

The london international wine fair marketing essay

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***LIWF - London International Wine Fair**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to critically analyze the communications mix used to attract visitors to the London International Wine Fair (LIWF) and to ensure that visitor number is on the increase year on year. The main focus being how to ensure that delegates who register much in advance actually make it to the event. The Report draws attention to the fact that registrations alone is no guarantee that the attendee will attend the event. The attrition rate has been maintained between 40-43% over the last three years. For the organizers anything between a 52%-58% turn out is good and anything above that is excellent. Although LIWF continues to be UK's biggest wine trade event the organizers have had to create a comprehensive marketing schedule to lure visitors and also use techniques to enable visitors to register so quickly the entire process may take lesser than 20 seconds. In terms of the communication mix they use all the channels but have moved much more towards on-line for advertising and use of social media for building relationships with their core communities. A new advisory board has been

formed lately comprising of influential trade figures. Working with the Advisory Board, LIWF will focus on the individual buying sectors to help drive more quality visitors to the event, but also to better connect the visitor journey and give those buyers a greatly enhanced show experience.

Numerous new value added services & initiatives have been announced to 2013 breathing new life to the event including a tailored made visitor plan termed " my wine fair". Also a LIWF app is on the horizon, providing as much relevant information ahead of the Fair as possible & also permits visitors to see which of their colleagues are attending the event via their LinkedIn profile This feature is sure to enhance participation & numbers. Other recommendations :

that LIWF announce its new initiatives for 2013 through a media campaign in order to create buzz & drive more visitor traffic.

LIWF to focus on Industry, to inject some much needed support for the trade at large by inviting a keynote speaker to address the Fair and building a programme that tackles the key business issues within the wine industry.

that LIWF focus on innovation, not just wines, innovation in packaging, storage, design, marketing – the complete trade.

that LIWF create a separate Wine Awards show to conclude the wine fair each year, an event that celebrates, recognizes & rewards the achievements of people & brands in this industry.

All this will help ensure that LIWF continues to be UK's most significant Wine Trade event.

1. INTRODUCTION

" The Grand daddy of all wine expos", The London International Wine Fair is organized by Brintex Events takes places this year in London between the 20th-22nd of May in Excel, London. Brintex was formed in 1963 and has almost 50 years' experience in organizing trade fairs and exhibitions. Presently it is one of the largest independent exhibition and conference organizing companies in the UK. With over 20, 000 wines from more than 25 countries makes it truly the must visit industry event annually. Each Year Around fifteen thousand visitors visitors from the UK and around the world visit the London International Wine Fair using it as a buying platform, to see what new wines are available and to research industry trends. It's perfect platform for everyone for whom wine and spirits are important. The London International Wine Fair prides itself on bringing together the finest wines from around the world, great food and a range of educating seminars to make learning about wine both fun and stimulating. LIWF is free to visit but strictly for trade only. Whether it's launching new products, looking for agents, meeting customers, targeting the press or aiming to win new direct business, LIWF is the key event in the world wine calendar for getting results.

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DISTIL486139_10150690089910859_1334675378_n. jpgFigure .

INTERACTION AT LIWF 2012Exhibition director, James Murray, commented: "

We are committed to cementing the show at the core of the UK wine industry for 2013. Whilst, as a leading industry event on the global stage, we will continue to welcome the international audience, our priority will be on the

domestic market, and acknowledging the importance of the UK buying community.

2. ORGANISATION'S STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To create an outstanding London International Wine Fair for all involved.

Deliver an even greater return on investment for participating exhibitors.

Focus to ensure maximum visitor attendance from core UK domestic visitor sectors; more on-trade, more independent retailers, more wholesalers and more multiple buyers and influencers. Continue to attract international buyers from core markets such as Scandinavia, Benelux and Eastern Europe.

Ensure a 'must attend' Fair, which leaves attendees inspired and able to improve and enhance their business as a result of visiting. Connect the visitor journey, bringing buyer and seller together more effectively. Introduce new content and initiatives that help to bring the buzz back to the show floor. Act as a positive lobbying platform to support the trade at large. C:

UsersGDesktopLIWF & DISTIL247999_10150211921100859_6334942_n.

jpgFigure . Sommeliers Tasting Wine at LIWF

3. TARGET AUDIENCE

Wine Producers

Wine producers from around the world throng to this event in order to engage with their target audiences & meet people from the trade to promote their brands. In 2012 there were over 1200 wine producers who attended constituting nearly 9% of the overall visitors. For e. g. Sula, Kumala, Hardy's, Wolfblass etc.

Distributors, Agents & Importers

Sales Distributors, Agents & Importers from all around Europe & UK visit LIWF to check out new offerings in the world of Wines & for potential business opportunities.

On Trade professionals

London has more bars, clubs, pubs, lounges & hotels than any other major city in the world. So that means a lot of on trade professionals attend the event each year to learn about the latest trends & offerings in the wine culture.

Press, PR, Media

At the last LIWF more than 350 members of the world's press visited the event. Due to the timing of the Fair, many exhibitors choose to launch new wines and new vintages with LIWF, so there is always plenty to write about for trade and consumer journalists. Facilities at the show include a fully prepared press office, where journalists can relax, arrange meetings or utilize the business facilities.

Design / Packaging

This is the category of people from the design & packaging background who are into designing & manufacturing of wine bottles, labels, corks, caps, cartons etc. They constitute about 3% of the visitor traffic.

Independent Merchants

This category includes independent wine stockist's who constitute nearly 10% of the visitor traffic.

General Off Trade / Wholesale

Buyers, owners & staff from wine merchants, supermarkets, off licenses, wholesalers & shops fall under this category & constitute 9% of visitor traffic.

TICKETS

Free Entry with Pre Registration. Every attendee gets a goody bag comprising sampling vouchers, event brochure, a spittoon and a tasting glass.

4. REASONS TO VISIT

Biggest Wine Trade event in UK & ideal buying platform
 To witness the latest launches & trends in the wine industry
 To network with over 20, 000 wine industry people from around the world
 Discover over 20, 000 wines including 10, 000 of which are niche & smaller producers
 Learn from dozens of tutored learning's & seminars by industry experts
 It's the one stop shop to meet, to taste & to do business
 Over 50 industry briefings, seminars & master classes conducted over three days. In the face of a challenging economic environment, the show cemented its position as essential to the UK and international wine and spirits industries. Visitor figures (counted only once per person and without exhibitor personnel) were slightly lower than 2011 at 13, 431 compared to last year's 13, 754. (Press Release 2012)C:

UsersGDesktopLIWF & DISTIL252749_10150211921440859_608363_n.

jpgFigure . Buyers & Exhibitors networking

5. THE COMMUNICATIONS MIX

C: UsersGDesktopLIWF & DISTILpromix. gifFigure 4. Marketing

Communications MixFor any successful & sustainable event the

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communications mix is an essential part of the strategy, sometimes called the promotional mix. This combination of tools will help an event organizer reach out to their customer base & raise awareness of its product or service offerings. Marcomm Wise (2006) defines marketing communications as all strategies, tactics, and activities involved in getting the desired marketing messages to intended target markets, regardless of the media use. Kotler (2006) defines marketing communications mix as the "Promotion" of the marketing Ps (Product, price, promotion and placement, people, process and physical evidence) and covers every method and medium of communicating with a target audience.

5. 1 PR, Advertising & Word of mouth.

Public relations or PR is the long-term process of building public awareness through communicating regularly with your various target markets. At its heart is the aim of building goodwill towards the company its products or services so that customers will think more favorably of your company and be more likely to make a purchase. It usually it may take the form of press releases to key trade and consumer publications, often centered around newsworthy events, such as product launches or celebrity endorsements. The PR for LIWF is ably handled by two firms Relish PR - for UK trade press enquiries. Complete Media Group - for International press. The last LIWF was attended by over 350 members of world press. The timing of the fair makes it very apt for Top wine makers to launch their offerings. The event creates a lot of buzz, so there is always plenty to write about for the Trade journalists, Press & Media. The event always has excellent facilities including a fully prepared press office so that journalists can relax, organize meetings, or

make use of the business facilities. In 2012 LIWF was the main sponsor of the first edition of the Harpers Drink awards, an event which brings the entire wine and spirit industry together for one event, to highlight and celebrate the very best the trade has to offer. The organizers have also revised the show dates & timings based on valuable visitor & trade feedback, in the previous years the event would run from a Tue-Thu but this year it starts on a Monday with the event going on until 6pm instead of the usual 5pm. This news has been well received by the trade & will help the organizers gain more exhibitors & visitors. In addition to this the organizers have also announced the Networking drinks event to be hosted within My Wine Fair to ensure 'face time' with relevant exhibitors. Nielsen (2009) advocates the creation of synergies across media to produce additional uplift. This can be achieved through an appropriate marketing communications media mix. Advertising is the the mass media method of marketing communications of a product / offering and provides the largest exposure to the most geographically isolated audiences at the lowest cost per person. LIWF in the months leading up to the event advertise the event in only trade magazines such as Harpers, Imbibe, Drinks International, off license news, restaurant news & the drinks business. Since the event is a very exclusive one for the trade only a lot of publicity & interest is generated by word of mouth. Also considering that most of the visitors & previous exhibitors are regular goers from previous years, the main information they seek is what else the organisers are adding new to the show in the coming year

5. 2 SOCIAL MEDIA

[http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:](http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcREbncWnVoakg6ORSQxRZKWNix7W6SvskHgXr2vQ0z0c3-_9gVBMP7ZZBjVnQ)

[ANd9GcREbncWnVoakg6ORSQxRZKWNix7W6SvskHgXr2vQ0z0c3-](http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcREbncWnVoakg6ORSQxRZKWNix7W6SvskHgXr2vQ0z0c3-_9gVBMP7ZZBjVnQ)

[_9gVBMP7ZZBjVnQ](http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcREbncWnVoakg6ORSQxRZKWNix7W6SvskHgXr2vQ0z0c3-_9gVBMP7ZZBjVnQ)Figure 5. Social MediaWhile press releases, print ads & mailers can still play a role, social media has fundamentally shifted the way people gather information and learn about events. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as " a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2. 0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. With over 3000 likes on Facebook and 3000 followers on Twitter (@londonwinefair), social media will have an increasing role to play to promote the wine Fair in 2013. Facebook's new live stream box can also be a powerful tool for increasing event participation. With more than 500 million people connecting on Facebook every day, it's the perfect place to reach out to thousand's who may not be in attendance. Live streaming via Facebook gives anyone who has access to the Internet the ability to get involved. Social media today is LIWF's most important communication tool for the following reasonsit's the perfect medium for people who like to attend liwf because of its two vital components that draw people to events and make them successful - networking opportunities and educational content. Most LIFW's visitors are using social media sites today such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. So they can probably be talk about the event in advance, during the event, and after the event on these social sites. Promoting LIWF on social media is a great way to drive attendance numbers to the actual event. Word-of-mouth marketing has a whole new meaning with the advent

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of social media, as LIWF's organizer's can mobilize registered attendees to reach out to their social networks to invite their friends/colleagues to register for LIWF 2013. Online forums such as LinkedIn groups and Facebook allow LIWF's attendees to communicate and collaborate before and after the event. This can change the dynamic of the event in a positive way, as more meaningful dialogue and participation can occur if attendees have a higher common knowledge point at the start of the event. One can be certain that LIWF's invited guest speakers will be better prepared to tailor their message to the audience and deliver a great a better presentation if they know that feedback about their presentation is going to be posted on the Internet in real time via Twitter, Facebook or attendees' blogs. When an event happens offline, whether a conference, sporting event or concert, the conversation around the event is happening online in real time on Twitter. This offers a unique opportunity not only for attendees, who can interact with each other and see what other attendees are saying, but also -- and more interestingly -- for people who aren't there. They can become part of the event without actually being there --- with hashtags, photos, videos, and other content being shared on Twitter. And, the new version of Twitter makes it even easier to follow the conversations and see media via the details pane," Penner says.

5. 3 DIRECT MARKETING

Direct Marketing is a channel that allows businesses to communicate straight with the customer with advertising techniques that include email, mobile phone texting, interactive consumer websites, online display ads, fliers, catalog distribution, cold calling, promotional letters and outdoor advertising.

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Sales are made much easier, and sales volumes can increase when consumers are informed, are knowledgeable, and possess much more interest in a product due to prior advertising (Lancaster and Reynolds, 2005). This is one of the strong areas for LIWF because over the years they have collected thousands of contacts of visitors on trade individuals. They have a clear idea of their target audience & know how to find them. LIWF sends out regular mailers out to this database as soon as the registration is announced usually in January each year for the event which takes place in May. LIWF manage this very smartly & have the mass mailers also sponsored by top wine brands & distributors. So every recipient will also receive knowledge on the sponsor of the mail & a link directly to their offerings or services.

5. 4 ONLINE & WEBSITE SERVICES

The website gets over 85, 000 unique visitors annually, making over 125, 000 visits (www. londonwinefair. com)is an extremely powerful tool in the communication mix for London International Wine Fair. The site is presently being redeveloped and will be launched soon by mid January to reflect many of the new aspirations & initiatives including My Wine Fair, which provides a tailored itinerary for visitors based on industry sector and sourcing requirements. The website is updated with up to date information about the tastings & master classes so that visitors are able to plan much in advance of how they would like to spend their time at the event, this is true value for time for the visitors as they are able to plan their schedule up front & also know about what exhibitors will be present at the event much ahead of their visit. The website is through one providing visitors with every minute detail

about the event. The website handles nearly 90% of registrations whilst other 10% visitors show up on the day.

6. TRENDS & ISSUES OF LIWF

The organizers also claim that the new online registration takes less than 20 seconds for a visitor to register making it very user friendly but the challenge is that its barely enough time to embed the core brand values of LIWF to them in that small duration. The Organizers have mapped out that its very likely that a visitor registered 2 weeks ahead of the show is more likely to attend than someone who had registered 12 weeks before the event and they use this information to direct their spend on marginal areas that require them. The trend is that these registrants constitute over 50% of actual turn out at the event. The organizers have also come up with an initiative to send quality badges up front to the registrants & also get in direct contact to ensure that visitors have all the information they require & to also encourage them to bring a colleague along. The event in 2013 will be principally catered towards UK wine business rather than being inclined towards the international scene in previous years of LIWF as the organizers are committed to cementing the show at the core of the UK wine industry for 2013. The missing of some big players in the scene like Pernord Ricard & EJ Gallo at the 2012 show raised several eyebrows in the industry but the organizers for 2013 have announced a set of new initiatives to instill faith & lure back previous exhibitors. The dates of LIWF 2013 have also come under some scrutiny as it is squeezed between two other major wine expo's of Europe namely Prowein, Germany & Vinexpo, Bourdeaux which are known to be of more significance for South American wine producers. The other main

issues is that taxation on wines & liquor in the UK, it's a tough situation in the UK wine market, where high taxes and recession conspire to prevent businesses from making any money; or not as much money as they might make in a market like China, Italy or Scandinavian countries.

7. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

LIWF for 2013 have announced some great initiatives like the travel bursaries for independent retailer etc, such news should be communicated well in advance before registration starts on the website. LIWF to conduct Speed Networking between exhibitors & buyers this will result in more meaningful business being conducted. LIWF could Partner with Select Restaurants during LIWF to showcase importance of food & wine matching, visitors could be given a special discount at the select restaurants. LIWF should Run Social Media contests with rewards like free bottles of wine, this will surely add buzz to the event & get visitors talking about the event much in advance. LIWF should draw up more attention towards Corporate Social Responsibility & Green Initiatives, in today's world its seen as of increasing importance for reputed companies to practice as suppliers & partners are keen to engage in meaningful business with such Companies. For e. g. championing a drink driving awareness campaign. Use of recyclable products throughout its event: delegate bags, brochures, conference agendas, flyers can be made from 100%-recycled material.

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Figure 4. Marketing Communications Mix [online] Available from <http://www.themarketingguywhodrivessales.com/crashcourse/graphix/promix.gif> [Accessed 27th December 2012]. Figure 5. Social Media [online] Available from <https://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&window=1&q=SOCIAL%20MEDIA&um=1&ie=UTF&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&authuser=0&ei=z7jnUNusBNS3hAePkoHABA&biw=1366&bih=667&sei=JbnnUJYQ6KTQBd34gYgD> [Accessed 27th December 2012]