

# How do you measure the impact of an experience?

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When Fiat launched its new 500X model last year, the car manufacturer tried something unique: The company partnered with Dynamo, the popular star of "Magician Impossible," . As part of the campaign, brand managers at Fiat took the 500X to 74 cities across Europe. The tour culminated in a grand live performance during which Dynamo "brought to life" a model of the car from a three-dimensional light show.

This is how experiential marketing looks. The objective is to engage the audience, entice members to actively participate in your campaign and allow them to create a one-on-one connection with the brand. Customers then positively associate their experience with your product, service and company.

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Fiat's live magic performance was only the opening act. What came later demonstrated the real power of experiential marketing. Fiat teamed with Microsoft to re-create the magical Fiat 500X illusion on Xbox One and Xbox 360. The result? Fiat -- an impressive leap for a company whose sales had fallen since 2009.

## **Create benchmarks.**

The question remains: How much impact did the experiential campaign have on the overall marketing strategy? The goal of the "Power of X" campaign was to get people to associate 500X with a magical experience at one of Dynamo's performances or via their Xbox system. But such an experience alone is not enough to push people to buy a high-ticket product. At the

outset, experiential campaigns might seem impossible to quantify in terms of success or contribution to the bottom line. But it can be done.

If you're an established brand and an experiential campaign is just one of many events in your year, the easiest (and most obvious) way to measure its impact is through benchmarking. Project your annual sales in the absence of the campaign and then transpose it against the actual sales figures.

For instance, if you own a product line that sees 5 percent growth year-on-year, any bump in sales after an experiential campaign may be attributed to it. It's not as easy in the real world, where factors such as pricing, competition and buyer sentiments also are at work.

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### **Survey consumers to learn their needs and motivations.**

If you're launching a new product with little historical data, you might not have the luxury of benchmarking. In those instances, consumer surveys can be extremely powerful. This is how you do it:

- **Survey Demographic Data:** Capture the age, gender, occupation and other details of the average consumer targeted by your experiential campaign. Benchmark this against demographic data obtained from your end buyers.
- **Post-Purchase Surveys:** Use consumer surveys to understand how variables such as features, price, competitive advantage and location contribute to the purchase. The survey also should tap into how your brand is positioned in customers' minds. You then can benchmark the

results against the position you wished to attain through the experiential campaign. For instance, if 80 percent of survey participants at the Dynamo show associated 500X with a magical experience but only 10 percent of the actual buyers espoused a similar brand image, Fiat's sales more accurately might be attributed to factors not directly influenced by the experiential campaign.

Survey and benchmarking results never will be as accurate as measuring the conversion rate on a pay-per-click campaign. But these strategies provide directional help if you want reassurance you're headed down the right path. Often, that's enough reliable evidence to make decisions.

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