout this research, the lack of clarity before the establishment of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model in planning and the implementation of experiential marketing has led to mass efforts of brands trying to haphazardly use this in vogue communications tool due to the perceived benefits as discussed by many including Li and Yang (2010). This has led to brands un成功fully utilising experiential marketing either as a component of an integrated campaign or alternatively, in isolation and upon evaluation seeing that there was in fact no benefit to the brand or that it was an extremely costly exercise. The establishment of this framework adds to not only the toolkit of the modern
marketer but academia alike and equips marketing practitioners with the ability to successfully implement an experiential marketing campaign.

Now that the application on the relevance of the Experiential Marketing Implementation has been discussed offering context on the subject matter, a detailed explanation of each stage of this model will be discussed in detail.

5.2.2 The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model: A Detailed Explanation

Reflecting on the key finding from Section 4.2.1 which suggests that academic literature lacks a theoretical model on the implementation of experiential marketing, a unified approach has been identified to enrich both academic literature and marketing practice when activating this communications tool. Instead of companies identifying with their own approaches, this research offers a structure to enrich the academic literature that codifies the various elements that are required to undertake an experiential activation. Before the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model is further explained, it is important to contextualise where this model falls into in the process of IMC marketing. Reflecting on the work of Smilansky (2018, 2009), and the findings presented in Section 4.2.1.1 deriving from the interviews with industry practitioners, IMC marketing plays a role in the successful implementation of experiential marketing. This is primarily due to three predominant reasons:

1. It optimises the ROI of experiential marketing when it is combined with mass marketing activities;
2. Alone, experiential marketing cannot deliver on reach metrics, and therefore, requires mass marketing activities in order to inform customers about the product; and,
3. As traditional marketing does not facilitate authentic interactions and two-way communication with customers (Schmitt, 2000, 1999a), experiential marketing complements the reach mechanisms of traditional mass marketing by creating opportunities for these interactions to take place (Kailani and Ciobotar, 2015; LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Lenderman, 2005; Li and Yang, 2010).

Therefore, for the purpose of this investigation, Belch et al.’s (2001) Integrated Communication Planning Model has been adapted to identify where the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model is strategically activated. Considering that the role that experiential marketing plays has evolved since the inception of Belch et al.’s (2001) model, it
is essential to now include this marketing communication tool to both update this approach and depict the role that the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model plays in line with this approach. As seen in Figure 5.2, Belch et al.’s (2001) Integrated Communications Planning Model retains all the fundamental steps required in the implementation of an IMC campaign. However, through the introduction of experiential marketing and the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, additional steps happen congruently to this process. Considering that the steps as seen in the Integrated Communications Planning Model are deemed important in the planning of integrated campaign, the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model compliments it by additionally including experiential marketing as it plays an integral role in modern marketing. The utilisation of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model commences after the fifth step of the Integrated Communications Planning Model where the development of the IMC plan happens by selecting the appropriate communications methods. Throughout the rest of this process, both of these models play a role, and must both be used to successfully create an IMC campaign that uses experiential marketing as a communications tool.
Discussion

Figure 5.2 The Strategic Placement of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model in the Integrated Communications Planning Model

5.2.2.1 Customer Segmentation

Deriving from the analysis of the findings in Section 4.2.1.7 on target markets that are responsive to experiential marketing, a clear contribution arising from the empirical data is that brands should not assume that experiential marketing is only relevant for younger generations including Gen Z and Millennials. Alternatively, brands should firstly ask themselves ‘how relevant is this product and marketing activation to our target market?’ , and secondly, they should adopt a multi-generational approach and make it applicable to all that
it is relevant to without alienating or categorising others. Hence, this forms the first step in the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model.

As evidenced in Section 4.2.1.7, the interviews conducted for the purpose of this research identified with two predominant approaches to customer segmentation; generational marketing and multi-generational marketing. To recap on the rationale behind these approaches, research participants including Orchard Thieves, Tayto and Lucozade who adopt the practice of generational marketing, tend to do so as they feel that the practice is most applicable to Generation Z and Millennials. This view is shared by Chaney et al. (2017), Debevec et al. (2013), Williams and Page (2011) and Himmel (2008). The predominant reason for the selection of these generations was due to their receptiveness towards digital technologies and social media (Duffett, 2017; James and Levin, 2015; McKenzie et al., 2012; Mc Crindle and Wolfinger, 2009). Alternatively, brands such as Flahavan’s and Fulfil elect for a multi-generational approach. Simms (2008) defines this as an *ageless society* where people are not defined by age but by the activities they are involved in. In order for experiential marketing to generate a positive return on investment, the current research argues that although experiential marketing is applicable to Generation Z and Millennials, it is not isolated to these generational cohorts. The majority of research participants identified with the multi-generational approach as it was deemed to have a stronger return on investment.

Interestingly, Sharp (2010) finds that even when brands try to target specific markets, it results in the development of vast customer bases, so long as they are gaining market share. Therefore, when a brand’s market share grows, the more diverse their customer base becomes. The appropriate approach is not to segregate generational cohorts, but alternatively, identify the desired characteristics, interests, needs or wants that are relevant to the product or the marketing campaign and ensure that they are not isolated to one generational cohort or specific consumer collective but shared amongst many. As long as an experiential activation is authentic and relevant to a customer base, any audience, despite generational cohorts, will react positively to the marketing tool. Thus, by employing a multi-generational approach, it can positively enhance the consumer – brand relationship.

For example, when interviewing the Flahavan’s Brand Manager, she mentioned the brands involvement in food festivals, specifically the West Waterford Festival of Food. On this
occasion they were launching a new product in their portfolio; Overnight Oats. It was quite different to the traditional lines in their product portfolio and in the market in general. Flahavan’s had a clear target audience defined for this which was categorised as “a younger audience profile, very conscious about health, are fitness fanatics, foodies and consume healthy food to fuel them for the day.” Through product sampling on the day, it became evident that the targeting strategy had over segmented the market incorrectly, as the product garnered the interest of prospective consumers of all ages who were very open to the new concept, even if their first preference would have been the traditional Flahavan’s product offering; hot oats. As a result, they altered their communications plan to not specifically focus on the demographical component of their audience, but rather the psychographic element focusing on health-conscious consumers who consume healthy food to fuel them for their day. This has since become a successful product in the Flahavan’s product portfolio. Throughout the interviews, similar viewpoints were also shared by many brands including Fulfil, Propercorn, Sparkling Ice, Kellogg’s, Fire and Smoke Meats and Denny Meats also. By adopting a multi-generational approach, experiential marketing has a greater return as it has appeal to a vast target market while still being relevant to them. It is essential to not make assumptions on receptive target markets through generalisations, but rather to adopt a multi-generational mindset where the personality characteristics of the target audience are perceived as more important.

Therefore, when segmenting a market when utilising the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, segmentation should be conducted using multi-generational psychographic customer segmentation. This approach harnesses relevant personal values, interests, hobbies, opinions, personality traits and values to ensure that the experiential marketing will enact relevant memory structures. Each of these segmentation tools can account for multiple demographical cohorts and offer a broad but still relevant target market. The benefit of this approach is explicitly stated by Binet and Field (2013: 26); “the efficiency of broad-reaching campaigns aimed at both existing and potential customers is dramatically greater (by a factor of 10) than those targeting either type of customer alone”.

Once the brand has accurately identified their desired customer segments, it is essential to set campaign/ experiential objectives. The next section discusses this step in the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model.
5.2.2.2 Setting Campaign Objectives

The importance of setting objectives for marketing campaigns has been widely researched and recognised (for example, Keegan and Rowley, 2017; Doyle, 2004; Keung and Kawalek, 1997; Hammer and Champy, 1994; Young, 1966). Fifield (2012: 176) defines marketing objectives as “the aim or goal to which all marketing activities in the organization must be directed over the planning period”. They are generated as a benchmark to aid the measurement of the performance of a firm’s campaign while taking into consideration the business and marketing objectives. By nature, objectives used for marketing communications are hierarchically related with strategic corporate objectives that are relevant to all levels of the organisation (Leppäniemi, and Karjaluoto, 2008). Additionally, it is essential to emphasise that the objectives and strategies pertaining to individual campaigns are linked and contribute to the overarching marketing communications objectives and the corporate marketing communications (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Objectives of this nature are typically related to building and generating brand and product awareness, disseminating information and the development of attitudinal components or affecting consumer behaviour (Delozier, 1976). Customarily, objectives are created in the pre-campaign planning process and offer direction for the key performance indicators (KPIs) which will be further discussed in Section 5.2.1.3, and collated metrics post campaign (Keegan and Rowley, 2017).

It is worth noting that objectives pertaining to a marketing campaign should be SMARRTT: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, relevant, targeted and timed. By ensuring objectives are SMARRTT, it ensures that from the outset there are clear and precise goals to build a successful strategy to effectively evaluate its outcome (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Table 5.1 details what is required for objectives to be SMARRTT.
### Table 5.1 SMARRTT Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific</strong></td>
<td>Objectives should be directional, clear and precise on what is to be achieved. It is essential that objectives relate to specific end results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurable</strong></td>
<td>Objectives should always have a quantified measurement statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievable</strong></td>
<td>Objectives cannot be unrealistic and must be capable of being reached. The department must be able to meet the specified objective set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Realistic</strong></td>
<td>Objectives must be realistic. Unrealistic objectives can be demoralising for teams and individuals when they are not achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant</strong></td>
<td>Objectives must be appropriate to the task at hand. It is essential that they are specifically related to a problem or task that the business has identified, should have due regard towards marketing and corporate objectives and contribute towards their fulfilment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeted</strong></td>
<td>It is essential that objectives relate to audience segments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timed</strong></td>
<td>Objectives must have a clearly stated time frame which signifies date by which they should be achieved. This enables marketers to schedule and monitor the marketing campaign and denotes when the evaluation should commence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pickton and Broderick (2005).

In line with the aforementioned contributions, research participants in the current research study confirmed that this is the logical next step when creating a campaign with experiential marketing is the identification of campaign objectives. The manner in which experiential marketing will come to life derives from the set campaign objective. In Section 4.2.1.1, research participants including Nestle, Birds Eye and Propercorn emphasised the importance of having defined campaign objective in order to assess the suitability of experiential marketing and the method in which it will be delivered. Additionally, discussed in this section is the utilisation of experiential marketing outside of a prescribed IMC campaign with two thirds having done this in past activations. However, these brands suggest that although the activation may be occurring outside of a planned IMC campaign, the experiential activation
still very much ties in with the overall campaign objective. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that throughout the direction of an IMC campaign, all experiential marketing activation must conform with the campaign objective. Section 4.2.2.4 further expands on the importance of campaign objectives disclosing that without the establishment of campaign objectives and KPIs, it is difficult to measure the effect of a marketing campaign as there is no benchmark to evaluate. As indicated by the Sparking Ice Healthy Beverages and Snacks Marketing Manager and the Pepsi Max Marketing Manager, the direction a campaign takes, whether it be an instore or external marketing activation working in isolation or as a component of a larger marketing campaign, solely depends on the campaign objective and what the brand wants to achieve in that particular point in time. Accordingly, campaign objectives form a key part of experiential marketing as all activity should relate back to this core objective according to the current research.

The respondents indicated that when setting campaign objectives for an integrated marketing campaign employing experiential marketing, it is essential to have a clear objective that required an experiential activation to be achieved. The following are examples of such objectives which research participants referred to:

- Brand in hand;
- Increase customer lifetime value;
- Improve brand saliency and demand around new products;
- Increase brand awareness;
- Increase brand relevance in consumers lives;
- Enhance brand and customer affinities; and,
- Produce authentic interactions affording the customers to understand the brand.

Deriving from the campaign objective, additional planning is required through the formation of campaign KPIs which will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.3 Setting Campaign KPIs
Having discussed the establishment of campaign objectives, the identification of KPIs are critical to guide and effectively evaluate a marketing campaign (Keegan and Rowley, 2017). Deriving from the campaign objectives, Bauer (2004:63) defines KPIs as “quantifiable metrics which reflect the performance of an organisation in achieving its goals and objectives”. In
Section 4.2.2.4, forty-two of the profiled brands including Barry’s Tea, O’ Donnell’s and Dairygold identify with the importance of KPI formulisation in marketing as it affords the brand the opportunity to evaluate the campaign. KPIs facilitate the measurement of performance of marketing campaigns and initiate benchmarking. Essentially, they indicate the effectiveness and efficiency of the performance of a marketing campaign (Vucomanovic et al., 2010). For KPIs to be an effective measurement system it is suggested that the following characteristics must be apparent (Parmenterg, 2007; University of Warwick, 2006; Maskel, 1991):

1. They must be connected to the overall business strategy to ensure operational success;
2. They must encompass both financial and non-financial measures;
3. They must be frequently measured and adapt to reflect changes in strategy;
4. They must be understood by all key stakeholders to ensure the optimal outcome; and,
5. They tie responsibility to an individual or a team.

Built on this theoretical foundation and the findings from the interviews, this research proposes three categories of KPIs which offer structure to marketing practitioners when setting these business metrics for experiential marketing. These KPIs are congruent with the categories of metrics in Section 4.2.2.4; functional return, financial return and holistic reward. The KPI categories are explained as follows:

1. Functional KPIs which are directly related to the desired outcome of the utilisation of digital marketing, experiential event marketing and public relations;
2. Financial KPIs which are comprised of the financial aspirations of implementing an experiential marketing campaign; and,
3. Holistic KPIs which involve brand health metrics which correlate with the long-term effect of the experiential marketing campaign.

Although these three categories have been previously discussed, in the context of evaluating the outcome of an experiential campaign, this research argues that this categorisation is relevant to both the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model in addition to methods of evaluation. The alignment of the categorisation of functional, financial and holistic KPIs is essential in order to successfully implement and evaluate a marketing campaign.
Table 5.2 Congruent Nature of the Categories of KPIs and Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Return</th>
<th>Financial Return</th>
<th>Holistic Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional KPI</strong></td>
<td><strong>Financial KPI</strong></td>
<td><strong>Holistic KPI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
<td>Return on Investment</td>
<td>Brand Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a clear purpose behind dividing the KPIs into these three categories. The rationale behind this derives from the diverse nature of measurement metrics referred to by research participants throughout the analysis of the research findings. Although according to the input of the industry professionals who took part in the interviews, they are currently used in isolation. Each of these metrics are fundamental in the evaluation of experiential marketing and not one of them can be disregarded. Therefore, each of them is fundamental in the establishment of KPIs. Table 5.2 portrays what falls into each category of KPI. It is also important to note that in each of these three categories, brands may attribute more than one KPI. Reflecting back on a quote from the O’ Donnell’s Senior Brand Manager in Section 4.2.2.4, who states that they create a Campaign KPI sheet of multiple KPIs. It is essential to assign KPIs to all components of a campaign to fully appreciate the outcome of it.

In line with Locke and Latham’s (1990) view of goal setting theory, this research would suggest that by utilising these previously discussed categories of KPIs, this structured nature of campaign planning should enhance the marketing activity. These three categories of KPIs emerged from the empirical data as most important as they are comprised of key metrics which relate to the successful implementation of an experiential activation. By assigning a KPI to each of these key categories, it ensures that these three pillars are considered and that all core components are accounted for.

The following section will discuss the fourth step in this process, campaign budget allocation.
5.2.2.4 Campaign Budget Allocation

Once the campaign objectives and the three categories of KPIs have been established, the sequential step in the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model is campaign budget allocation. As previously discussed throughout Section 4.2, interview participants value experiential marketing and do view it as a critical component in modern day marketing practice. This is due to its unique ability to build authentic two-way interactions and bespoke experiences directly with a consumer. However, when allocating funds from the campaign budget, this stature and prominence is not evident in the discussions in Section 4.2.1.4. In this section, interview participants clearly state that while experiential marketing is a valuable communications tool, traditional and mass market communications are prioritised in budget allocations. When discussing the budgets available for experiential marketing in modern marketing practice, Wood (2009) and Event View (2006) suggest that organisations are reallocating the majority of their budget from traditional marketing methods to experiential marketing events. This research contradicts these views; however, this may be due to the development of the practice overtime and the difficulties with evaluating the success of an experiential activation. The current research finds that the allocation of spend to experiential marketing is 10-40% of the campaign budget. Table 5.3 summarises the budget allocation for experiential marketing for a selection of brands participating in this research.

Table 5.3 Summary of Budget Allocation for Experiential Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Experiential Marketing Budget Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heinz</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heineken</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle</td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucozade</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribena</td>
<td>40 - 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfil</td>
<td>30 - 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire &amp; Smoke Meats</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Roots</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flahavan’s</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Shoot</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparking Ice</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayto</td>
<td>40% (including Tayto Park Sponsorship)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Evidently, experiential marketing does not receive the majority of the marketing budget of brands profiled for this research. In Section 4.2.1.4, the Monster Energy Experiential Execution Excellence Manager indicates that the budget allocation process and states that the available funds tend to be cannibalised by traditional marketing methods to ensure that there are rich consumer touchpoints instore and in high footfall areas. This sentiment is shared by the Purina Shopper Activation Manager also. The Cadbury Marketing Manager offers additional insight into this observation stating that the budget allocation for experiential, social and public relations is extracted from the remainder of the budget. To reiterate this point, participants stated “it is more around an objective where we need to hit a certain coverage for a media perspective and then we revisit the budget after that and see what is available in terms of experiential...”. At this point it is essential to note that the budget allocated to experiential marketing in an integrated marketing campaign does depend on the campaign objective. Therefore, depending on the role that experiential marketing plays to successfully meet the campaign objective and KPIs, experiential marketing can be used in a multitude of ways. This results in different amounts of the budget being allocated to the communications tool. Thus, this research suggests that 10-40% of marketing spend is a common amount to allocate to experiential marketing with the degree of variance depending on the scope to which experiential marketing is required to meet the campaign objective and prescribed KPIs.

Once the campaign budget has been allocated, this research suggests that one should plan the campaign timeline and each of the marketing tools being employed. This will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.5 Timeline of Campaign

The strategic timing of experiential marketing in the lifespan of a marketing campaign was a topic that emerged as very significant from the empirical data. Indeed, this is an area that there is a dearth of academic research in, as identified in the research objectives, and is therefore, a key focus of this research contribution. For a campaign using experiential marketing to be deemed a success it requires precise timing and the optimisation and amplification of each component. In order to achieve this, a brand must firstly evaluate the experiential process. This research suggests that experiential marketing should not be used at the beginning of the lifecycle of the marketing campaign, but after the utilisation of
As discussed in Section 4.2.1.3 by interviewees including Flahavan’s, Denny Meats and Birds Eye, it is essential to first conduct a targeted traditional marketing campaign due to its ability to build awareness. Traditional marketing by nature offers marketers mass reach due to its widespread scale (Peppers and Rogers, 1995). For the purpose of this study, the practice of traditional marketing is comprised of the following communications tools:

- Print Media
- Out of Home Advertising
- Radio & Television Broadcast
- Digital Marketing
- Email Marketing
- Direct Mail
- Sponsorship

Endorsing the utilisation of mass marketing activities, Sharp (2010: 39) states that “smart marketers know they need to reach all buyers (i.e. buyers of the category, and everyone from light to heavy buyers of a brand) in order to reinforce buying propensities, and to win new
sales”. The intent of traditional marketing being positioned first in this triad of activities lies with the premise that it is controllable by the brand, can ensure campaign amplification and builds relevant memory structures for the mass audience. Denny Meat’s Marketing Manager refers to the fact that when using traditional marketing methods that the content is always ‘polished’, is ‘100% on brand throughout’ and ‘explains the brands values and what it stands for’. For experiential marketing to be successful, the brand infrastructure and key messaging must already have been established and disseminated. Experiential marketing should not be utilised unless a brand has a healthy level of brand penetration and consumers are aware of the brand that they are interacting with. Through this staged interaction, consumers then build a deeper understanding of the brand due to their immersion in the brand values. Another consideration that resonates with this approach is that without relevant memory structures, narratives and cues being established through traditional mass marketing, customers can hijack a brands establishment and management of memory structures, narratives and cues, resulting in alternative messages and meanings being created and disseminated (Cova and Pace, 2006; Muñiz Jr and Schau, 2007). This is typically an action motivated by passion rather than antagonism towards a given brand (Cova and Fuschillo, 2013).

Once the initial stage of mass marketing has been completed, through the use of experiential marketing, brands then have the ability to give the campaign a new dimension through two-way communication. As previously discussed in Section 2.3 and throughout Chapter 4, experiential marketing plays a vital role in modern marketing communications. As stated by the Birds Eye Marketing Manager, experiential marketing affords a brand the opportunity to expand on a core message to help consumers understand what the brands essence is, along with the product being more engaging to them on a personal level as they build their own relationship with it through staged activations. In this stage, authentic two-way interactions are created through experiential marketing initiatives that bring the brand’s memory structures, narratives and cues to life, offering the consumer the opportunity to make them personally relevant in their lives. This cannot be achieved in the first stage of this process as there is no authentic or personalised interaction with the customer base. Thus, it is essential to always use mass marketing and experiential marketing sequentially and use each of these communications tools to their strengths.
As previously discussed throughout Section 4.2.1, experiential marketing implementation is prescriptive by nature and not one approach will be applicable to all brands as the type of activation is derived from the campaign objectives and KPIs. Along with the campaign objectives and KPIs, this research has stressed that there are many factors that can contribute towards the decision to activate experiential marketing activity. Therefore, within the model this stage is influenced by many factors including, 1) budget allocation, 2) the brands preference towards internal or external activations, 3) the responsiveness of the relevant target market/s, and 4) the brands stage in the product lifecycle. As the findings of the research stresses that each of these four factors play a critical role in the success of experiential marketing, it is essential to progress the conversation on each of these topics.

1. **Budget Allocation:** Through the analysis of the research findings deriving from the interviews in Section 4.2.1.4, this research has enriched the academic literature on this topic. While evaluating the twenty-three interviews profiling fifty brands, it arose that on average, they typically allocate between 10-40% of their budget to experiential marketing. However, considering the scale of a brand, the figures attached to this percentage can drastically vary and influence the choice of experiential activations. Therefore, brands need to choose where they lie on the 10-40% scale depending on the size of the business, their turnover, the money allocated to the overall marketing budget, and campaign objectives and KPIs.

2. **The Brands Preference Towards Internal or External Activations:** Section 4.2.1.5 introduced the categorisation of internal and external brand activations. Again, a brands preference towards either of these types of brand activations can heavily influence the implementation of experiential marketing in the timeline of the campaign. For example, for small to medium enterprises or brands who do not have as much funds available to activate experiential marketing, internal brand activations close to the point of purchase that typically revolve around a sampling mechanism are essential. This should be the core experiential focus as it allows consumers to build an understanding of the brand with low investment. As the brand grows, they can additionally expand to larger experiential events, that may take place outside the confines of a retail establishment that retails the product.
3. **The Responsiveness of the Relevant Target Market/s:** Although different brands identified with different target market strategies as previously discussed (Section 4.2.1.7) and in the first stage of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, a clear preference was multi-generational marketing strategies, where brands do not specifically target customers based on attributes of a generational group, but alternatively identify with consistent characteristics among generations (Chaney *et al.*, 2017). Deriving from the viewpoint of the interview participants, this approach was deemed more suited to experiential marketing as it ensures that the activation appeals to as many customers as possible and in turn, makes the ROI more efficient.

4. **The Brands Stage in the Product Lifecycle:** When discussing the applicability of the product lifecycle to experiential marketing (Section 4.2.1.8), interview participants identified that when utilising experiential marketing, it is essential to consider the PLC stage that the brands reside in. Additionally, according to the PLC stage, brands must adjust their experiential approach to ensure an optimal outcome of the marketing activity. Hence, brands must track growth and development from a PLC perspective in order to effectively activate experiential marketing activity.

After the experiential marketing activation has occurred, brands must ensure that the marketing activation must transcend the physical barriers of the event, if applicable, and allow it to live on a greater platform, online, to ensure an efficient and effective return on the investment. This research identifies that this can be achieved through two mechanisms; experiential amplification and experiential optimisation. Experiential amplification requires sharing captured content created during the experiential event and sharing it on social platforms so that one does not have to physically be at the event to immerse themselves in the activation. It typically comes in the form of videos, pictures or user generated content. Experiential optimisation requires capturing this content and repurposing it. For example, brands taking a long form video and creating a series of shorter videos or using user generated content to create content for their own social platforms.

As depicted in Figure 5.3, there is an additional component that runs concurrently with the timeline of a marketing campaign using experiential marketing; The Experiential Event Amplification Framework. Although the conceptualisation of this model has previously been discussed (Sections 4.2.1.6) and shown in Figure 4.1, it is a fundamental factor in the timeline
of experiential marketing in order to amplify the experiential event beyond its physical presence, digital technologies must be applied to reach a mass audience. Key findings of this research, enhance the existing literature on the topic, Figure 5.4 portrays the strategic timing of where each of the stages fall into the timeline of a campaign.

Figure 5.4 The Application of the Experiential Event Application Framework in the Timeline of an Experiential Campaign

Through the alignment of these two frameworks, there is a structure for the development of strategic timing and the implementation of a marketing campaign utilising experiential marketing.

Further to this, it is important to note that there is no fixed duration for each of these stages, this is unique to the campaign plan. However, this research finds that it is essential to put a timeframe on both the experiential optimisation and amplification stage of the campaign.
Discussion

timeline along with the after phase in the Experiential Event Application Framework in order to be able to evaluate the campaign and assess brand health metrics.

Following on from the completion of the marketing campaign, it is essential to evaluate its success (Dunn, 2009). Section 5.2.2.6 continues to do this in the final step of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model.

5.2.2.6 ROI Calculation and Evaluation
The concluding stage of this framework requires the evaluation of the campaign. As previously discussed (Section 4.2.2), although there are methods of evaluating experiential marketing available to marketers including MROI, ROE² and ROX, this research identifies that marketing professionals do not use these as they do not evaluate all the essential key metrics which are critical to the success of an experiential marketing campaign. Thus, built on the findings from the interviews a key contribution deriving from this research which enhances the current literature on the topic of experiential marketing is the Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE) formula. ROIE offers marketers the ability to firstly account for all key metrics in the evaluation of an experiential marketing activation, and secondly, uncover the contribution that an experiential marketing activation makes towards the overall success of an integrated marketing campaign. Considering that this accounts for the second key findings on this research, it will be discussed in detail in the following section.

5.3 Return on Integrated Experience
Resulting from findings as previously discussed throughout Section 4.2.2, a topic which garnered much attention and focus was how companies evaluate the outcome of an experiential marketing activation. Respondents in this research study outlined differing opinions of the methodology they employ to evaluate the practice. This research identifies three predominant categories that brands are focusing on:

1. Return on Investment (ROI)
2. Return on Experience (ROE)
3. A combination of both approaches

Table 5.4, as previously presented (Section 4.2.2.2) categorises the brand participants according to their focus on each of these methods. Although 46% of brands that participated in this study stated that their primary concern was calculating the ROI of a campaign, they
also stated that they do measure figures pertaining to digital metrics, public relations and the experiential event itself.

Table 5.4 Categorisation of Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROI</th>
<th>ROE</th>
<th>Combination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carling</td>
<td>Ballymaloe Foods</td>
<td>Dingle Gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadbury</td>
<td>Birds Eye</td>
<td>Lucozade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca Cola</td>
<td>Strong Roots</td>
<td>Fruit Shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayto</td>
<td>Breyers Ice Cream</td>
<td>Robinsons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry’s Tea</td>
<td>Pepsi Max</td>
<td>Ribena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flahavan’s</td>
<td>Lipton</td>
<td>Mi Wadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairygold</td>
<td>7up</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Smoke Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Chocolate</td>
<td>Lyon’s Tea</td>
<td>Propercorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparking Ice</td>
<td>Ben &amp; Jerry’s</td>
<td>Club Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Lynx</td>
<td>Orchard Thieves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franciscan Well</td>
<td>Fulfil</td>
<td>Desperados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowntrees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coors Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Murphy’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purina</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heinz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestle Cereals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Heineken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nescafe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Denny Meats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep RiverRock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schweppes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monster Energy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’ Donnell’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Earlier, it was presented that there are methods available to marketers to aid them in evaluating the outcome of an experiential marketing campaign. These include the concept of return on marketing investment (MROI, also referred to as ROMI) as previously discussed by Lenskold (2003) and Powell (2002), return on experience (ROE) as discussed by Lenderman (2005), Frawley’s (2014) ROE² and PWC’s (2019) ROX which evaluates the accumulative effect of the customer experience and the employee experience. During the interviews it became apparent that these methods of evaluating experiential marketing were not being used by the interviewees. The primary reason for this was that these calculations do not account for all the relevant metrics that brands are measuring and therefore, do not offer a view of the campaign result in totality. Essentially, the previously discussed metrics, as depicted in Figure
5.5, either primarily focus on the return of investment or the return on experience in isolation, however the brands profiled for the purpose of this research study use both of these forms of metrics. Therefore, there is significant need to develop a method of calculation that is comprised of all the relevant metrics.

Figure 5.5 The Continuum of Experiential Return Calculations

Therefore, this research identifies and satisfies the requirement for an alternative method of calculating the return on experiential marketing that is comprised of all the required metrics to successfully appraise the outcome of an experiential marketing campaign. It is essential that this approach is constituted of both ROI and ROE measurements to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the marketing practice. This leads to the second main contribution of this research; Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE). Deriving from the analysis of the interviews with industry professionals, ROIE offers academics and marketing practitioners a formula which accounts for all the fundamental categories of metrics which have not been considered in the previously published ROE measurements. ROIE lies in the middle of the continuum of ROI and ROE as presented in Figure 5.5 and allows for the analysis of both of these critical factors to occur in one convenient calculation.

5.3.1 Return on Integrated Experience: An Introduction
As previously discussed, a fundamental issue with the extant methods for evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing is that they do not account for all of the critical metrics used to evaluate the practice. Reflecting on the previously discussed viewpoint of Gill et al. (2017), engagement initiatives have quintessential differences from traditional marketing methods and thus, these must be reflected in methods of evaluation. For example, in the
analysis of the interviews throughout Section 4.2.2, interviewees clearly state that there are a multitude of metrics they measure through KPIs which include social media metrics, event metrics, PR metrics, brand health metrics and financial measurements including data from retailer EPOS and category sales uplift. However, they all unanimously agreed that the evaluation formulas which are presently available to marketers do not account for all of these, so alternatively, they just measure KPIs which still does not contribute towards a transparent return to the business. Therefore, brands are not using the methods of calculation available to them and in certain cases forfeiting the action of reflecting a campaign in its totality. In Section 4.2.2.4, all the metrics that are employed by brands were evaluated and compartmentalised into three categories:

1. Functional Metrics
2. Financial Metrics
3. Holistic Metrics

These categories of metrics take inspiration from Kaplan and Norton’s (1992) paper outlining the Balanced Scorecard Approach. Similarly, in this case this contribution appraises the outcome of an experiential marketing activation from more than one approach. Through the three aforementioned categories, it measures the campaign metrics, the financial performance of the campaign and the effect that the marketing campaign has had on the brand. Table 5.5 lists all of the metrics in these categories that arose from the interviews with industry practitioners that they collectively use when evaluating the practice of experiential marketing which were previously discussed in Section 4.2.2.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Metrics</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Holistic Metrics</th>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Reach</td>
<td>Figures coming in</td>
<td>Brand Usership Status</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Penetration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Amplification</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Brand Recall</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link Clicks</td>
<td>Working/Non-Working Speed</td>
<td>Brand Image</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags Utilisation</td>
<td>Projected ROI V Real ROI</td>
<td>Category Sale Uplift</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Engagement</td>
<td>Investment Vs the period</td>
<td>Investment Vs the period</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Earned Mentions</td>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>Emotion Engagement</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Tracking</td>
<td>Value Set</td>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Impressions</td>
<td>Retailer EPOS</td>
<td>Brand Uplift</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click Through Rate</td>
<td>Market Share</td>
<td>Brand Uplift</td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Entries</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounce Rate</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Rate</td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
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<td>Email Open Rate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click Through Rate (CTR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencers Outreach Coverage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Impressions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Google Hits &amp; Spikes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
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<td>Average Session Duration</td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Website Traffic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Per Click (CPC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking of Specified Keywords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Interacted with the Brand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footfall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freebie Dissemination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples Distributed</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume Targets</td>
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<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Revenue Generated on the Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads Captured</td>
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<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Check Ins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Attendee Satisfaction Surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Polling Response Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total Registrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPR Approved Emails Gathered for Mailing List</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Vs Activation Footfall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brand Sentiment</td>
<td>Brand Growth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Publicity Reach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media Impressions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readership of articles</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PR mentions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share of voice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media Outreach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Message Penetration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicity Engagement</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.5 Return on Integrated Investment Metrics**
Using these key categories of metrics, the following details how they collectively offer the foundation of the Return of Integrated Experience (ROIE) formula.

The ROIE calculation takes inspiration from two financial measurements. The first of these measurements is the previously discussed Balanced Scorecard approach (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). The second measurement is Marshall’s (1890) Cost Benefit Analysis based on the principles of evaluation as outlined by Dupuit in an article written in 1848. Building on the core premise of this theory that measures the costs and benefits pertaining to a specific action, this research study suggests that the key metrics in this equation should be divided into two categories, return and reward. As depicted in Table 5.6, return is comprised of the two categories of metrics; functional metrics and financial metrics, while the holistic metrics constitute reward. Both the functional and financial return components can be classified as a campaign input, are measurable and constitute an action on the brands behalf. The return component of this campaign directly correlates to the campaign strategy which is developed from the campaign objective and KPIs. Through the correct targeting, positioning and selection of communication tools, this section should theoretically portray a positive outcome correlating to the prescribed action. Resulting from the analysis of the prescribed metrics in these categories, it will aid the marketer to make an informed decision as to whether or not a return has been yielded from the campaign. Where you do not yield a return, it is profit foregone.

The remaining category, holistic reward, measures the outcome of the marketing activation through the measurement of brand health metrics. The success of the metrics that are being measured in this category will be directly correlated to the success of the outcome of the functional and financial return. The reward component of this formula assesses the strength and validity of the marketing strategy, targeting and positioning, and tests whether it successfully appealed to the target market and not only generated a positive campaign outcome, but also contributed to the development of brands health and brand equity. Due to the fact that the holistic reward category of measurement has the ability to increase brand value over time rather than result in immediate impact, it can result in additional profit. Therefore, it is an enabler of brand performance. However, due to the fact that the holistic reward can be measured over the long term it is essential to establish the period of time that you are going to measure this category for. One must consider the following; most marketing
activities affect customers who won’t buy a brand on a frequent basis, and therefore the sale effects can be spread out into the future (Sharp, 2010). Brands must decipher the period of time they are willing to assess the brand health metrics over, as it is unsustainable to continue the campaign indefinitely. This is due to the fact that the effect of the campaign will only be relevant to a certain time frame.

Essentially, the functional and financial return measure the short-term effect and the holistic reward is measuring the long-term success. This approach is in line with the approach adopted by Binet and Field (2013) in their report The Long and the Short of It, where they state that “emotional metrics are more likely to predict long-term success, whilst rational metrics are more likely to predict short term success” (Binet and Field, 2013: 9).

Similar to the theoretical framework behind Marshall’s (1890) Cost Benefit Analysis, for the experiential campaign to be deemed a success, the reward must exceed the value of the return. The purpose of this lies in the premise that the return component is the direct output of the experiential campaign. The reward accounts for a longer-term effect where brands measure brand growth as a result of the campaign which is measured in reward. Therefore, if the long-term effect outweighs the immediate effect then the campaign has been successful and has positively impacted the brand.

5.3.2 Return on Integrated Experience: A Detailed Discussion
Although Section 5.3.1 offered an overview to the process of ROIE, the following section discusses each stage in the process in detail. From the outset, it is important to state that the purpose of ROIE is to evaluate the experiential contribution of an overall marketing campaign. It is imperative to note that this measurement works in tandem with the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model and therefore has two shared steps in the beginning of the process. As depicted in Table 5.6, these include the establishment of campaign objectives and campaign KPIs. The purpose of having these two steps in both of these new academic contributions is to highlight the importance of campaign planning and structure. Without having this crucial information at the outset of both the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model and the ROIE formula, there is no basis for the successful implementation or evaluation of a marketing campaign. In Section 4.2.2.4, it was shown that brands including Tayto, Sparkling Ice, Barry’s Tea, and Pepsi Max discuss the importance of being clear on campaign objectives before attempting to measure the output of a marketing
campaign as this informs the campaign measurements. Reiterating the importance of establishing campaign objectives and KPIs, the Dairygold Marketing Manager details how they divide their KPIs into categories including media KPIs to ensure that they firstly are conducting the campaign in the correct approach and that it is sufficiently measurable.

Table 5.6 ROIE Formulation Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROIE Formulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign Objective:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign KPIs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1: Functional KPI</td>
<td>KPI 2: Financial KPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Return</td>
<td>Financial Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Metric</td>
<td>Actual Metric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the campaign objectives and KPIs have been established, the brand must select the relevant metrics for the campaign. It is essential that they are in line with the applicable category of KPI to accurately evaluate the success of the marketing campaign. For this to be achieved, the marketer must select five metrics from each category in Table 5.6 and establish a target for each one of them in order for campaign success to be accurately measured. The reason for five metrics being selected in each of the three categories is that in each of these categories, there are a multitude of metrics that could be measured. For example, in the category of digital marketing metrics which resides in Functional Reward, the interview participant identified with twenty-three possible metrics that they have used to date. However, as previously stated, experiential marketing is prescriptive by nature and deriving from the campaign objectives, only certain metrics will be relevant. Thus, although twenty-three digital marketing metrics are mentioned in this category, not all of them will be relevant to the experiential marketing campaign at hand. This research suggests that it is vital that metric types and targets are not imposed by this framework but rather can be adapted as
required. Also, in order for the Balanced Scorecard approach to take effect each of these categories have to be comparable.

Upon campaign completion, the brand must return to the ROIE framework and fill in the actual metrics of what was achieved from the experiential activation. Once the documentation of these metrics has been completed, in order to make the metrics in each category comparable, this evaluation approach applies a multiplier effect to each category in the form of a point system. As previously stated, it is essential to measure each category of metrics, but a key issue lies in the fact that without a multiplier effect, one cannot compare or contrast the metrics as they are presented in different forms. For example, in the digital marketing metrics category in functional return, impressions may be measured. However, when trying to compare impressions to the outcome of retailer EPOS data in financial return category or brand sentiment in the holistic reward category, there is no way of reading this data that offers insight into the accumulative effect of the experiential marketing activation.

In essence, by utilising a multiplier effect, it affords brands the opportunity to successfully assess the experiential marketing activation in totality and clearly see its contribution towards the overall IMC campaign.

As depicted in Table 5.7, there are specific points allocated upon successfully meeting the set metric targets. These points are divided according to the two key categories return and reward, each being assigned an equal weighting of 100 points. For the return segment, the two primary metrics are functional and financial reward. The functional reward is an essential component considering that ROIE was established with the core purpose of evaluating marketing campaigns that utilise an experiential component as a communications tool. In this case, there will always be a live action element and therefore, event metrics will always be relevant. In Section 4.2.2.4, in the interviews with Lyon’s Tea, Ballymaloe Foods, Coca Cola and Mi Wadi, the participants detailed the multi-faceted approach they employ when collating data from an experiential activation. The scope of metrics included here were vast and included footfall, samples distributed and attendee satisfaction surveys. Following on from the experiential activation, digital marketing and public relations are essential to amplify the core campaign messaging and therefore, act as a central component and a critical metric to include and evaluate. When discussing the role that digital plays in experiential marketing and how it should be measured, Flahavan’s Brand Manager asserted that digital plays a critical
role in making experiential marketing quantifiable to determine how much is being spent for a particular reaction from a consumer. The financial return has one category of metric contributing; ROI. It is essential to consider the investment into the campaign and the sales it is generating. In Section 4.2.2.4, the Heinz Marketing Manager asserts that the two most important metrics here are sales and market share. However, further delving into this topic, sales metrics were investigated and discussed with other brand participants. Due to feedback from brands including Tayto and Lynx, the topic of sales was subdivided into imperative key metrics which should be used to evaluate the ROI component of a marketing campaign as listed in Table 5.7. Each of these four categories will have an allocation of 25 points, 5 points per metric which will be awarded if the metrics target is met or exceeded.

In the reward segment, there is one category; holistic reward with one component, brand health metrics. According to this research, in the FMCG sector this information is predominately informed by bespoke consumer studies or from research bodies including Nielsen, Kantar MillwardBrown and Dunhumby. As previously discussed (Section 5.3.1), this metric is measured over a longer period of time, traditionally as a continuous practice, as it will not have an immediate effect from a marketing campaign unlike its return counterpart. Although brands should consistently be monitoring brand health metrics, for the purpose of ROIE they must identify a time period to evaluate the success of the experiential contribution towards the overall marketing campaign. This section has an allocation of 100 points, 20 points per metric which will be awarded if the metrics target is met or exceeded.
### Table 5.7 ROIE Formulation Part 2

#### ROIE Formulation

**Campaign Objective:**

#### Campaign KPIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI</th>
<th>Functional Return</th>
<th>Financial Return</th>
<th>Holistic Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KPI 1: Functional Return</td>
<td>Target Metric</td>
<td>Actual Metric</td>
<td>Points Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 2: Financial Return</td>
<td>Target Metric</td>
<td>Actual Metric</td>
<td>Points Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI 3: Holistic Reward</td>
<td>Target Metric</td>
<td>Actual Metric</td>
<td>Points Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As previously stated at the beginning on the discussions on ROIE, where this section differs is that it is not measuring the campaign results, but rather the campaign effect of the brand. Therefore, once the campaign is completed, the actual metrics have been accounted for and the points applied to each metric, if the experiential component was successfully implemented and tied in correctly with the overall brand campaign, the value of the points allocated to the *reward* should exceed the value of the points allocated to the *return*. Resulting from this, the brand would generate supplementary profit for the brand due to the enhanced brand health. However, if the value of the points allocated to the *return* exceed the value of the points allocated to the *reward*, then the experiential component of the campaign has not positively contributed to the success of the campaign or the development of brand health. This may be due to a flaw in the strategy plan, a poor allocation of budget or the campaign, a lack of campaign integration or the effect of the experiential activation being isolated to the action rather than contributing to the overall integrated campaign and as a result, brand health.

Using the sample data set in Table 5.7 as a working example, all fields have been filled with the relevant metric, target metric, actual metric and the point allocation. In this data set the *return* figure is 50 and the *reward* figure is 80. In this case, the experiential activation can be deemed to have a positive contribution to the overall marketing activation. However, considering that this research set out to create a financial calculation that offers an output that would be considered not only valuable to academics and marketing practitioners, but to a senior management team, how the outcome of ROIE is presented is critical. Therefore, by merely saying that the *reward* has exceeded the *return* is not sufficient. The contribution to the brand can be extrapolated between the deviation between the *return* and the *reward*. For example, in the data set in Table 5.8, *return* figure is 50 and the *reward* figure 80, this leaves a differential value of 30. The success or failure of the campaign lies in this figure. Table 5.9 offers structure as to how to contextualise this numeric value through a traffic light system.
Table 5.8 ROIE Sample Data Set

### Campaign Objective:
To build brand awareness and encourage brand in hand for our new NPD line; Coca Cola Cherry and Lime.

### Campaign KPI’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KPI 1: Functional KPI</th>
<th>KPI 2: Financial KPI</th>
<th>KPI 3: Holistic KPI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success implementation of a sampling initiative with online amplification.</td>
<td>Uplift in retail and category sales Post 6-week uplift</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ROIE Formulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Metric</th>
<th>Actual Metric</th>
<th>Points Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Return</td>
<td>Financial Return</td>
<td>Holistic Reward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Digital Marketing Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Reach</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>520,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Entries</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Impressions</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Traffic</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>410,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencer Outreach Coverage</td>
<td>40 Influencers</td>
<td>26 Influencers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Event Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales on the Day</td>
<td>€4,000</td>
<td>€5,430</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Check Ins</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>14,304</td>
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<tr>
<td>Footfall</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samples Distributed</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Attendee Satisfaction Surveys</td>
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<td>350</td>
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</table>

#### Public Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>PR Mentions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share of Voice</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>Publicity Reach</td>
<td>400,000</td>
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<td>Publicity Engagement</td>
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<td>331,748</td>
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<td>Key Message Penetration</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>

**Total Return**: 5 points

**Total Reward**: 80 points
### Table 5.9 ROIE Margins of Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
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<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
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<th>85</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>-5</td>
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<td>15</td>
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As previously discussed, when the return exceeds the reward, this does not constitute campaign success as the experiential component did not contribute to the development of brand health as the experiential activation was deemed more successful than the campaign outcome on brand health. The success of the experiential activation is isolated to the activity itself and did not positively aid brand development; resulting in campaign failure. To date, campaign success has been categorised as a result when the reward exceeds the return. However, it is essential to note that this is not always the case. As depicted in Table 5.9 experiential success occurs when the differential value falls between 20 - 45 points. This signifies that in isolation, the experiential activation was a success. Building on this, it was conceptualised through a strong campaign strategy, was successfully integrated into the overall campaign and therefore, positively contributed towards brand growth. However, if the differential value falls into the orange zone which signifies two categories; 5 to 15 points and 50-70 points, the campaign can be deemed a success but there are factors which must be investigated in more detail. In the case of the differential value falling below the optimal range, it may signify that the success was marginal and could have been further optimised through a stronger contribution towards brand health. Where the differential figure falls between 50-70 points, slightly over the optimal value range, this can also be deemed as a success, but caution should still be heeded as for the same reason. However, if the differential value falls between 75 – 100 or 0 - -95 this is a concerning outcome. Here, the reward is over indexing and therefore, although there was strong growth in brand metrics, the experiential activation did not contribute to this development. Resulting from this, it is essential to note that although the resulting figure may be intangible in comparison to a traditional ROI or MROI outcome, this contribution still deserves recognition as it is a notable contribution towards the development of overall brand health and growth.

5.3.3 Application and Utilisation of the Return on Integrated Experience
Experiential marketing is a valued marketing tool by both academic and marketing practitioners alike due to its innate ability to create an authentic two-way interaction between a brand and a consumer. Where the practice lacks credibility lies in the fact that according to respondents, brands find it difficult to calculate the return on the practice and believe that the current available metrics including the previously discussed MROI (Lenskold, 2003; Powell, 2002) and ROE² (Frawley, 2014) do not account for all the components that are
deemed essential to measure. This research proposes a new approach to this, ROIE, which offers an alternative method, specifically for FMCG brands, to evaluate the contribution of experiential marketing towards the overall marketing campaign, while taking into consideration all the fundamental metrics as discussed in Section 4.2.2.4 and illustrated in Table 5.5.

Through the development of this approach to evaluating the success of this marketing activity, academics and marketing practitioners alike are equipped with an approach that adequately evaluates all the key metrics in the newly introduced categories; *functional return*, *financial return* and *holistic reward*. Not only does ROIE offer a formula that is inclusive of key metrics, but it also affords marketing practitioners the opportunity to offer commercial relevance of experiential marketing by illustrating that the holistic reward enhances brand value overtime, therefore, generating profit. Although this approach is specifically created with the FMCG sector in mind, additional research should be conducted to evaluate how ROIE can be amended for other business sectors and industries.

5.4 Conclusion

Built on the foundation of the findings as presented in Chapter 4, this chapter presents the key contributions deriving from the in-depth interviews that were conducted with industry practitioners in the FMCG industry. The overarching discussion concerns the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing and posited methods which offer theoretical structure in the form for two major contributions:

1. The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model; and,
2. The Return on Integrated Experience Formula.

To conclude, Section 5.2 introduced the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model and explained how the model can be applied in modern day marketing for FMCG brands. From the outset, the purpose of the development of this model derived from the lack of theoretical guidance in academic literature for brands in the implementation process of experiential marketing from the marketing practitioners’ perspective. Throughout the analysis of the findings in Section 4.2.1, a consistent theme that arose was that brands tend to use this communications tool, but not in a controlled or strategic manner. Thus, each brand has their own approach and for brands who are trying to successfully implement experiential
marketing, there is no guidance or correct approach. Satisfying the first two research objectives of this research study, the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model offers brands a model which codifies the various elements that are required to undertake an experiential activation and further advances the literature on experiential marketing.

The second key finding that arose from this research is the Return on Integrated Experience formula. Through the development of the three core fundamentals of this formula, *functional return*, *financial return* and *holistic reward*, this research presents the first and only method of evaluating experiential marketing that includes all of the metrics required to evaluate experiential marketing and depict the contribution it has made towards the success of an integrated marketing campaign. Successfully meeting the requirements of the third research objective of the current research study, the development of ROIE makes experiential marketing accountable eradicating a key barrier to its utilisation and enhances its applicability in modern marketing for FMCG brands.

Taken together, these two models constitute major theoretical contributions to the literature on experiential marketing. For practitioners, the benefit to brands in the FMCG market who use these models will accrue when they are used together. The following chapter synthesis this information into conclusions of the study and into meaningful research directions.
Chapter 6

Conclusion
6.1: Introduction

This research study explored and investigated how brands in the FMCG industry implement experiential marketing and evaluate the outcome of this communications tool. It has been argued, both in the literature and throughout this study that from a theoretical perspective, the implementation of experiential marketing has not been adequately represented in academic literature. The current generation of customers of FMCG products have greater disposable income, more choices and new shopping and spending patterns (Haddad, 2016). Customers not only want a desired product in today’s economy, they also want their personal values to be reflected in a memorable customer experience (Forhez and Evans, 2018; Haddad, 2016). However, despite this identified necessity for brands to employ experiential marketing strategies, 51% of customers say that brand experiences typically fall short of their expectations (Riordan, 2020), indicating fundamental shortcomings in the implementation process of experiential marketing. Indeed, current research studies examining experiential marketing (for example, Tafasse, 2016; Wood, 2009) have made contributions which have developed the concept, but evidently, further insights into the implementation process of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry is required to bridge these shortcomings.

This thesis presents the first major framework for the development of experiential marketing activities in a manner that allows them to be more strategically effective while also ensuring – through an ROIE formula – that the return can be assessed in line with short- and longer-term objectives.

As discussed throughout the study, experiential marketing has garnered much academic attention. To date, research on this topic has been primarily represented by the customers perspective, from a relationship viewpoint and by the role it plays in online experiences through methods including word of mouth marketing. However, there is a gap in the literature on the marketing practitioners’ perspective and the process that experiential marketing activations follow. This significant gap was firstly uncovered in the literature review in Chapter 2 and became more apparent in the interviews with industry practitioners and the analysis of the findings which derived from this in Chapter 5.
Drawing on the literature and the overall findings of the empirical research, this chapter synthesises the key contributions from this research and presents them in the form of meaningful conclusions. In doing so, the research questions and research objectives of this study are satisfied. Subsequently, recommendations for practice resulting from the research are identified for marketing practitioners in the FMCG industry. Future research directions and potential limitations of the study are also identified.

6.2: Key Conclusions of the Research
The key contributions of the study are presented under the following headings:

- The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model; and,
- The Integrated Return on Experience Formula.

Table 6.1 offers an overview of these conclusions and of the current research study’s contributions to the academic literature. This synoptic framework provides a basis for subsequent discussions of the salient themes that arose from the current research study.
Table 6.1 Synoptic Framework of Salient Themes from the Empirical Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro themes</th>
<th>Broad Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes / comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Segmentation</td>
<td>• Multi-Generational Marketing</td>
<td>Identified by research participants as the optimal segmentation approach for experiential marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Objectives</td>
<td>• Integration</td>
<td>All experiential marketing, whether occurring as part of an IMC campaign or as a reactive measure must be linked to the core objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign KPIs</td>
<td>• Functional KPI</td>
<td>In order for brands to measure all of the required metrics, three categories of KPIs have been formed to ensure that brands account for all key elements that must be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial KPI</td>
<td>• Holistic KPI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Allocation</td>
<td>• Monetary Value</td>
<td>Typically, it is allocated 10-40% of the campaign budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline of Campaign</td>
<td>• Targeted Traditional Marketing</td>
<td>Brands should strategically activate experiential marketing in line with the steps in the timeline of the campaign. Additionally, this must occur in line with the Experiential Event Application Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiential Marketing</td>
<td>• Experiential Optimization &amp; Amplification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiential Event Application Framework</td>
<td>• Functional Return</td>
<td>In line with the three categories of KPIs, ROIE measures all the key components of an experiential marketing activation and evaluates the contribution that communications tool made towards the overall success of an integrated marketing communications campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on Integrated Experience Calculation &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>• Financial Return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Holistic Reward</td>
<td>• Digital Marketing Metrics</td>
<td>Measuring online optimization and amplification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Event Metrics</td>
<td>• Measuring the success of the experiential activation at hand.</td>
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6.2.1: The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model

Despite experiential marketing garnering extensive academic attention over recent years, this research identifies gaps in the literature on the implementation process of this communications tool. Research to date primarily focuses on the benefits of the practice while also offering insight on its relationship with other marketing methods. However, despite this there are many theoretical shortcomings including the lack of guidelines for marketing practitioners, resulting in them intuitively using experiential marketing in a way that they perceive to be the correct method of implementation. Another key issue is the lack of a framework guiding brands in the successful planning and application of experiential marketing which has resulted in many brands investing in this tool and not being satisfied with the outcome. To bridge these theoretical shortcomings, this research presents the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model; a framework that effectively guides FMCG brands to successfully plan and implement an experiential marketing activation, in line with an IMC campaign.

Frameworks are commonly used in order to guide academics and marketing practitioners to successfully implement methods of communications, thus, they play an important role in
marketing practice. However, experiential marketing has not yet benefited from a toolset similar to those employed in other prominent methods of communications which inevitably impedes its potential success. The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model bridges this gap and in turn, elevates the status of experiential marketing as it now has a clear purpose in modern marketing practice. Additionally, not only does this model contribute to experiential marketing literature, it also offers significant contributions to topics including traditional marketing communications, brand-customer relationships, loyalty, digital marketing and consumption collectives. Each of these subjects are closely linked to the successful implementation of experiential marketing. Therefore, the outcome of this research is not only relevant to experiential marketing but can be applied to the development of academic literature in a multitude of topics, enriching the theory and practice of many marketing disciplines.

This research study has also formulated a relationship between the Experiential Implementation Model and the Integrated Communications Planning Model as presented by Belch et al. (2001). This research adds to the accepted mix of credible communications tools by making the addition of experiential marketing as a critical component of an IMC campaign. This significantly improves the applicability of the model as it now has relevance in modern marketing communications in the FMCG industry where experiential marketing plays an essential role due to its innate ability to cultivate authentic two-way communication during staged brand activations. While aligning with the Integrated Communications Planning Model, this research also makes additional significant contributions through the development of the categorisation of KPIs; functional, financial and holistic KPIs. Another key contribution deriving from this model is the role that the multi-generational approach takes when segmenting a market for an experiential activation. Throughout the development of this model, it has always been the intention of the researcher to ensure that the recommended approach for conducting experiential marketing is efficient and contributes towards the optimal ROI on the campaign. By employing a multi-generational segmentation approach, it further enhances this as it ensures that experiential marketing activations attract the maximum number of relevant customers affording brands the possibility to interact with a larger audience than would be possible with traditional segmentation approaches.
Prior to the development of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, the relationship between experiential marketing and digital marketing was recognised, however the optimal approach on how to capitalise on this was not adequately represented in academic literature. Thus, there was a benefit portrayed but no effective method to achieve it. Through the development of the Timeline of the Campaign and the Experiential Event Application Framework as depicted in Section 5.2.2.5, both academics and marketers have clear visibility on the exact method by which these benefits can be achieved.

The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model affords the practice of experiential marketing the opportunity to be a valued and an accountable tool of marketing communications. Through the many theoretical contributions made during the development of this model, which have positive implications for both academia and marketing practice alike, this research has established links with well-established concepts in modern marketing including integrated marketing communications, traditional marketing, digital marketing, relationship marketing and consumer collectives. Considering that each of these topics play a key role in the development and application of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, each of these concepts are evidently interlinked with the practice of experiential marketing when this framework is employed. Through the establishment of these links and the creation of essential marketing theory on experiential marketing, experiential marketing can be deemed an accountable method of marketing communications which has the ability to cultivate significant brand growth and development while creating unique and invaluable interactions with customers which ultimately result in brand development, brand relationships and consumer tribes. This is unique to the practice of experiential marketing and due to this contribution, it is now realistic for brands to generate these benefits associated with experiential marketing.

6.2.2: Integrated Return on Experience Formula
A fundamental component of the utilisation of any marketing communications tool is the ability to evaluate its utilisation. Although there are existing methods for evaluating experiential marketing in academic literature available to marketing practitioners, they are limited in usefulness as they do not account for all of the measurement components that are required to measure the effectiveness of experiential marketing activations in totality. This research shows that the existing models do not have wide and enthusiastic acceptance.
Methods of evaluation to date have either focused on the ROI or the ROE element of the outcome of this practice, however, both are essential and must be accounted for. Considering that experiential marketing is formed upon an authentic interaction with customers, brands must account for the factors outside of financial metrics. This forms a fundamental finding of this research as it offers a platform for the development of a formula that is comprised of all the essential metrics that brands utilise when evaluating experiential marketing. Consequently, with the aim of overcoming this identified gap, this research enriches the current literature by introducing the Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE) formula. This formula offers FMCG marketing practitioners a method of evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing while also evaluating whether or not the experiential marketing activity positively contributed towards the overall success of the integrated marketing campaign.

While also making contributions to marketing disciplines including experiential marketing, marketing metrics and marketing effectiveness, this research contribution elevates experiential marketing in modern marketing practice, positioning it as a more usable tool. Each of these aforementioned marketing disciplines form key components in the ROIE formula and when utilised correctly offer new dimensions and value to the communications tool. This is achieved through the many defining factors of this framework which offer accountability to this marketing communications tool. Firstly, through the development of the functional, financial and holistic measurement categories, marketing practitioners have the ability to 1) account for all of the key metrics required to portray the full effect of the experiential marketing activation and 2) customise their chosen metrics in these categories thus ensuring that the right components are being measured in response to the campaign objective and KPIs. To date, there is no other method of calculating the return on an experiential marketing activation in academic literature that employs this approach. Secondly, accounting for a key contribution deriving from the ROIE framework, the long and short-term effect of experiential marketing can now be measured through the introduction of two categories of metrics; return and reward. This places experiential marketing in a position where it has more objective credibility as the practice now has an explicit link with bottom line financial performance along with the long-term enhancement of brand health metrics. As a result, experiential marketing can and must now be afforded the same respect
as established marketing communications tools due to the contributions of this thesis. Through the development of the ROIE formula, experiential marketing now has a fundamental role to play in the marketing of FMCG brands which can be assessed more fully through financial means.

It is essential to also note the links that have emerged from the ROIE approach due to the functional, financial and holistic categories of metrics. These categories of metrics are comprised of many different elements of marketing practice, specifically digital marketing, experiential event marketing, public relations and brand health metrics. Evidently, this framework for calculation has clear links with many disciplines which evidently enhances both literature on these topics along with the worth of this tool.

In conclusion, the ROIE formula forms a valuable academic contribution in marketing literature. Not only does it enhance the present theoretical understanding and application of this communications tool, but it also makes a once elusive form of marketing communication amenable to evaluation through the accumulation of metrics from a multitude of marketing disciplines which play a role in the successful implementation of experiential marketing. Additionally, ROIE offers marketing practitioners insight on the long-term value of experiential marketing, portraying a benefit to its employment.

6.3: Contribution to Research
Throughout this research study, many gaps within academic literature have been discussed. To summarise, in research conducted by Lemon and Verhoef (2016: 89) on customer experience throughout the customer journey, they state “there are many challenges to conducting research in this area. The topic is dynamic and multidisciplinary, and it requires multiple methods. Although some bright spots exist, such as multichannel/ omnichannel research, many aspects of customer experience are void of string marketing scholarship. In several areas, marketing practice has a strong head start. It is time to strengthen theory, understanding, and knowledge in this critical area of marketing”. From the outset, this thesis set out to enhance academic literature on the practice of experiential marketing, specifically, relating to the implementation and evaluation of the communications tool. This in turn overcomes Schmitt and Zarantonello’s (2013) criticism of literature on experiential marketing, stating that it offers little guidance for marketers as their primary concern is content and
solutions, the *what* of experiences, rather than processes and causation, the *how* of experiences, which is more favourably documented in research to date. The theoretical developments deriving from this research which address the implementation and evaluation of the practice also acts as a source of practice guidelines to be extracted from. The following sections discuss the key contributions deriving out of the two primary theoretical contributions.

6.3.1: Theoretical Contribution One, The Experiential Marketing Implementation Model

Through the development of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, this research contributes a structure which enriches the academic literature by codifying the various elements that are required to undertake an experiential activation. This model emphasises a strategic approach to experiential marketing, while also firmly rooting it in the long-established Integrated Communications Model. Additionally, this finding bridges the literary gap and in turn, elevates the status of experiential marketing as it now has a clear purpose in modern marketing practice.

The Experiential Implementation Model makes contributions to the development of many schools of research in marketing. Building on existing theoretical constructs of many topics, it is important to breakdown the theoretical contributions by topic.

- **Integrated Marketing Communications**: Built on observations by many authors since the 1980s on integrated marketing communications, Belch *et al.* (2001) developed the Integrated Communications Planning Model. Considering that this was developed in 2001, there was an absence of experiential marketing from this model. However, in line with Smilansky’s (2009) finding that experiential marketing should not be used in isolation this research proposes that the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model should congruently work in line with step five in Belch *et al.*’s (2001) model, where the development of the IMC plan happens by selecting the appropriate communications methods. Throughout the rest of this process, both of these models play a role, and must both be used to successfully create an IMC campaign that uses experiential marketing as a communications tool. Thus, this research refreshes the Integrated Communications Planning Model through the introduction of experiential marketing as a key communications tool.
Further building on this development, although integration has been presented as a key theme in experiential marketing by Smilansky (2009), emerging from this research, an additional priority has been brought to light. Although experiential marketing should be practiced as a planned component of an experiential marketing campaign, this is not always the case. When brands employ experiential marketing outside of a planned marketing campaign, it is important that they identify with the importance of communicating a marketing message in line with the present marketing campaign. This introduces a key finding of this research; although it is important for brands to use experiential marketing in an integrated approach, this is not always how it is used in marketing practice. Thus, when brands plan an experiential activation outside of the outlined campaign, they must ensure that the core purpose, campaign objective and messaging ties in with the coinciding brand messaging for the integrated campaign which is being activated. Regardless of whether experiential marketing is being used as a component of an integrated approach or otherwise, brand consistency should be the primary concern for a marketer.

- **Digital Amplification of Experiential Marketing**: In 2001, research conducted by O’Dell (2001) stated that when amplifying experiential marketing activations, it is essential to amplify the reach of staged events before, during and after the event. This research identifies with these findings and further develops this concept, finding that each of these time periods must have their own specific objectives. The dominant attitude expressed by brand representatives was that by strategically adopting a time phase approach, marketers have the opportunity to ensure that the message is effectively amplified to the mass market. Therefore, this research identifies objectives for a time phase approach when amplifying an experiential marketing activation online as previously seen in Table 4.5. Further to this, Smilansky (2009) identified that brands should utilise digital, PR, advertising and live broadcast in order to amplify an activation to reach the mass audience. Although advertising and live broadcast are still relevant to modern marketing practice, they are deemed not to be cost effective amplification tools and are not generally used for this purpose by FMCG brands included in this research. This research finds that Smilansky’s (2009) contribution should be updated and adapted to include four critical success factors necessary for
Conclusion

the amplification process. These are digital, PR, media partnerships, & influencer marketing.

By combining the critical success factors with the time phase approach, this research presents a framework for brands to effectively amplify experiential events. The proposed model builds on the Network of Co-Production Model developed by Kozinets et al. (2010) and depicts the role of the critical success factors in the time phase approach. By combining the contributions deriving from adaptions by O’ Dell (2001) and Smilansky (2009), the Experiential Event Amplification Framework (Figure 4.1) forms a key contribution to academic research, enhancing literature on both experiential marketing and digital amplification in digital marketing.

- **Memory Structures:** Significant research has been undertaken on the topic of memory structures in marketing by authors (for example, Romaniuk and Sharp, 2016, 2004; Sharp, 2010; Greenfield, 2000). Very much linked to bonds in the topic of relationship marketing, research to date has shown that as customer encounter and interact with brands, thoughts and feelings are generated about the experience at hand. When this happens, brand memory structures develop and enrich a brand’s equity. As brands treat customer interactions as bespoke and individual encounter, it is also important to note that in the development of each brand memory structure in the brain, this happens in a way that is not only unique to that experience, but also to that person’s perception of the encounter. This research further enriches this topic putting a caveat in place on experiential marketing and memory structures finding that for memory structures to be effectively built during experiential marketing activations, it is essential that experiential marketing is not used at the outset of a marketing campaign but alternatively, after traditional marketing has been implemented. The rationale behind this is that traditional marketing is controllable by the brand and can ensure campaign amplification, while building relevant memory structures for the mass audience. Experiential marketing should not be utilised unless a brand has a healthy level of brand penetration and consumers are aware of the brand that they are interacting with. Through this staged interaction, consumers then build a deeper understanding of the brand due to their immersion in the brand values. Another consideration that resonates with this approach is that without relevant memory structures, narratives and cues being established through traditional mass marketing,
customers can hijack a brand's establishment and management of memory structures, narratives and cues, resulting in alternative messages and meanings being created and disseminated.

After this, experiential marketing should then be implemented to enrich and personalise these memory structures through authentic two-way interactions that bring the brand’s memory structures, narratives and cues to life, offering the consumer the opportunity to make them personally relevant in their lives. This cannot be achieved in the first stage of this process as there is no authentic and personalise interaction with the customer base; that is why this research contributes that it is essential to always use mass marketing and experiential marketing sequentially and use each of these communications tool to their strengths.

- **Relationship Marketing:** The link between experiential marketing and relationship marketing has been well established in academic literature (for example, Zena and Hadisumarto, 2012; Maghnati et al., 2012; Chou, 2009; Mathwick et al., 2001). However, a core premise of this research was to uncover how brands successfully implement experiential marketing activations which result in positive brand-consumer relationships. Firstly, considering FMCG products have risk attached to the product in the eyes of the consumer, as you cannot test it before purchasing it, sampling reduces the perceived risk. Therefore, while allowing the consumer to participate in a brand activation and develop a relationship with it, it is important to enhance that moment by allowing the customer to test the product. This must act as an extension to the activation. Prior to this research, the effective utilisation of sampling and experiential marketing had not been investigated and therefore, left a considerable gap in the literature. Following on from this contribution, sampling is identified as playing a key role in the successful implementation of experiential marketing and consequently through the sensory component of sampling, it also has a significant influence on the potential success of experiential marketing influencing a positive relationship with a consumer.

- **Consumer Behaviour:** Although as stated by Winsted (2000), Bagozzi et al. (1999) and Richins (1997), emotions play a critical aspect in consumption, this research finds that it is essential to nurture those emotional bonds through in a structured manner by firstly conducting traditional mass marketing activities and then delving into
experiential marketing where consumption can be more relevant, especially in the FMCG industry. In addition, indeed Tynan & McKechnie (2009a) address the fact that imagination and nostalgia contribute to an individual’s experience, that research finds that it is essential to address the fact that for this to favour the brand, it is essential that memory structures are firstly created using traditional marketing before experiential marketing takes place where consumers personal experience plays a key role. Without the right foundations, imagination and nostalgia can hinder a campaign as consumers may not have enough knowledge of the brand/ product/ campaign. Therefore, a contribution of this research it is essential to firstly disseminate these memory structures in a controlled manner before they are developed on an individual basis.

6.3.2: Theoretical Contribution Two, Return on Integrated Experience Formula
The second key finding of this research, the ROIE Formula, presents an all-encompassing method of evaluating experiential marketing, both in the short-term and significantly over the long-term, in the context of overall brand health. The ROIE formula makes contributions to the development of many schools of research in marketing. Building on existing theoretical constructs of many topics, it is important to breakdown the theoretical contributions by topic.

- Measurement Difficulties: It has been well documented in marketing measurement literature that there are fundamental issues with the accountability of experiential marketing as it is difficult to measure (for example, Wohlitz, 2017; Smith and Hanover, 2016; Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010). Through the development of this marketing metric, a significant issue and gap in the literature has been resolved. ROIE is a method of evaluating the outcome of experiential marketing which not only makes the practice accountable, but also accounts for all of the identified key metrics. Considering that Smilansky (2009) clearly states that integration is key, a fundamental flaw of Frawley’s (2014) ROE² and PWC’s (2019) ROX is that they evaluate the outcome of experiential marketing as an isolated component. Although the multi-channel nature of experiential marketing can lead to complexities as stated by Ruchi et al. (2017), this research identified a gap in the literature which called for a measurement metric which encapsulates all of the success factors of the accumulated practice. ROE² & ROX display the downfalls of this approach where measurement has only been on
individual components (Smith and Hanover, 2016; Harris, 2016; Frawley, 2015; Srinivasan and Srivastava, 2010; Lenderman, 2005). This research successfully identifies a measurement of success that overcomes these pitfalls and offers academic literature a rich method of calculation that measures the many facets of the practice of experiential marketing.

- **KPIs:** Keegan and Rowley (2017) identified KPIs as a critical guide and effectively evaluate a marketing campaign. Built on this theoretical foundation and the findings from the interviews, this research finds that there are three essential categories that KPIs should be divided into when assigning KPIs to an experiential marketing activation which offer structure to marketing practitioners when setting these business metrics. They are as follows:
  - Functional KPIs are directly related to the desired outcome of the utilisation of digital marketing, experiential event marketing and PR
  - Financial KPIs are comprised of the financial aspirations of implementing an experiential marketing campaign
  - Holistic KPIs involve brand health metrics which correlate with the long-term effect of the experiential marketing campaign

In line with Locke & Latham’s (1990) view of goal setting theory, this research would suggest that by utilising these previously discussed categories of KPIs, this structured nature of campaign planning should enhance marketing activity.

- **Marketing Metrics:** Building on Binet and Field’s (2013) categorisation of marketing metrics; short term metrics and long-term metrics, this research further enhances this viewpoint. Building on this theoretical contribution, this research employed this perspective and it informed the categorisation of return and reward. However, considering that this is the first time that this has been built into a formula to evaluate the outcome of experiential marketing, this counts as a substantial theoretical contribution as this formula has the ability to compare and contrast the return from short term and long term metrics. In the ROIE formula, this can be measured through return and reward. Essentially, the functional and financial return measure the short-term effect and the holistic reward measures the long-term success. This positions experiential marketing as more objective credibility method of marketing
communications as the practice now has an explicit link with bottom line financial performance along with the long-term enhancement of brand health metrics. As a result, experiential marketing can and must be afforded the same respect as established marketing communications tools due to the contributions of this thesis.

Overall, the contents of this thesis significantly enhance academic literature on the topic of experiential marketing, while also contributing to other schools of literature, reinforcing the multi-disciplinary nature of the practice. The following section will discuss the limitations of this research study.

6.4: Limitations of the Study
At its core, this research explores the implementation and evaluation process of experiential marketing within the FMCG industry. Having discussed the key proposed contributions made by the current research, some limitations must also be acknowledged. Firstly, as previously presented, this thesis presents major contributions to the literature on the development of experiential marketing. Although outside the scope of this present research study, an in-depth analysis was not conducted evaluating the difference in perspective of multi-national companies and small to medium enterprises on the implementation and analysis of this communications tool. While this research offers a collective view representing all research participants in the findings, further insight and observations could potentially have been uncovered through stratified sampling; particularly in subthemes including the product lifecycle, budget allocation, internal and external activations, and responsive target markets.

Secondly, as presented in Section 5.3, this thesis presents a major contribution for the development of experiential marketing – the ROIE formula – where the return of an experiential marketing activation can be assessed in line with short- and longer-term objectives. However, this research did not explore whether the resources required to generate and collate the data were more accessible to larger companies rather than small indigenous companies, thus signifying a possible limitation which can be further pursued in practice or future work. As it stands, the ROIE formula is likely to be effectively used by all companies, regardless of scale.

Thirdly, prior to this research study there was a significant lack of development in experiential marketing literature, this formed a key limitation of this research study. Considering that this
research is interpretative by nature, existing academic literature played a fundamental role. Without a rich theoretical grounding, this research had to rely on the dearth of available literature and the data emerging from the semi-structured interviews. Lastly, considering that the research pool consisted of industry professionals, a limitation of this study is the possibility that they could have been self-reporting which in turn would affect the accuracy of the emerging data.

6.5: Future Research Directions
Emerging from the proposed contributions and the limitations of this empirical research, a number of issues requiring additional research and debate emerged. It is apparent from the contributions of this research that there are many issues in the realm of experiential marketing and its activation within the FMCG industry that require supplementary research and analysis. Conceptually and methodologically, this research suggests a number of future directions that derived from the current study. The following are the proposed future research directions pertaining to the core philosophy of experiential marketing.

Product Lifecycle: Methods of Experiential Marketing that Optimally Perform for Specific Stages in the Product Lifecycle

Through the analysis of the interviews with industry practitioners, it became evident that methods of conducting experiential marketing differ according to the stage of the product lifecycle (PLC). Although this research offered some perspective on this topic, it is recommended that additional research is required on this topic to uncover the optimal approach to utilising experiential marketing for brands, products and services at different stages of the PLC. Additionally, experiential marketing methods should be categorised according to their effectiveness at each stage of the PLC. By conducting this research, the current literature on the topic would be advanced and marketing practitioners would have clear direction on how to successfully implement experiential marketing.

Although the topic of experiential marketing has garnered much academic attention in recent years, there is still much of this practice that has not yet been investigated and requires further research. To date, the practice of experiential marketing in response to different stages in the PLC has so far received scant attention in the literature and yet, this plays an integral role in the development of this communications tool. Additionally, research on the
topic of experiential marketing and the PLC may require additional research for brands, products and services on an individual basis as there may be a specific approach required for each avenue.

**Adapting the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model outside of the FMCG Industry**

A key contribution of this research is the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model which provides a fundamental structure to aid the successful implementation of experiential marketing initiatives for academia and marketing practice alike. Considering that this model derived from the analysis of the interviews with industry practitioners from the FMCG industry, the theoretical construct of this formula is firmly rooted in this sector. With the newness of this model in mind, an interesting research agenda is required to further analyse this contribution. In particular, qualitative studies should be conducted on the suitability of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model in other business sectors and industries. Considering that experiential marketing is currently very much open to interpretation thus resulting in a large variance of success, there is a clear requirement in both marketing practice and academic literature for the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model not only in the FMCG industry, but also in others. Potentially, this could be a universal model, but more research is required to test the validity of this statement.

**Marketing Metrics: Adapting the Return on Integrated Experience Formula outside of the FMCG Industry**

Another key contribution deriving from this research, Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE), is also similarly specifically created for the FMCG industry as all research participants represent brands in this category. Considering that this research identifies that the largest barrier to successful experiential marketing implementation is the lack of accountability and the absence of an appropriate methods for evaluation, an all-encompassing approach to the evaluation of an experiential marketing activation is an essential academic contribution. Hence, further research should be conducted evaluating the suitability of this formula for other industries also. While literature to date on evaluation methods for ROE have been presented by PWC (2019), Frawley (2014) and Lenderman (2005), according to this research, they do not encompass all of the metrics that brands require to evaluate experiential marketing initiatives. Therefore, research evaluating the applicability of ROIE to other
industries is an essential research avenue that must be conducted, as the practice is growing in popularity.

**Marketing Communications: Application of the Return on Integrated Experience Formula for the Analysis of Alternate Communication Tools**

This research study identified that ROIE offers much insight into the evaluation of experiential marketing and its contribution towards the success of an integrated marketing campaign. In the development of this formula, the researcher uncovered the possibility that this formula could be adapted for other communications tools to evaluate the return from the practice and more importantly, its contribution towards the success of an integrated marketing campaign. To date, there is no academic formula template that can measure the effect of all marketing communication techniques and evaluate how they contribute towards the success of an integrated marketing campaign. Hence, this research study suggests that further research should be conducted to evaluate whether the ROIE formula can be adapted and used for other communications tools and the potential alternative uses for this formula.

**Consumer Behaviour: The Effect of Brands Utilizing the Experiential Marketing Implementation Process on Consumer Behaviour**

This research specifically investigates the industry professionals’ perspective on experiential marketing. However, further research could be conducted to evaluate the effect that the theoretical contributions deriving from this investigation have on consumer behaviour from the consumers perspective. By introducing the consumer perspective this could enrich this data and offer further perspective on the most effect method of implementing experiential marketing.

**6.6: Recommendations for Practice**

Deriving from the current research study, a number of prominent issues for managers arose which are relevant to the field of marketing communications. For brands who currently employ experiential marketing tactics and brands who are assessing the suitability of the communications tool for their brand, it is of great importance to ensure that the brand messaging is clear and consistent. As depicted in Figure 6.2, a brand must have a brand positioning statement, brand values, a brand plan and strategic brand messaging documented, in order to successfully activate their brand. Once these marketing structures
are in place, a brand can then work on generating campaign narratives that tie in with the brand positioning, values, brand plan and the brand messaging. This ensures a consistent brand message and tone, therefore allowing customers to buy into the brand. However, it is valuable to note that although experiential marketing is commonly implemented as part of an integrated communications strategy and there are key ties to the components illustrated in Figure 6.1, this is not always the case. Experiential marketing is also commonly used as a reactive technique as it is uniquely equipped to react to brand concerns like a drop in market share through sampling mechanisms, or it can also bring the true essence of a brand to life at industry events while still tying into the overarching brand messaging and narratives. It is essential that through any experiential marketing initiative, marketing professionals ensure that branding and key messaging is consistent with the core values of the brand, strong brand resonance will be built.

**Figure 6.1 Brand Planning & Consistency**

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Brand Positioning

Brand Values

Brand Plan

Brand Messaging

Brand Story/IMC Campaign 1
Brand Story/IMC Campaign 2
Brand Story/IMC Campaign 3
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In addition to ensuring that there is a clear brand narrative adopted for all experiential marketing initiatives, it is of great importance that FMCG brands ensure that there is an element of sampling at the core of experiential marketing to ensure positive ROI on this investment. This is vital for customers to establish brand affinities and create memory structures on the product. Also, by customers sampling the product, it reduces the risk in their mind as they have identified their preference towards the product and are more likely to invest in it. Essentially, there are two different methods of sampling; instore sampling and sampling at external activations. A brand’s chosen method is effectively influenced by the campaign objective and the available budget allocation. Thus, this research suggests that brands that may be new or have small marketing budgets should focus on instore sampling as it requires a smaller investment while also driving brand awareness close to the site of purchase. Following on from this, brands of a larger scale or brands who invest in larger experiential marketing campaigns should consider the addition of external activations which have the ability to further immerse customers in the brand ethos. By doing this, it allows the activation participants to build deeper connections with the brand which in turn enriches memory structures.

While it is valuable to have consistent messaging and the right mechanics to effectively implement experiential marketing, there are other fundamental recommendations for practice that must be considered by marketing practitioners. Firstly, experiential marketing must be used in tandem with traditional marketing activity as each of these communications tools interact with customers in a different way and it is essential to employ them together to cultivate both reach and interaction. It is crucial to note that experiential marketing must not be undertaken without preparatory and foundation work building upon traditional marketing activities. Traditional marketing is a controlled marketing communications tool which communicates with the masses, building brand saliency by portraying a consistent message in a creative way. However, experiential marketing affords customers the opportunity to build on the memory structures that have been previously built during the traditional marketing campaign and allows the customers who interact with the experiential activation to have unique interactions with a brand while developing their own brand meaning. This increases the possibility of enhanced message penetration with consumer tribes. After an experiential marketing activation occurs, brands must amplify it online to
ensure the optimal ROI. Although experiential marketing typically is synonymous with target audiences in small quantities, by amplifying the practice online, it ensures that the experiential activation lives beyond the physical event and interacts with the masses on digital platforms. Secondly, throughout these three phased approaches, target markets and segmentation are considered. Rather than segmenting a target market through demographic methods, brands should firstly, question ‘how relevant is this to our target market?’, and secondly, adopt a multi-generational approach and ensure that the experiential activation is applicable to all that it is relevant to without categorising or alienating others. This is achieved by identifying consistent characteristics among generations that are relevant to the key campaign message. This ensures that the experiential has maximum penetration and a higher return on investment.

Additionally, as previously discussed, experiential marketing typically does not happen in isolation. When employing experiential marketing as a component of an IMC campaign, brands must effectively allocate monetary funds. This research finds that the optimal approach is to allocate 10-40% of a campaign budget towards experiential marketing. The specific percentage is allocated according to the campaign objectives and the KPIs and according to the role that it plays within the campaign. It is also essential to note that both companies and brands should identify a uniformed budgetary approach where they identify how budgets should be allocated towards integrated marketing campaigns. This ensures that the monetary funds are effectively spent in accordance to the company expectation.

Lastly, as established in the ROIE formulation, in order to measure the success of an experiential activation, there needs to be clear campaign objectives and KPIs established. The campaign objective must be in line with the company and marketing objectives and deriving from this, brands should document functional, financial and holistic KPIs. This ensures that all critical components of an experiential activation are considered and are measurable. Building on this point, brands should employ the ROIE formula in order to measure the metrics that must be accounted for which contribute towards the outcome of experiential marketing and also evaluate the contribution of experiential marketing towards the overall success of an experiential marketing campaign.
Conclusion

6.7: Conclusion
This thesis study explored and investigated how brands in the FMCG industry implement experiential marketing and evaluate the outcome of this communications tool. Adopting an interpretive approach, this research was conducted through in-depth interviews with twenty-three research participants profiling fifty brands. The rationale behind interviewing industry professionals who have been involved in an experiential activation was to represent the marketing practitioners’ perspective as it was not prevalent in literature to date. By representing the viewpoint of this key stakeholder in experiential marketing campaigns, fundamental insights were gathered on the implementation process and analysis of experiential marketing offering much needed academic development to fuel the growth of this communications tool in both academic literature and marketing practice alike.

A key conclusion of the research is that although brands in the FMCG industry do implement experiential marketing, the method by which it is implemented varies as there is no accepted established model to offer guidance to brands on the optimal approach of the practice. Resulting from this, brands either are satisfied with the outcome or feel that experiential marketing activations conducted by the brand could be more successful. However, without a guiding principle on how to successfully implement experiential marketing, there are clear obstacles in improving the implementation of experiential marketing activations. Through the development of the Experiential Marketing Implementation Model, this research contributes a structure which enriches the academic literature by codifying the various elements that are required to undertake an experiential activation. By brands employing this model and the various contributions that have led to its development as discussed throughout Section 5.2, it ensures that brands within the FMCG industry are conducting experiential marketing in an effective manner, thus leading to a more efficient ROI and positive contribution to an overall integrated marketing campaign.

A further key conclusion of this research relates to the evaluation of experiential marketing, specifically in the FMCG industry. Forming the theoretical basis of this contribution is the finding that present methods of calculation do not meet the requirements of marketing practitioners as they do not factor in all key metrics that are deemed to be of great value to evaluate an experiential marketing activation. As such, a company can measure components of an experiential marketing activity, i.e. the return on investment or the return on
experience, but there is no method that measures the combined effect of both these categories. Through the development of the Return on Integrated Experience (ROIE) formula, this research offers both academia and marketing practitioners an approach that encompasses all the key metrics required to evaluate an experiential marketing activation and essentially quantify its contribution to the overall success of an integrated marketing campaign. Deriving from the collective intelligence collated from the interviews, ROIE at heart is a model that fundamentally makes experiential marketing quantifiable by considering all the relevant key metrics and equips marketing practitioners with the relevant data to justify the financial investment in the communications tool.

To finally conclude, the central tenet of this research rests on cultivating a theoretical understanding of the experiential marketing phenomenon in the FMCG industry. In doing so, this research brings key insights pertaining to the implementation and analysis of experiential marketing to the fore. The key conclusions and recommendations of this study aim to enhance academic literature and equip marketing practitioners with the required tools to effectively use experiential marketing as part of an IMC plan. By conducting this research from the industry professionals’ perspective, key insights were uncovered which have been lacking from academic literature to date. If harnessed appropriately, these insights will fundamentally change experiential marketing as they add structure to the communications tool and also makes it accountable. In summary, this research offers a fresh perspective on the implementation of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry, and throughout the contributions as discussed in this chapter, equips academics and marketing practitioners alike with critical knowledge which is essential for furthering the experiential marketing research agenda.
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Appendices
Appendix A: The Boursin Sensorium

Scan to see campaign video
Appendix B: #FreshNew500 Granita Bar
Appendices

Appendix C: Interview Guide

The following questions, of which the interview guide is comprised of, offered a general structure to each of the interviews while ensuring that the researcher asked the relevant questions to uncover the required data. Each of these questions acted as a probe to encourage the research participant to share key insights on the topic of the application and evaluation of experiential marketing in the FMCG industry.

What does experiential marketing mean to you?

Do you currently implement experiential marketing?

Can you give an example of an experiential event that your brand has recently implemented?

What types of experiential marketing do you implement?

Do you believe that experiential works best at a particular stage of the PLC?

Is there a particular target market/ customer categorisation group that you feel experiential lends itself to?

For how long has experiential marketing been an element of your IMC plan?

Why did you start using the marketing strategy?

Why do you continue to use it?

Is experiential marketing used as a standalone communications tool or is it integrated with traditional marketing activities? If it is integrated, how do you link your experiential activities with your traditional marketing? If it is not, why?

Roughly how do you divide your marketing budget between traditional and experiential marketing methods?

Do you use digital marketing, and in particular social media, in conjunction with your experiential marketing activities? Why?

Experiential marketing is a tool used to target a specific target market; do you/ how do you try to reach a mass audience?
A common application of experiential marketing is the use of technology including augmented reality and virtual reality. Do you currently use technology in your experiential strategy? If not, do you plan to in the future?

Do you measure the effectiveness of experiential marketing? If so, how?

Does evaluating the return on experiential activities pose any difficulties for your company?

What are the key determinants you use to evaluate the outcome of the experiential activity? i.e. footfall, relationship development, online interaction/publicity etc.

Are there certain experiential methods that you feel connect with your target market more and yield a better return? i.e. instore activities, events, guerrilla tours etc.

For your brand, are experiential events more effective in store or through external brand activations?

As a primary concern of experiential marketing is the development and maintain the long-term relationship of the consumer, is this something you have considered when evaluating the outcome of experiential? If so, how do you measure this after the experiential activity and on a long-term basis?

Regarding experiential activity, which is your primary concern, return on investment (ROI) or return on experience (ROE)? Why?

Besides ROI and ROE, are there any other ways that you measure the effectiveness of your experiential activity?

Do you believe that experiential marketing has an impact on your brand? How?