

# A case study of the glastonbury music festival marketing essay



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## **A Case Study of the Glastonbury Music Festival:**

### **Abstract:**

The basis of this research is to explore how marketing has affected the nature of the Glastonbury Festival, which includes an exploration of the statistics in respect to key elements of festival management, the attraction of attendees; as well as understanding the link between successful marketing and nature of the acts that are performing at the Glastonbury Festival. This means that it is important to understand how the use of modern technology has evolved the consumer society and the celebrity of culture; hence changing the nature of marketing these festivals. In respect to the Glastonbury Festival there has been a movement from the fringes to the mainstream, which is indicative of the commercial aspects associated with success in the 21st Century. This is supported by the sponsorship and branding of the festival by Orange; as well as the emphasis on sales and revenues. However at the heart of this remain some of the traditional values of community spirit and charity, which is the differentiating effect that has meant the longevity of success. The following research has sent 14 questionnaires to targeted organisers, brand sponsors and marketers of the Glastonbury festival; however only 5 replied. This was to be expected and has provided insightful and preliminary data to understand the importance of marketing communication of the Glastonbury Festival.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Overview:**

The nature of events management has changed significantly over the last forty years, with the use of visual technology and recently instantaneous communication. Therefore the nature of marketing these events has changed, which means that the target audience has shifted radically (Zhang et al, 2005). One key issue that has been raised is that with changes in the television, film and music industry; especially with the advent of the internet the role of celebrity has become a permanent fixture in the home (Rowley and Williams, 2008). This means that the nature of events have evolved to reflect the changes in society and societal interests. The change of the events has meant that marketing has had to evolve in order to make events successful, therefore the following dissertation is going to explore the link between events marketing, modern technology and youth trends to understand this evolution.

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The use of the festival as a medium to explore this relationship will illustrate the changes, because the festival has moved from being part of the fringe culture in the 1970s to a mainstream summer event (Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005, 2009). This means that the whole management and marketing of these events has had to change, in part these festivals are no longer a symbol of protest and anti-establishment and reflects an economic enterprise of modern consumer society (Rowley and Williams, 2005). The rationale of this problem is to explore how the Glastonbury Festival has evolved over the last 40 years with the development of consumer needs, which is directly related to the evolution of marketing. This dissertation will argue the most important change in marketing is the selling of brands and images, which has become more effective with the evolution of television, satellite and instantaneous communication.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The aim of this dissertation is to understand the links between the evolution of marketing techniques, the role of technology and the change in the nature of festivals. It will consider the role of celebrity culture and how this has changed the music market and the nature and message of festivals.

Therefore in order to meet this aim the following question will be asked:

How has the nature of Glastonbury Festival evolved over the last 40 years with the impact of marketing techniques?

In order to answer this question the following objectives has been developed:

To explore the development of the Glastonbury Festival as a brand

To identify the evolution of marketing technology as a way to sell Glastonbury Festival as a brand

To analyse the impact of marketing large headline acts on the nature of the festival and the effect on the number of attendees, revenues and the nature of the acts.

To investigate whether the “ utopia” of the Glastonbury Festival has been lost through marketing a celebrity brand

## **Rationale**

The rationale for this research is because in the modern world of marketing, brand and image has become even more important; therefore the following dissertation will explore modern marketing techniques (Rowley and Williams, 2008). Therefore, a key factor of change is the use modern marketing techniques, such as Buzz, Viral and WOM, have been used to develop Glastonbury Festival as a brand, i. e. the selling of celebrity as a lifestyle choice, in a way one would choose their clothes or music (Rowley and Williams, 2008, Larsen et al, 2005, 2009). Although the basis of this dissertation is to consider the effect of marketing on the facts and figures of the Glastonbury Festival, the final aim will allow for a discussion of the nature of the festival. It will begin by highlighting the basis of the festival, refer to the attendees, act types and revenues and then consider the modern festival and the numbers, especially the role of Orange (glastonbury. orange. co. uk, 2010). It seems that the last 12 years especially the Glastonbury Festival’s approach is compete with mainstream festivals, such

as V rather than stay true to its “hippy” and “utopian” roots (Corbett, 2003).

## **Limitations**

The key limitation with this research is that as it is on limited timeframe extensive questionnaires and interviews with festival goers are not possible. Therefore, it is going to focus on existing studies, newspaper reports and the use of questionnaires with organisers and marketing groups. This means it will provide an indication of how the festival has evolved; as well as the participants. Yet it will not actually provide the views and motivations of the festival as this will be inferred from the accumulation and analysis of other sources.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

### **Theoretical Review:**

#### **Marketing Theory:**

WOM (Word of Mouth) is a central concept to the marketing of lifestyle experience, which is even more important in the festival industry (Zhang et al, 2010) The power of WOM has been accentuated by the modern forms of communication, which includes social networking sites, such as Facebook and blogs set up by companies and events where the experience is sold to the consumer (Zhang et al, 2010). Therefore, not only using these sites and forms of communication is important, but maintaining the CEM to meet the consumer’s expectation. This means that the events management and organisation is just as important as the marketing communications (Verhof et al, 2009). This is because these new networking sites also leave the

experiences so it is important that the customer leaves happy, because if it fails to do so and a negative experience is left through these modern forms of communication then it may turn away a potential customer (Litvin et al, 2004). Therefore, the “lifestyle” of the event must meet the actual customer experience so the CEM is as important as the marketing of the event (Verhof et al, 2009, Lindgreen and Vanhamme, 2005, Litvin et al, 2004, Gruen et al, 2005, Diez-Martin, 2000). This links to the tourism theories of Cohen (1972) and Plog (1974) who argue that others are attracted to leisure facilities and events based upon the experiences of others. His urging for ‘theories of the middle ground’

rather than the creation of a single theory would be repeated three decades later by

Franklin and Cragg (2001: 18) who observed,

[http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/free\\_files/Chapter%203-248bacb341e5860354547930d339ecb3.pdf](http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com/free_files/Chapter%203-248bacb341e5860354547930d339ecb3.pdf)

This means the brand and identity are very important to the potential consumer on the basis of trustworthiness. The use of blogs and online reviews; as well as festivals using these sites to market their event is application of Plog’s theory of allocentricity and psychocentricity (1974); whereby leisure consumer choices are based upon the “observation that it is innovative and adventurous tourists that discover new destinations or tourism products, who then, act as opinion leaders and share their experiences... thus creating diffusion and marketing momentum for new destinations and innovative travel products” (Litvin et al, 2008). As the <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-study-of-the-glastonbury-music-festival-marketing-essay/>



review of the marketing literature has highlighted is that the role of technology is very important (Buttle, 1998, GL Market Research, 2007, Tarp, 1989, Stokes and Lomax, 2001). This can be seen in how the impact of modern communication technology has evolved radically over the last 40 years, which has meant that the consumer can be engaged more effectively; however on the flip-side it has meant that the consumer is more aware and has greater demands (Buttle, 1998, GL Market Research, 2007, Tarp, 1989, Stokes and Lomax, 2001). This has changed the face of marketing, which needs to be more sophisticated and reflect the desires of the consumer (Peppers et al, 1993, Zhang et al, 2005). Another key finding has been that modern technology is traditionally the medium of the youth; therefore it stands to reason that youth focused events will use the modern technologically based marketing techniques (Carroll et al, 2002, Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005, Zhang et al, 2010). This can be seen in the increased use of WOM, Viral and Buzz techniques; especially in regards to the use of social networking sites (Buttle, 1998, Lindgreen and Vanhamme, 2005, Gruen et al, 2005).

## **Review of Festivals and the development over the last 30 Years**

The implication has been that the Glastonbury Festival was forced to change to survive. As Larsen and O'Reilly (2005, 2009) argue the Glastonbury Festival, have had to evolve from their traditional rationale to the modern consumer needs; whereby the use of modern marketing techniques plays a central role (Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005, 2009, Rowley and Williams, 2008).

This means that there has been a blending of marketing and entertainment,

with the growth of social networking sites (Zhang et al, 2010). This is important argument because it illustrates how marketing and entertainment have become the brand, i. e. any performance is marketing of the image (Zhang et al, 2010). Therefore events that are based on entertainment are based on the brand and must deliver. Also the festival is a site of selling the entertainment industry, the concept of play and most importantly the concept of play in the mainstream (Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005, 2009, Rowley and Williams, 2008, Zhang et al, 2010)

Rowley and Williams (2008) explore the impact of brand sponsorship on the nature of music festivals. It highlights how revenue stream, target audiences, headline acts and marketing approaches are essential to festival success and the use of an appropriately picked sponsor is essential (pg. 782). Larsen and O'Reilly (2005) explore the changing nature of music festivals to a place of music consumption; therefore they are an important place of selling the celebrity image and brands of music artists. Rowley and Williams (2008) also highlight the role of the brand sponsor plays an important role which will form an important part of the analysis of Orange's role in Glastonbury Festival over the last 12 years, the nature of the company and its ties with the Sony Walkman Brand of Mobile Phones. This has meant marketing techniques and the sale of the festival is essential to hit the mainstream and not the fringe (Rowley and Williams, 2008, Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005, 2009). However, the marketing techniques have had to focus on the freedom and self-exploration, i. e. societal abandonment, to attract greater numbers and higher revenues at the festival and promotion of artists (Larsen and O'Reilly, 2005).

The use of the “ utopia” and the “ freedom” of festivals has meant that the initial heart of the Glastonbury Festival has been adapted from comradeship to sell a brand – the Glastonbury Festival and the celebrity image that is the focus of these festivals (Larsen and O’ Reilly, 2005, 2009). Therefore, the use of “ anti-society” and “ anti-consumer” roots of the Glastonbury Festival has been used to sell the brands associated with the modern synthesis (Rowley and Williams, 2008, Larsen and O’Reilly, 2005, 2009). As Zhang et al (2010) argues brand management is now an integral part of entertainment based events management. It highlights that the two are no longer separate. The implication of this is that for a festival to be a success it has to be based in mainstream entertainment, which has meant the evolution for the Glastonbury Festival to a brand with key sponsors such as Orange (Rowley and Williams, 2008, Larsen and O’Reilly, 2005, 2009).

Larsen and O’ Reilly (2009) identifies that events must become mainstream to survive. This supports the argument of how modern marketing techniques such as the social networking sites means that the initial sense of comradeship have become a part of the brand (Larsen and O’ Reilly, 2009, Zhang et al, 2010). Yet Larsen and O’ Reilly (2009) also identify that there may be a resurgence of the grassroots, because growing technology has meant that marketing has had to go to the grassroots, such as social networking sites. However, the key finding is that marketing has perverted the basis of the Glastonbury Festival to become that the synthesis to the modern festival, based on consumerism and the bottom line (Larsen and O’ Reilly, 2009). However, Larsen and O’ Reilly (2009) do advance the key argument that the marketing of the festival is based on the initial tenets of “

utopia”, “ comradeship” and rites of passage, yet these are now marketing technique which has brought the fringe to the mainstream (pg. 7).

### **The significance of the Glastonbury Festival and its demographics over the last 30 years:**

The Glastonbury Festival began in the 1970 with its roots in music and expression costing a mere £1 with free milk from the farm. The festival relied on traditional WOM techniques where the social groups into the Blues spread the word to come together and enjoy the music (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010). The acts of the time included Marc Boland who was on the fringes at that time, because of the unsure attitudes of the BBC and mainstream media to glam rock; however the times changed to a popularity of the genre later to the point in 1971 the genre was popular (Paytress, 2006); whereby “ on the eve of his sell-out UK tour, Bolan stated “ I am so pleased that people are there. I feel I might just go on stage and burst into tears”” (Tobler, 1992). Therefore Glastonbury Festival was a haven for experimental music and self-expression in its original form. This is supported by the range of artists from the mainstream to the fringes of the “ fayre” that was conceived in 1971 (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010). However, after 1971 no festival took place until 1978 and this only took place because of persuasion and a free festival with few amenities was on, but the community and togetherness in the expression of music was the key (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010). In these three festivals the attendance was between 500 and 12, 000 people who came together through traditional WOM techniques. In 1979 the festival was secured through a bank loan and a mixture of mainstream artists, such as Peter Gabriel, to the fringe of performing arts performed. The result was 12,

000 attendees but a loss to the organisers as it was unsustainable at the nominal charge of £5 (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010). In 1981 the festival returned supporting the CND and illustrating its commitment to the fringe and bringing together youth for peace; again the artists were widespread from New Order to Gordon Giltrap (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010). The following increased to 18, 000 at a mere £8 per ticket. During the 1980s the festival took off; however its commitments remained with a vast range of artists; however the artists were committed to freedom of music and expression.

### **Table 1: Evolution of Glastonbury Festival from 1970 to 2009 (Glastonbury Festivals, 2010)**

Year

Artists

Price

Attendees

1970

Marc Boland, Al Stewart, Quintessence

£1 (free milk inc)

1, 500

1971

David Bowie, Quintessence, Joan Baez

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Free

12, 000

1978

Stonehenge

Free

500

1979

Peter Gabriel, Sky, Fotsbarn Theatre

£5

12, 000

1981 (CND)

New Order, Aswad

£8

18, 000

1982 (CND)

Van Morrison, Judie Tzuke

£8

25, 000

1983 (CND)

UB40, The Beat

£12 programme 80p

30, 000

1984 (CND)

The Smiths, Paddy Ashdown

£13 programme 80p

35, 000

1985 (CND)

Aswad, Joe Cocker

£16 Programme 90p

40, 000

1986 (CND)

The Cure, Madness, Level 42

£17 Programme £1

60, 000

1987 (CND)

Van Morrison, New Order, Elvis Costello

£21

60, 000

1989 (CND)

Van Morrison, Pixies and Suzanne Vega

£28 Programme £2

65, 000

1990 (CND)

The Cure, Sinead O'Connor, World Party

£38 Programme £3

70, 000

1992 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

The Levellers,, Shakespear's Sister Primal Scream

£40 Programme 4

70, 000

1993 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)



Lenny Kravitz, Stereo MCs, Velvet Underground

£58 Programme £4

80, 000

1994 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Bjork, Van Morrison, Manic St Preachers

£59 Programme £5

80, 000

1995 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

The Cure, Oasis, Simple Minds

£65 Programme £ 5

80, 000

1997 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

The Prodigy, Sting, Radiohead

£75

90, 000

1998 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Tori Amos, Robbie Williams, Bob Dylan, Primal Scream

£80

100, 500

1999 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

REM, Fatboy Sllim, Blondie, Lonnie Donegan

£83

100, 500

2000 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Chemical Brothers, Basement Jaxx, David Bowie

£87

100, 000

2002 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Mis-teeq, Rod Stewart, Rolf Harris, Coldplay

£97

140, 000

2003 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

REM, Radiohead, De la Soul, Moby

£105

150, 000

2004 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Paul McCartney, Oasis, Scissor Sisters, Black Eyed Peas

£112

150, 000

2005 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

The Belly Dance Superstars, Coldplay, Basement Jaxx, Beautiful South

£125

153, 000

2006 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Artic Monkeys, Shirley Bassey, Lily Allen, Amy Winehouse

£145

140, 000

2008 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Jay-Z, Will Young, Leonard Cohen, Neil Diamond, Verve

£155

140, 000

2009 (Greenpeace and Oxfam)

Lily Allen, Little Boots, Lady Gaga, Rolf Harris, Dizzee Rascal, Tom Jones,  
Cirque du Soleil

£175

140, 000

The latter years saw an increase in mainstream pop artists, a significant increase in the price and the introduction of commercial ideas. As the table illustrates the festival was no longer music for the people; rather it is a commercialised example of another pop festival, like the V. As Orange (2009) indicates “[s]ince Michael Eavis founded the event on his dairy farm near Pilton, Somerset, it has attracted more best-selling bands, awe inspiring performers and emerging talent than any other festival. And every year it gets bigger, better and more popular, usually selling out on the first day of sale. This year saw the fastest sales ever, with every ticket snapped up within one hour” (pg. 4). Therefore the sales and revenues are seen as more important than the heart and soul of the festival, which was the initial concept. However, the sense of community remains at the centre of the concept, because “[s]ociety is becoming more fractured and people are less sociable in a physical society, making the importance of festivals as a communal experience grow and grow “(Orange, 2009, pg. 4). Another implication is the marketing of the festival relies on releasing the sale date and acts through the media, social networking sites, blogs and their website and it sells out on reputation and brand illustrating the power of CEM and WOM techniques that has created today’s success. As Kotler (1967) <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-study-of-the-glastonbury-music-festival-marketing-essay/>

identified the WOM of approach is integrally linked to the concepts of customer experience and feedback, which are now an important part of leisure and events management (Kirkpatrick and Roth, 2005). The move towards the centre, which can be seen in the acts, is because there is an important link between CEM and WOM, which is that the experience needs to be measured against rival festivals and then seen as superior. Therefore if the experience is standard to other companies or not comparable in the industry then there will be a nil impact of WOM, because there is no specific CEM to hold one company or product above another (Kirkpatrick and Roth, 2005). This means the elements of WOM, CEM, branding and vision are central to the success of the festival, which includes the festival becoming mainstream in nature; however setting itself apart on its moral standing and concepts of community. These are the key themes that will be explored in the questionnaires.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology:**

### **Empirical Foundations**

The research philosophy that this research utilises is positivism, which is the social scientific method that is based upon the scientific method. As Bryman (2008) argues this research methodology is based upon the premise that physical world and social events are comparable; therefore a researcher can apply scientific principles to describe human behaviour (Veal, 2006, Saunders et al, 2003, Bryman, 2008). As Bryman (2008) indicates the basic principle of this empirical approach is to use observation and create a theory that can be applied to the wider social reality. This approach is justified because under the positivist remit theory is universal (Saunders et al, 2003,

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Bryman, 2008). This is because there is an assumption that there are “universal laws” that govern social events, such as the influence that marketing can play to influence consumer decisions. In order to undertake a positivist study it is important that the theory can be replicated and testable, because theory is universal, and sets of principles and inferences can describe human behaviour and phenomena across individuals and settings (Bryman, 2008).

An important element is to be objective and independent from the data; therefore it is important to apply an approach that allows the researcher to recordable data and analyse it in order to identify the “universal laws”. As Veal (2006) argues the uncovering of these laws enables researchers to describe, predict and control social phenomena. This is especially important in the marketing industry, because influences on consumer behaviour and various groups can be migrated from events and festival management to the wider discipline. As Saunders et al (2003) argues a central theme of the research is that there is objectivity, where the researcher remains independent of the subject of the research. This has been partially initiated in the review of the demographics of the Glastonbury Festival since its inception. In order to apply the findings of this review it is important to test the findings against some observable data; whereby the formulation of knowledge by developing theories from objectively collated variables that are operationally distinct from each other and defined accordingly (Bryman, 2008, Saunders et al, 2003). Therefore, this research will employ a series of questionnaires and then undertake analysis of the findings in relation to the themes identified in the literature review. This will provide the necessary

highly structured methodology that are important in order to be tested by the quantification of observations, and by the use of statistical analysis in relation to the responses to the questionnaires (Saunders et al, 2003). Every step will be taken to ensure that the method used is verifiable and testable, which is the cornerstone of positivism.

### **Research Method:**

In order to apply a positivist method it is important that the approach can be copied; hence it was decided to apply a quantitative method. This will be complemented by the choice of using questionnaires. In order to test these questions through statistical analysis this questionnaire will contain closed or scaled questions in order to quantify the outcomes (Saunders et al, 2003). The final section of the questionnaire will contain open-ended questions, which have been designed to find out in depth experiences of the marketing of Glastonbury Festival in order to identify whether the perceptions of the respondents clarify the findings in the literature and newspaper reports. As Saunders et al (2003) argues the use of an open-ended section allows validity to be built in the test and ensures that the questions are not leading. This section also ensures that this allows for fewer more succinct sections in the closed question section, which means higher response rates (Bryman, 2008).

Therefore the methodology employed will be a positivist approach where the focus will be on statistical analysis of determining the evolution of marketing techniques and successes in regards to the Glastonbury Festival. This has been initially considered in the 40 year review of the festival; whereby the following factors will be considered; marketing techniques, acts attracted  
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and number of attendees. The questions within the questionnaires have been developed from the finding in the literature review and analysed in regards to the analysis of the demographics and acts at the Glastonbury Festival. The key sections of the questionnaire are;

The link between the increase of revenues as more consumer based marketing techniques are employed and the link to branding of the Glastonbury festival.

The role of celebrity stars at the Glastonbury Festival.

The number and types of attendees to the Glastonbury Festival and the audiences that are marketed to

The development of Glastonbury Festival the brand, which explores to what extent marketing techniques, branding and consumer society has moved the Festival from the “ utopian”, “ hippy” fringes to the mainstream music market.

### **Data Collection:**

The questionnaires within this study will be conducted and analysed descriptively in order to ensure the object of such a research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Veal, 2006) . In advance of undertaking the complete body of questionnaires it was important to conduct a test to ensure that there is reliability in the questionnaire. Hence the questionnaire was conducted in order to check; time needed; instructional clarity; question clarity; ease of answering questions; sufficient coverage of topics; and suggestions from the pilot participants (Bryman, 2008). The

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purpose of testing the validity is to ensure that the questionnaires meet the standards necessary to make the results verifiable and process re-testable.

The non-probability sample technique used will be self-selection; whereby the questionnaires will be distributed to the companies and organisers in the Glastonbury festival. These will then be distributed throughout their marketing, branding and event managers in their organisations. The number of possible respondents will be asked for; however as this is a voluntary technique the respondent will decide to undertake it or not (Saunders et al, 2003). To make the questionnaires easier they have been designed on Survey Monkey, which means that only an email link needs to be distributed. This means that the distribution by the companies and organisers is simplified to increase the willingness of participation (Saunders et al, 2003). From the distribution stage all that that needs to be done is completion by the respondent, which is automatically saved to the website database. Therefore, the rationale behind the non-probability sampling technique is that respondents decide themselves, whether they will take part in the research or not. This is very important, because the desire to participate will mean that answers are properly considered (Saunders et al. 2003). Hence, the result is quality over quantity (Saunders et al. 2003).

## **Analytical Approach**

Therefore, as primary data will be collected via e-questionnaire from organiser and sponsors which will be analysed through the use of positivist grounded techniques it is important the analysis is both objective and testable (Bryman, 2008). From the descriptive analysis of the questionnaires the findings will be tested through a deductive approach. This testing will <https://assignbuster.com/a-case-study-of-the-glastonbury-music-festival-marketing-essay/>

undertake primarily a quantitative approach, which means that data with statistics or data that has been coded, which can then be analysed through descriptive statistics. This will provide a concrete foundation for the basis for the statistical analysis to consider the findings in the statistical review. The snapshot approach of applying the themes from the literature to the findings of the questionnaires will help to identify the evolution of marketing techniques and audience target groups. This approach will be used due to time and financial constraints where the 1969 festival will be identified and then every 5 years after until the Orange decade where every year will be explored to highlight the evolution in the festival. This is especially important as the initial festival was not measured on revenues of successful brand management and was a congregation of anti-establishment. The evolution of marketing techniques, branding and audience target groups will be help to develop the analysis of the demographics of the attendees and acts providing a richer set of findings.

### **Limitations:**

The limitations of the research are as follows:

The figures that have been obtained over the last 40 years are limited and difficult to verify. Hence, the figures will be focused more in the era of Orange's Sponsorship where the figures of revenues and attendee numbers will be easier to obtain. The acts will be easier to obtain and the types as reported. The problem with this that this approach does not show a clear evolution over