Event promotion: a key success factor for companies?
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Summary of thesis

Title: Event promotion: a key success factor for companies?
Authors: Benoît Marcone and Pau Riera Vuibert
Level: Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration, Marketing
Key word: Event promotion, communication tools, corporate image, loyalty, staff motivation, notoriety
Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to explain why companies in France use the event promotion.
Method: In this part we explain how we are going to collect our information. On one hand we collect secondary data from books and internet websites to have an overview of the event promotion market and on the other we collect primary data through three written interviews sent to an event promotion agency’s CEO, one project manager of the same company, and an executive assistant, who works in a company which uses event promotion agencies to set its events up. We also explain why we choose this method, these persons and the kind of questions we ask.
Theoretical framework: In this chapter we explain all the important terms necessary to well understand the topic we chose by defining some specific concepts. Indeed, we talk in a first time about communication in a general way and then more specifically about event promotion, its definition, types and aims. We also in this part explain others concepts such as the loyalty.
Conclusion: We present the answer of our purpose. Companies use event promotion for mostly three reasons that are to get a good corporate image, be well known and also to federate and motivate its work forces. We go a little further in this part talking about event promotion agencies and their competitive advantages, especially the customers’ loyalty, to stay competitive on the market. Finally, we talk also about the limits of our study.
Acknowledgements

First of all, we want to thank all the persons who have contributed to our thesis. We think notably at Mr Jean-Pierre Colmez, Chief Executive Officer of a French event promotion agency Ludico, Mrs. Marine Coroller, Chief Manager in the same company and finally Mrs Paulette Drumez, executive assistant in Approvisionnement Electrique, a company which uses event promotion, without who this study would be impossible.

We also want to express our gratitude to our supervisor Jean-Charles Languilaire for his advice and his feedbacks. We want to thank him also for his patience and the explanations he gave us during all this semester. Finally, we have a special thinking to our friends who offered constructive remarks and criticisms during our meeting groups.

Benoît Marcone
Pau Riera Vuibert
Introduction

In this chapter, we discuss about a new trend in the promotion field, which is the event promotion. In a first time we explain what event promotion is by defining several terms, in a second step, we stress the fact that companies use event promotion since the 80’s. Finally, we present the purpose of our study, which is to explain why companies use the event promotion, and then we show the structure of our work.

1.1 Introduction to event promotion

“Event promotion is a gathering of human beings, generally lasting from a few hours to a few days, and designed to celebrate, honour, sell, teach about or observe human endeavours” (Matthews, 2008, p.140). Event promotion is thus a communication tool used by companies in order to reach its target on a given market. The definition above gives us a good aspect of what the event promotion is but nevertheless does not show another important characteristic which was highlighted by Boistel (2005) who describes who the event promotion is created for: “event promotion aims at all the company’s external audience, its customers, and also the staff of the company” (Boistel, 2005, p. 27-47). An important point in the latter definition, in order to avoid misunderstandings for the following parts, is the differentiation between internal and external audience (we are going to explain this differentiation in our theoretical framework). According to a study of the Advertiser Union (2003), image, reputation and staff motivation are the three main goals of event promotion. It should however be noted that the objectives are quite different according to the firm size (Boistel, 2005). Small companies look for notoriety in order to growing up more quickly in the market whereas bigger companies seek to shape their image (Boistel, 2005).

1.2 Problem

The event promotion is not something really new, it exists since the Middle Age: signs (Antiquity), printing (XV century), newspaper (XVII century), bill sticking (XIX century), cinema (1900-1920), direct communication (beginning of the XX century), radio (1920), TV (1940), internet (1990-1995) and mobile phone (1995-2000) (Anon., 2006). Jacques Stocquart (1991) talks also about the Antiquity Greeks’ public markets as the first steps of event promotion. More recently, we can stress the example of Ford at the beginning of the XXth century, who offered to visit his manufactories for the launch of the T Ford (Dockès, 1993). In 1925, André Citroën rent the Eiffel Tower in order to write with lights the letters of the famous brand on it (http://www.tour-eiffel.fr/documentation/dossiers/page/illuminations.html). But at the beginning of the 80’s the event promotion market has evolved with the implementation of big American companies in France and the development of new image technology (Anon., 2004). The event promotion used by professionals as a promotional vector begins to be developed and specialized agencies, mostly big advertising agencies’ satellites or small independent entities, are created by professionals from tourism or promotion. In 1986, we could count 25 of these specialized agencies in France, 10 years later 150. Nowadays, there are 715 event promotion agencies in France (Bedouk, 2010). As shown in the figure 1, the French market is still rapidly growing, in 2008 it can be observed an increasing of the turnover for specialized agencies (+ 3, 5% compare to 2007) or also the increasing of employment in this sector (+ 2% compare to 2007) (Anon., 2009). In 2009, the market situation slowed down because of the financial crisis (Di Rossa, 2009), but the 2010’s perspectives are better (Di Rossa, 2010):
The figure 1-1 shows there is a strong demand from companies to organize events. Indeed, except for the year 2009 (Cappelli, 2009), the event promotion market in France is growing, especially since the 80’s. Therefore, the point which interests us are triggers which lead companies to use event promotion rather than those traditional media since the 80’s. The term “traditional” implies that those kinds of media have been in existence for some time. M. R. Stafford and R. J. Faber (2005, p.6) define the traditional media as an “established medium that is therefore an entity that has become traditional” (television, cinema, radio for instance are established medium). A question can thus be raised: What are the key success factors of this kind of promotion?

1.3 Purpose

The question above leads to the purpose of this thesis that is to explain why companies in France use the event promotion.

1.4 Limitations

Our study concerns the French market of event promotion in France for the main reason we have a direct contact with an event promotion agency’s CEO in France and also because it’s easier for us to find information about the French market of event promotion in France considering one of us has already done an internship in this kind of agency in France.

1.5 Thesis plan

To bring answers to our purpose, we work in four parts: in the first chapter we expose and explain theories about event promotion to understand what it means, in the second part we collect data through qualitative method. In the third step, we analyze the data we just collected and the written interviews we did. Finally, in our last part we present our answer to the purpose.
2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter we present our theoretical framework and the main theories that will help us answer our research questions. This part is where we accumulate a knowledge base that is necessary to fully understand the scope of the thesis. First of all, we present a general theory about communication. We review at this occasion the communication in the 4 Ps and also the communication process. Then, we talk about event promotion: definition, types, and aims. Finally, the last paragraph concerns the loyalty in a given market, a definition and a presentation of the different kinds of loyalty.

2.1 Promotion in the marketing mix

“The marketing mix is the set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market” (Kotler, 2001, p.76). Jerome Mc Carthy first introduced this concept in 1960 as the variables through which a firm carries out its marketing strategy (Kotler, 2001). A good marketing mix is the base of an efficient marketing, which is based itself on the right balance of marketing elements and processes depending on the nature of the product, service or idea being marketed (Kotler, 2001). In our field study, promotion is the variable that is interesting for us. According to Doyle and Stern (2006), have good products and services is not enough: to generate sales and profits, their benefits have to be promoted to customers or more generally to the target. Therefore, “marketing communication is the process of transmitting messages with the objective of making organisation’s products or services attractive to target audiences” (Doyle and Stern, 2006, P.248). There are mainly four different reasons a company wants to communicate to its targets:

- **Inform**: the company has to communicate about its products and services in order to be better known next to customers and also to explain exactly what the company is doing (Doyle and Stern, 2006).
- **Persuade**: the company has to convince customers that its brand is the best in the market (Doyle and Stern, 2006).
- **Image creation**: in some case, corporate image can be a huge competitive advantage. Especially in a market where products are simple and similar, the values and beliefs of the company become the brand. Therefore, the image created is the main differentiator for customers to choose between a brand rather than another one (Doyle and Stern, 2006).
- **Reinforcement**: in many cases, companies communicate only to reinforce their position in the market. Indeed, this action aims to reassure the current customers rather than to win new ones, because for most established businesses it’s most important for the future to keep their current customers. In this perspective, the company seeks to
remind to its customers that the brand is still reliable, relevant and good value (Doyle and Stern, 2006).

So now we have seen the four main reasons for a company to communicate, thus, in the following part we study the communication process and what are the different steps of such process.

2.2 Communication process

The company’s communication plan needs to be adapted for specific segments considering customers are all different (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). Importantly, given the new interactive communications technologies, companies must ask not only “how can we reach our customers” but also “how can we find ways to let customers reach us”. To communicate effectively, marketers need to understand how communication works. Communication involves all the following elements:

✓ Sender: the entity sending the message to another one.
✓ Encoding: the process of putting the intended message or thought into symbolic form.
✓ Message: the set of words, pictures or symbols that the sender transmits.
✓ Media: communication means used by the sender to pass the information on the receiver.
✓ Decoding: the process by which the receiver understands the symbol encoded by the sender.
✓ Receiver: the entity receiving the message sent by another one.
✓ Response: the reactions of the receiver after being exposed to the message.
✓ Feedback: the part of the receiver’s response communicated back to the sender.
✓ Noise: the unplanned static or distortion during the communication process, which results in the receiver getting a different message from the one the sender sent (Kotler, Wong, Saunders and Armstrong, 2005).

Two of these elements are the major parties in a communication (the sender and the receiver), the message and the media are the major communications tools and encoding, decoding, response and feedback are the four primary communication functions. The last element is noise in the system. (Kotler et al., 2005).
The Figure 2-2 summarises the process of communication:

![Diagram of communication process]

Figure 2-2: The communication process (Doyle and Stern, 2006, p. 250)

For a message to be effective, the sender has to encode his message in an understandable way for the receiver: the encoding process must match with the decoding process. Thus, the best messages consist of simple words and other symbols that are familiar to the receiver (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, Armstrong, 2005). A company can reach its target thanks to four ways of communication (Lendrevie, Lévy & Lindon, 2006):

- **Advertising:** “it’s the means by which goods or services are promoted to the public. The advertiser’s goal is to increase sales of these goods by drawing people’s attention to them and showing them in a favourable light” (Petley, 2002, p.4). Nowadays, advertising is a complex and complicated concept, employing thousands of people with a wide range of skills in marketing, writing, photography. According to Petley (2002), there are four factors for advertising to exist. First of all, the company needs goods and/or services to be advertised; second, a competition between different providers of the same kind of goods and services, for which there needs to be a significant potential market. The third factor is the means of advertising cheaply to large numbers of people. Finally, a population with sufficient education to be able to understand advertising messages.

- **Point of sale:** group of techniques used in the point of sale in order to increase either the turnover, the customers’ number, the gross profit or to realize an operation to improve the corporate image. The point of sale contains sales with bonus, discount, samples, gifts and so on (Vandercammen and Gauthy-Sinéchal, 1999). The point of sale uses a group of specific products made for each special operation, such as display stands to expose products, pictures and so forth (Van Dick, 1990).

- **Word of mouth:** it’s everything you can do to get people talking, we can say as well that word of mouth is “C to C” marketing. It’s about real people talking to each other (C to C) instead of marketers doing the talking (Sernovitz, Godin and Kawasaki, 2006).
Public relations: it’s the management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends’ (Harrison, 2000)

The last way to communicate shown above is the one that interests us because it refers directly to our main topic the event promotion. “Public relations can be defined as those activities undertaken by the organisation to communicate to its public that are not paid for directly” (Doyle and Stern, 2006, p.279). The major activities undertaken in public relations are as follows:

- Achieving positive coverage in the media: the company has to communicate through newspapers, journals, television in order to create or keep a good coverage in the media. By carrying positive and persuasive stories about the firm, its people or its products, the team management persuades customers the company is reliable. (Doyle and Stern, 2006).
- Creating and reinforcing the corporate image: the company has to create a visual identity easily recognizable by customers who by the way should feel good about (Doyle and Stern, 2006).
- Sponsoring special events: sponsoring allows companies to catch customers’ attention to their products and activities by presenting events that attract target publics (Doyle and Stern, 2006).

So now, we saw the basic knowledge of communication, we are going to see deeper the last point above and address the concept of event promotion.

2.3 Definition of event promotion

In the communication, there are two kinds of media: the traditional media and the alternative media. The traditional media are the most used by companies in France (http://www.insee.fr). In our case, we are going to talk about alternative media considering event promotion takes part of it. Indeed, according to Matthews (2008), the alternative media designates all the communication actions not included in the traditional media (TV, radio, press...). Alternative media include all the direct marketing actions but also all alternatives promotion actions like street marketing, point of sale, event promotion (Matthews, 2008). So we can now give a definition of what is event promotion according to Matthews (2008, p.140): “event promotion is a gathering of human beings, generally lasting from a few hours to a few days, and designed to celebrate, honor, sell, teach about or observe human endeavours”. This definition stays rather general and does not indicate the target of event promotion. It’s indeed essential to consider Boistel’s view: “event promotion aims at all the company’s external audience, its customers, and also the staff of the company” (Boistel, 2005, p. 27-47). Therefore, as we can see above, event promotion is not only designed for customers but for the work force as well. This new differentiation leads us to define two new terms depending the aim of the action: if the target of the event is the customers, we talk about event promotion, if the target of the event is the workforce, we talk about business tourism which is define “as a traveller whose main purpose for travelling is to attend an activity or event associated with his/her business or interests” (Bedouk, 2008). Both of these terms are event promotion.

2.4 Aims of event promotion

According to a study of the Advertiser Union, image, reputation and staff motivation are the three main goals of the event promotion. Image is defined by Baines, Egan and Jefkins (1996, p.356) as “the impression of an organization held by a public based on knowledge and
experience; the image defines also the character of the organization: the way the company is seen to behave will influence the impression people have of it'. The reputation refers to "the opinion of others about a company as a whole rather than its specific qualities or the social status it holds" (Oriesek, 2004, P.17). Finally, staff motivation is defined as "a gathering of desires and will which lead a person to achieve an objective matching a need" (Legendre, 1993, p. 881-882). It should however be noted that the objectives differ substantially with the firm size. Small companies look for notoriety in order to growing up more quickly in the market whereas bigger companies seek to shape their image (Boistel, 2005). These goals are also quoted by Arcan (1994) when they say event promotion provides a positive image, increases the prestige of the firm, increases its capital of sympathy and confidence among the public, strengthens the internal cohesion of the staff who takes a matter of pride. So we can see here the most important aim of event promotion is to give a good image of the company in addition to increase sales. Indeed, the effect of event promotion on the corporate image is due to the emotional dimension that it brings and which has a multiplier effect on the image of the brand or company because of the lively and dramatic event outside the company (Perlstein & Piquet, 1985).

The Table below summarizes the different goal according to the different authors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertiser Union</th>
<th>Boistel</th>
<th>Arcan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff motivation</td>
<td>notoriety</td>
<td>Capital of sympathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff cohesion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-1: Different aims of event promotion

So we have seen deeper what event promotion was with several definitions, the aims and the target of such operation. Now we are going to talk in the last part about loyalty. Our purpose is to explain why the event promotion is used by companies, so in order to have an overview of this success, it might be interesting to see as well how event promotion agencies lead customers to become loyal.

2.5 Concept of loyalty

We talk here about the concept of loyalty in order to give deeper information about the event promotion market. This section is not created to answer directly to our purpose but to highlight what are the key success factors of event promotion agencies to be competitive on this market. Therefore we define in a first time what is loyalty according to Guichard and Vanheems and in a second step we describe different kinds of loyalty in accordance to Kapferer and Lauren.

When a customer buys always the same brand or appeal always to the same service provider, we talk about loyalty (N. Guichard and R. Vanheems, 2004), it means the customer is satisfied by the product or the service and he/she is even ready to pay more for it (J.C. Dufour and S. Maisonnas, 1997). Nevertheless, Jacoby and Kyner (1973) add one condition to have a loyal customer: the repurchase behaviour of a brand must be combined with a good attitude about it. Thus, a customer is considered as loyal if he has a repeated purchase behaviour for the brand and if this behaviour is a consequence of positive feeling about the brand. If it’s not the case, repeated purchase behaviour without a good feeling about the brand
can’t be considered as loyalty (N. Guichard and R. Vanheems, 2004). Indeed, if we take the case of a company that has the monopoly on one market, customers can’t be loyal because they don’t have the choice between different companies. By the way, a customer can be loyal to several brands.

Kapferer and Lauren (1992) highlight four different kinds of loyalty:

- Loyalty by conviction: the customer is loyal to the brand because it matches exactly to his/her needs. The customer has tried others brands but they don’t suit him/her. Thus the customer is loyal to the brand because he/she is convinced by its superiority in comparison to the others in the market (Kapfere and Lauren, 1992).
- Loyalty by lazy satisfaction: the customer is loyal to a brand because he found a quite good product. He/she doesn’t want to find another better product, the one he/she got is good enough (Kapfere and Lauren, 1992).
- Loyalty by risks fear: changes are a risks source. Thus, the simple fact to change a brand can be risked for the customer. The customer doesn’t want to change a brand because he/she is scared to be disappointed by these changes (Kapfere and Lauren, 1992).
- Loyalty by inertia: the customer is loyal to a brand owing to the practical nature associated to the repetition. Indeed, the fact to repeat a purchase again and again makes his/her life easier and therefore he/she doesn’t want to change the brand. The customer just buys the brand because it’s easier for him/her (Kapfere and Lauren, 1992).

So we’ve seen in this part the conditions to talk about loyalty toward a brand, the effects that can occur and the different kinds of loyalty.

As a conclusion, it’s very important to understand event promotion is not only designed for customers but also for professionals and company’s personal; event promotion is mostly focus on reputation, image and staff cohesion.
3 Method

In our thesis, we explain why companies use the event promotion, so we need to gather information to understand this phenomenon. In this chapter we explain which methods are used in order to give an answer to our purpose. In a first time, we present the differences between a qualitative and a quantitative research approach and explain our choice. In another part, we discuss about which kind of data is the best for our study, primary or secondary data. Then we present our written interviews and the method we will follow to write them. In a last point we present the reliability and the validity of our method.

3.1 Qualitative and quantitative approach

“The simplest way to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative may be to say that qualitative methods involve a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements or amounts” (Murray, 2003, P.1). On the other hand, quantitative methods are focus on measurements and amounts of the variables studied by the researcher (Murray, 2003).

So now we are going to study those concepts deeper by defining them and show the method to do these approaches.

3.1.1 Quantitative definition

Here we have two different definitions of a quantitative approach, the first one given by King, Keohane and Verba (1994, pp. 3-4) “quantitative research uses numbers and statistical methods. It tends to be based on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena; it abstracts from particular instances to seek general description or to test causal hypotheses; it seeks measurements and analyses that are easily replicable by other researchers.”

The other definition is given by Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 6) “quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generalize to other persons and places. Careful sampling strategies and experimental designs are aspects of quantitative methods aimed at produce general results. In quantitative research, the researcher’s role is to observe and measure, and care is taken to keep the researchers from “contaminating” the data through personal involvement with the research subjects. Researchers “objectivity” is of utmost concern.”

3.1.2 Qualitative definition

Here we have two different definitions of a qualitative approach, the first one given by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.2) “qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving and interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter”. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms on the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, ... – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in people’s lives. The other definition is given by Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.1) “qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they interact... Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to interpretive research.” (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

3.1.3 Comparison between quantitative and qualitative researches

“Whereas quantitative research is profoundly influenced by a natural science approach of what should count as acceptable knowledge, qualitative researchers are more influenced by
interpretivism” (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.415). It means in quantitative research the information is more precise, and it’s easier to draw conclusions (because the information is based on measurement and amounts). In qualitative research you have to understand and interpret the information obtained, and the conclusion often depends on the researcher. We can also say qualitative research tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers.

The Table 3-1 summarises the main differences between a qualitative and a quantitative approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some common contrasts between quantitative and qualitative research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nature of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative researches (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

The table above summarises the differences that we have found by analyzing the definitions of quantitative and qualitative research. We have seen that with quantitative method we can get statistics and numbers, and with qualitative method we search explanations for a phenomenon, in our case, the reasons that lead companies to use event promotion.

3.1.4 Our choice

We don’t need numerical information about event promotion, we will not calculate how many companies use the event promotion end we won’t explain the evolution of this phenomenon. Our research is not based on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena; our purpose is to explain why companies use the event promotion.

Through our semi-structured interviews, we want to collect deep and rich data concerning the interviewees’ points of view and work experiences, to finally find out a way to solve our issue.

As we mentioned before, the conclusions in qualitative research often depends on the researcher, because he/she has to understand and interpret the data. The results of our research are not greatly affected by our special characteristics or expectations, but as we are doing qualitative research we should understand and interpret the information obtained, and the conclusions that we get might be different from the conclusions that would obtain researchers with different characteristics and expectations, about the same information.

To summarize up, in this thesis we use a qualitative approach because our purpose is to try to explain a new phenomenon and for this reason we need rich and deep data and also points of view of persons who are in the event promotion sector.
We can see in the Figure 3-1 the main steps in a qualitative research.

First of all, we developed the written interview’s questions in order to get clear answers, easy to analyze and helpful to solve our purpose. Then we have selected the relevant subjects, who are the CEO and the project manager from Ludico (an event promotion agency) and a worker from Approvisionnement Electrique (a company which is a Ludico’s customer). Regarding the collection of relevant data, we just waited the responses from our written interviews to move to the next step that is interpretation of data. Thus, through our written interviews we collect information based on personal experiences of workers in their natural state and interpret this information to give solution to our purpose. Steps 5a and 5b imply that we must understand and interpret deeply the information obtained; it is not just a matter of analyzing and displaying results. To do this, we asked some questions that do not help directly to solve our purpose, but which allow us to understand better the respondents, their activities and needs so as to think like them. We have finally written the conclusions that we have obtained.

3.2 Data collection

Data collection is an integral part of the marketing research process (Kurtz 2009). One of the most time-consuming parts of collecting data is determining what method we should use to obtain the data. This section discusses the most commonly used methods by which marketing researchers find both secondary and primary data (Kurtz, 2009).
3.2.1 Secondary data collection

According to Kurtz (2009) secondary data are information that already exist somewhere, having been collected for another purpose. Most of researchers start by collecting secondary data in order to have an idea more definite of the purpose. The main way to gather this kind of data is to search in books, newspapers, articles, the Internet, online database, etc. The advantages of this kind of data are mainly the fact you can obtain it more quickly and at a lower cost than primary data. Also, secondary data can provide information that companies cannot collect on their own (information is not directly available or too expensive). However, collecting secondary data can also present problems. The most important is about the reliability of the information: researchers have to evaluate secondary data carefully to make certain it’s relevant (match to the subject), accurate (reliably collected and reported), current (not too old to take decisions) and imperial (objectively collected and reported) (Kotler, 2008). Another problem that can occur during the secondary data collection is the non-existence of the information needed: it’s really scarce when a researcher can find all the information he wants just by gathering secondary data (Kotler 2008).

We have secondary data from books, newspapers and overcoat from the Internet. Each time we add a new data we show the reference to insure the reliability of the information. Therefore our method to collect data is trusty. Moreover, we use only scientific information that equally guarantees the veracity of our data.

Our secondary data has enabled us to develop the first two chapters of our thesis. We collected information from scientific books that have allowed us to complete the introduction (introduction to event management) and also the theoretical framework. From these books we used many definitions of event promotion that helped us to explain the topic of our thesis and have also helped us to understand the differentiation between internal and external audience of event promotion. From newspapers and the Internet, we obtained information about the evolution of the event promotion and we have observed that there is an increasing demand. Thus, we found our purpose, which is “why the event promotion is used by companies”.

3.2.2 Primary data collection

According to Kurtz (2009) primary data are information collected for a specific survey. In other words, the researcher has to create him/herself the data he/she will use in order to give an answer to his/her purpose. Like we have seen above, secondary data give a global view of the subject but not a deep explanation of the subject area. For that, we need the primary data. “Although research to gather primary data can cost more and take longer, the results can provide richer, more detailed information than secondary data offers” (Kurtz, 2009, p.235). There are three main different ways to collect qualitative primary data: questionnaires, interviews and observations (Kurtz, 2009).

3.2.2.1 Observation

“Observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place” (Kumar, 2005, p. 120).

There are two kinds of observation; on the one hand, participant observation is when the researcher participates in the activities of the group being observed in the same manner as its members, with or without their knowing that they are being observed (Kumar, 2005). On the other hand, non – participant observation is when the researcher does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer, watching and listening to its activities and drawing conclusions from this (Kumar, 2005).
In our case, we don’t choose this method considering we are not able to do this kind of observation.

3.2.2.2 Questionnaires

According to Kumar (2005, p.126), “a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorder by respondents”. There is only one difference between an interview schedule and a questionnaire: in the first case, the interviewer asks questions and records the respondent’s replies and in the second case, the respondent records his replies himself. In the case of a questionnaire, as there is no one to explain the meaning of questions to respondents, it’s important that questions are clear and easy to understand. There are three different ways to administrate a questionnaire:

- The mailed questionnaire: send the questionnaire by mail is the most common way to collecting information
- Collective administration: try to obtain a captive audience because it ensures a very high response rate.
- Administration in a public place: administer questionnaires in public places as shopping center, school and so forth.

We don’t use questionnaires because they are more appropriate for a quantitative research and in our case we do a qualitative research.

3.2.2.3 Interviews

Shipley gives a definition of an interview “it is a serious conversation between someone with specific knowledge or expertise and someone who may benefit from that expertise” (Hemphill-Pearson, 1999, p. 19). There are three different kinds of interviews (Kumar, 2005), the unstructured interview, the structured interview and the semi-structured interview.

On the first hand, unstructured interviews are interviews without any set format, allow questions based on the interviewee’s responses and proceeds like a friendly, non – threatening conversation. In this case, there is no structure and because each interviewee is asked a different series of questions, this style lacks the reliability and precision (Kumar, 2005).

On the other hand, in structured interview the researcher is going to ask a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions. For that he has to write an interview schedule which is a “written list of questions, open – ended or closed – ended, prepared for use by an interviewer in a person – to – person interaction” (Kumar, 2005, p. 26). One of the main advantage of this method in comparison to an unstructured interview is that it provides uniform information, which assures the comparability of data.

Finally, semi-structured interview “combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data at the factor level” (S. L. Schensul, J. J. Schensul and M. D. Lecompte, 1999, p. 149). Questions in this kind of interview are preformulated but the answers are open-ended, the interviewee can answer whatever he/she wants (S. L. Schensul et al., 1999).

3.2.2.4 Comparison between observation, questionnaire and interview

When the question of what kind of survey we should do for our thesis came up, we had the choice between three options: observation, interview, questionnaire. The idea of make an observation was quickly given up because of our geographical situation: we couldn’t be in France to handle it. Between an interview and a questionnaire once again the choice was
obvious: we do a qualitative research in this thesis and questionnaires are designed for quantitative researches. Therefore we chose the interview, but not the face-to-face interview but a written interview (it was clearly easier for us to send the interviews because we are in Sweden and the interviewees are in France).

3.2.2.5 Our choice: the written interview

Our purpose in this thesis is to explain a phenomenon. In this perspective, we decided to ask some questions about even promotion to specialists, so that lead us to contact three different persons in France: an event promotion agency’s CEO, Mr Jean Pierre Colmez, one project manager of the same company, Mrs Marine Coroller, and finally an executive assistant, Mrs Paulette Drumez, who works in a company which uses event promotion agencies to set its events up.

We decided to interview these three respondents because two of them, the CEO and the project manager, are professionals and can give us interesting information about event promotion through their own experience. The customer’s point of view is also very interesting considering she can give us their reasons to use event promotion. So this choice to interview professionals and customer is relevant because we have complementary opinions from the buyer and the seller to explain the success of event promotion.

We did a semi-structured interview in order to get depth results and try to have an explanation more precise of the phenomenon we are studying. Therefore, we used five main topics to build up our written interview in order to bring an answer to our purpose. Those parts are not apparent in the interviews, they are just useful to make easier the analysis. During this interview, we want our interviewees focus on their answers and get the most reliable data as much as possible. At the time of an interview people can get bored to answer questions and to cut short the session they respond without really paying attention to their answers. Therefore they hedge the results of the interview.

In order to avoid this phenomenon, we prefer put important questions (directly link to our purpose) at the beginning of the interview, to have our interviewees totally focus on their answers. As a presentation, the very first interrogations introduce our three interviewees to know a bit more about their experience on the event promotion market. Then come others questions less important in case interviewees are getting tired and they want to dash them off.

To be concluded on the structure of our interview, we can say the first and the last set of questions are less important and easier to answer and the ones between are more important and require more time to answer.

We sent the written interviews the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of May and we received all the answers one week later (we sent also an email the 8\textsuperscript{th} of May to remember them to answer because our deadline was getting closer and closer).

3.2.2.6 Questions

The layout of the questions is really important during a study because it has an impact on the quality of information obtained. Therefore, questions must be clearly understandable and relevant. So in this section we are going to present the two kinds of questions you can use in an interview: open – ended and closed – ended questions (Kurtz, 2009).

3.2.2.6.1 Open – ended questions

In an open – ended question the possible responses are not given. In the case of a interview, the respondent writes down the answers in his/her words (Kurtz, 2009).
3.2.2.6.2 Closed – ended questions

In a closed – ended question the possible answers are set out in the interview and the respondent chooses the category that best describes the respondent’s answer (Kumar, 2005).

The Table 3-2 below summarizes, according to Kumar (2005), the advantages and disadvantages of these two kinds of questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Open – ended questions| Provide in – depth information  
                      Respondent can express their opinion  
                      Respondent not “conditioned” by having to select answers  
                      No investigator bias                                                                 |
| Closed – ended questions| Easy to analyze  
                       Easy and quick to answer                                                                 |
|                      | Information lacks of depth and variety  
                       Possibility of investigator bias  
                       Given responses could condition the thinking of respondents |

Table 3-2: Comparison open/closed - ended questions

In our written interview, with used both open and closed-ended questions in order to get depth information and in the same time get answers easy to analyze. Moreover, it’s better for the interviewees to alternate both kinds of questions because otherwise interviewees are getting tired of answer to each question and don’t stay focus on the subject.

3.2.2.6.3 Written interviews’ description

In this part, we present the questions we asked to the three interviewees. In a first time, we gather in different tables questions speaking about the same topic. In a second step, we explain what we are waiting for by asking those kinds of question in order to find answers to our purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Since when have you been working with promotion agencies? | 1. How long have you been on the event market?  
2. Why did you decide to work in this area?  
3. Have you noticed a significant change in the events market over the past ten years (high demand, increasing the number of agencies...)? | |

Table 3-3: Questions about interviewees’ experience
With this kind of questions, we want to find out the years of experience of these companies with the event promotion in order to see if those agencies are experienced in this sector or on the contrary if they are newly created. In this perspective, this part helps us to determine if our interviews are reliable, especially for the CEO’s written interview. Indeed, in this kind of research, our results are based on the interviewees’ experiences. Therefore, if they are new in the market, the reliability of the study will be distorted by a lack of knowledge from the interviewees. Moreover, those questions show us also when the interviewees have started to be interested by the event promotion and we can see if it matches with the trends stressed in the introduction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. According to you, what is the added value of these agencies?</td>
<td>4. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset?</td>
<td>1. Why, do you think, your customers do not organize their events themselves instead of involving you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Why do you use this communication means? Do you think it is more efficient than usual communication means?</td>
<td>5. What, do you think, are the reasons why event promotion is currently successful?</td>
<td>2. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are you happy with the results brought by these actions talking of profit, media penetration, and customers’ loyalty?</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What, do you think, are the reasons why event promotion is currently successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Would you say that these promotions yielded you significant results in terms of good mood, atmosphere, and group cohesion in your company?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you think event promotion is essential to your company in terms of communication?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Why, do you think, event promotion faces a great success currently?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The kind of questions in the Table 3-4 is directly linked to our purpose. Indeed, as our purpose is to try to explain why companies use the event promotion, we asked to the three different persons what the added value of this communication means is, according to them. In this part we asked more questions to the customer because it’s interesting to us to understand why he/she uses event promotion. In order to get the most precise idea as much as possible, we asked many questions about motivation and customer satisfaction. This point of view is really interesting considering we expect in this case the reasons, or at least some of reasons, which lead companies to use this kind of promotion. The CEO’s questions are less numerous and based on his own experience of the event promotion market. In a first time, we want to know what the key success factors of his agency are, why his agency is still competitive on the event promotion market, and in a second time we asked him what the key success factors of event promotion are in a general way. We asked almost the same questions to the project
manager with just one difference with the question “Why, do you think, your customers do not organize their events themselves instead of involving you?” We expect from this question a description of what the process to set an event up is and also an explanation of the necessary competences that lead customers to appeal to specialized agencies rather than set their own event up. Another interesting point in this part is the comparison of event promotion with other promotion tools which allows us to understand why companies prefer use event promotion rather than “traditional” media, and also to show pros and cons of each kind of promotion tools. To be concluded on this second set of questions, we can say we asked really precise questions about the added value of event promotion in order to know, according to three different points of view due to their different job, what the key success factors of event promotion are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Could you replace event promotion by another communication means that would yield the same results? Why?</td>
<td>6. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as used as advertising is? Why?</td>
<td>4. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as important as advertising is? Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-5: Questions about event promotion in comparison to advertising

In this set of questions, we indirectly compare event promotion with other communication tools. We want to find out here what the pros and the cons of event promotion are in order to stress the main points that lead companies to choose this kind of promotion over others. The point of view of the customer is particularly interesting because she tells us why she prefers event promotion rather than the “traditional” media. It means she is going to talk about the main advantages for a company to use event promotion. In this perspective, the questions in the table above are suitable for our purpose because we are trying here to list the intrinsic qualities of event promotion which lead company to choose this kind of promotion rather than another one. In our theoretical part, we explain the difference between traditional media and alternative media. Thanks to those questions, we can have an idea more precise of these two kinds of media because with questions such as “Could you replace event promotion by another communication means which would yield the same results? Why?” we expect from the interviewee an explanation of the characteristics of event promotion and maybe a brief discussion about the aim of event promotion. Indeed, we highlight in a previous part several aims of event promotion, it could be interesting to relate the reasons of why we can’t replace the event promotion to another communication means with the aims we describe in the theoretical part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you always work with the same contractor? Why?</td>
<td>7. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies?</td>
<td>5. Do your customers call back you after a first collaboration? Can you explain why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Have you ever organized events by yourself?</td>
<td>8. Are you used to make business with those customers?</td>
<td>6. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you communicate your</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17
In this part, the topic of the questions is different. Indeed, we are not focus on the added value of event promotion anymore, but on the profile of companies which appeal to event promotion agencies and the loyalty in this kind of market. The aim we want to achieve by asking those questions is to find out if the event promotion is simply based on the organization of events or whether there is a real relationship between the customer and the specialized agency. In other words, is it important for customers that specialized agencies are aware about their customers’ businesses and also about their habits and values or is it just a matter of organization? We tried to find out in this part what can lead companies to use event promotion and which are the factors or criteria to choose an event promotion agency. Therefore, we want to find if the loyalty can bring a competitive advantage in this kind of market. Moreover, in addition to study the loyalty in this market, we want to draw a profile of who are the main customers (in terms of company’s size) of the event promotion market. As a conclusion we can say this kind of questions allow us to have an idea of who use events as a promotional vector and to highlight relations between event promotion agencies and their customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Do you work with event promotion companies to organize in-house events? External? Both? 13. How often do you work with communication agencies? 14. For which sort of event principally?</td>
<td>10. Event promotion is divided into two types of events: business tourism and event promotion to purely commercial ends. What type of event do your customers usually call you for? 11. Can you explain why? 12. Most often is it small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events? 13. On average, how many events do you hold a year? Is this number the same each year? Increasing? Decreasing?</td>
<td>7. What kind of events do you usually hold? 8. Are they usually small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events? 9. On average, how many events do you organize per year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This group of questions is designed to find out information about events in event promotion market. We want in this part to know for instance which kind of event is the most popular between business tourism and event promotion, how big are they and their frequency. We want to know all these information in order to have a more precise idea about what kind of event is the most popular. Moreover, we know also thanks to these questions, in average, the frequency of events per year. The last point is one of the most interesting in this part: we want to know this frequency in order to know if there is a significant variation of the number of events per year during the last past years. Indeed, if we can show such a thing, it means there is a variation of the demand on the event promotion market and it could be interesting to
study this phenomenon as well. Is the demand increasing? Decreasing? For what kind of events? As many questions which allow us to give an explanation more complete to our purpose. In our theoretical part, we talk about the difference between event promotion and business tourism, this set of question allows us to determine which kind of event is the most represented and to whom are they designed.

As a conclusion, these written interviews are designed to find answers for our purpose through five main topics which are the interviewees’ experience, the description of the most popular kind of event and its frequency, the added value of event promotion, the loyalty on this market and finally a comparison between event promotion and the others promotion tools.

3.3 Reliability and validity in qualitative research

“Loosely speaking, reliability is the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out; validity is the extent to which it gives the correct answer.” (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p19).

3.3.1 Reliability

Reliability concerns the consistency of a measure. It means the tendency to obtain the same results if the measure was to be repeated by using the same subjects under the same conditions. In our interview, we are going to ask mostly open-ended question in order to let the respondent free to say whatever he/her wants, without influence him/her: it’s the best way to have reliable information (Edward, Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Indeed, if we ask only closed questions, in the case where the respondent doesn’t find the exact answer among the ones that are suggested, he/her is going to give another one that is not the most appropriate. All this process leads to bias, that’s why we will use open-ended questions (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The data obtained is presented in empirical material, and if someone else realises the same study in the future with the same respondents, then the results must be similar.

3.3.2 Validity

The validity of an interview is to know if the answers given make sense or not: in another word, in this case the question is about the quality/credibility of our survey. In order to have a good quality survey, we have to be careful with the questions we are going to ask. Indeed, if the questions are out of the subject or difficultly understandable, the validity of our interview will be worthless (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Our three interviews contain all possible questions that are required to answer the question “why do companies use event promotion”. Thus the validity of our study is right.
4 Empirical material

In this chapter we present our empirical material and we describe the three interviewees, the companies where they come from and finally the answers obtained with our written interviews. This allows us to have a first approach of the results of our written interview to find an answer to our purpose.

4.1 Companies’ description

Among the three interviewees, the CEO and the project manager come from the same company Ludico, an event promotion agency. The customer works in another company, l’Approvisionnement Electrique, an electrical material distribution company. First of all, we describe quickly this company and in a second time we discuss a little more about Ludico.

4.1.1 Approvisionnement Electrique

L’Approvisionnement Electrique is a subsidiary of SONEPAR’Group. What is SONEPAR? It’s a private independent group that was created in 1960 and moved toward the distribution of electrical equipment since 1969 (http://www.approelec-sonepar.fr). SONEPAR is the co-leader (70% of its turnover is generated outside of France), while it is maintaining its leadership in Europe with a market share of approximately 15%. The group operates in 32 countries on four continents and makes a turnover of over €6.6 billion thanks to its 19,700 employees and its 1,146 agencies. L’Approvisionnement Electrique covering the entire East South of France with more than 100 employees. Mr Patrice Blin is the CEO of the company and in 2008 the turnover was around €40 million. The company has more than 6,500 customers and more than 500 suppliers. Its headquarters is located in Toulon in the South of France. Its business is the electrical equipment distribution as thread and cables, lighting, climatic (http://www.approelec-sonepar.fr).

4.1.2 Ludico

4.1.2.1 ID card

Ludico is a company based in the South of France in Aix-en-Provence that counts 7 employees and Mr. Jean-Pierre Colmez who is the CEO of this company. In 2008, the turnover of the company was around €2,5 million. The activity of the firm is the event promotion: Ludico is implanted for more than 25 years and has realized more than one thousand events (http://www.ludico.fr).

25 years ago, the company offered some services adapted to the then needs, less targeted, less diversified. Ludico was offering only parties, meetings, and rooms renting for some entertainments. But it was already avant-gardist to offer during seminars some funny activities and was then one of the rare agencies doing that.

4.1.2.2 Ludico’s offer

The Ludico’s specialty is to take care about the exchanges between participants and the transmission of a message. Their objectives are to adapt their propositions to each customer and always customize an event. These objectives are in one hand to find play solutions to company’s needs but it’s also to stress the human and interactive exchange between participants (according to Mr Colmez, Ludico’s CEO).

The specificity of the events organized by Ludico is based on the conceptualization of their events: meetings with some decors integrated, make funny participants’ speech,
everything is set up to establish an atmosphere in relation with the event’s theme and
dynamize the meeting.

The philosophy as well as the positioning of Ludico is not common. Mr Colmez says it
himself “my company is weird”. At the national scale, there are just a few agencies like this
one. By the way it’s for this reason Ludico has for signature “funny agency”. Contrary to
many agencies that offer spectacular and rich events in term of visual (fireworks, first flight in
a hot-air balloon…), Ludico offers a real play spirit and a cordial welcome (according to Mr
Colmez, Ludico’s CEO).

The disadvantage of this positioning is sometimes companies don’t want to appeal to
Ludico because they have a bad image of the company in terms of serious and prefer appeal to
agencies more “conformist”.

4.1.2.3 Ludico’s demand

Ludico is a really special agency and people who appeal to it know the philosophy and
the temperament of Ludico. Indeed, this agency counts only on its customers it already has
and doesn’t want to expand its customers. It may seem surprising but the agency exists for 25
years and the CEO works only with about 30 customers and he doesn’t want to prospect and
find new ones. His current customers know why they choose this agency: the value-added of
Ludico resides in its CEO who is empowered of a good relational and a good capacity to
organize and to lead. We can stress that the agency works only in B to B (Business to
Business) and not in B to C (Business to Consumer), we can find among its customers for
instance Coca Cola, AGF and others big companies.

We can precise for all the event promotion agencies there are some golden rules to
take into account: respect of budgets and planning, be really clear about the conditions of the
event (costs, delay, quality…), give a maximum of information to the customer, establish a
customize relationship with the customer... The main objective for an event promotion
agency is to be in the promotion strategy of a company and build a long-term relationship
with it (according to Mr Colmez, Ludico’s CEO).

For that, agencies bet on their competencies’ fields which constitute some differing
assets: in this case, the customer disposes of, with Ludico, technical and logistical
competencies and a long experience in the event promotion sector.

Now we have seen the companies’ descriptions, we are going to discuss and explain the
answers of our written interviews.

4.2 Answers’ description

In this part, we present the answers of the three interviewees. In a first time, we gather
in different tables questions and answers speaking about the same topic, with questions in
black and responses in blue (in order to be clearer toward the reader). In a second step, we
stress the relevant information that will allow us to bring an answer to our purpose; in another
words, how the data we collected solve our purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Since when have you been working with promotion agencies?</td>
<td>1. How long have you been on the event market?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Since 1987</td>
<td>1. 25 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why did you decide to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This part of the interview was built in order to know in one hand the experience of the CEO we interviewed and in another hand to see when the customer uses the event promotion as a promotion tool to communicate about his/her company and his/her products. Moreover, in this set of questions we have an idea of what the event promotion market is looks like, both demand and offer. The CEO and the customer have been starting using event promotion almost in the same time, 25 years ago. Furthermore, we learn in this part the event promotion market is very competitive and the demand for such promotion is increasing. As a conclusion, we have seen in this part the CEO’s opinion is quite reliable considering is on the market for 25 years. Moreover, we learnt the event promotion market is very competitive and the demand for event promotion is increasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. According to you, what is the added value of these agencies?</td>
<td>4. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset?</td>
<td>1. Why, do you think, your customers do not organize their events themselves instead of involving you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They have a deep knowledge in events set up; in general, they master event organization and they are of great help.</td>
<td>4. Getting fun what is important and... boring</td>
<td>1. For the added value of the agency (playful positioning), the solutions we bring to problems, the ideas we propose them, file management and problems upstream and downstream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Why do you use this communication means? Do you think it is more efficient than usual communication means?</td>
<td>5. What, do you think, are the reasons why event promotion is currently successful?</td>
<td>2. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We use event promotion because it allows us to gather a lot of potential customers and talk about our company and our products: we have a direct contact with people. I don’t know if event</td>
<td>5. Companies are looking for new ways to impress their customers. They don’t want to sell just a product, they want to sell values, beliefs,...they want to convince the customer that their brand is the best one. In this perspective, event promotion gives to companies a huge advantage:</td>
<td>2. Its positioning “playful” Some are successful thanks to their added value, their creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What, do you think, are the reasons why event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>promotion is more efficient than usual communication means because it’s really hard to measure the results of one action.</td>
<td>They have the possibility to create a real relation with customers. Another big advantage of the event promotion is the business tourism: in a world where the profit race and the productivity don’t stop to accentuate to the detriment, sometimes, of team workers’ psychological health, it’s important to federate these teams, consolidate or even create links between employees in order to provide an optimum production’s efficiency to the company.</td>
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<td>4. Are you happy with the results brought by those actions talking of profit, media penetration, and customers’ faithfulness?</td>
<td>Promotion is currently successful? 3. I guess one of the most important reason is companies know that they must have a good corporate image next to customers and event promotion provides a good corporate image. Moreover, create an event is a good way for a company to be known because when your event is a success, everybody is talking about it and you enjoy a good reputation as well.</td>
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<td>4. When organizing events, it is fairly hard to measure the consequences. Usually, we could observe conviviality and more easiness to move people. Could we call that loyalty?</td>
<td>5. Yes, during in-house seminars involving the entire personnel, and externally, during giving best wishes to our suppliers.</td>
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<td>5. Would you say that those promotions yielded you significant results in terms of good mood, atmosphere, and group cohesion in your company?</td>
<td>6. Do you think event promotion is essential to your company in terms of communication?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Yes, during in-house seminars involving the entire personnel, and externally, during giving best wishes to our suppliers.</td>
<td>6. Event promotion is a communication tool which is included in our political communication, of course we are still using others media as press, radio…</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Do you think event promotion is essential to your company in terms of communication?</td>
<td>7. Why, do you think, event promotion faces a great success currently?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Event promotion is a communication tool which is included in our political communication, of course we are still using others media as press, radio…</td>
<td>7. Event promotion is a good way to communicate for us because it gives a good corporate image. Indeed, during an event the company is getting closer from its customers and you can more easily speak to them and create a relationship. In my</td>
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This part is one of the most important in order to give an answer to our purpose. The aim of this set of questions is to find elements that show the advantages of event promotion as a promotional vector. Therefore, we can see in the interview all the interviewees are agreed on one fact: if an event promotion agency wants to be successful on this market it has to be really creative and reactive. The customer wants to be surprised by the way whose event promotion agencies promote their products. All the three interviewees highlight the skills and the capacity for a specialized agency to set up an event: an event promotion agency is going to create added value only if it is able to manage and organize an event which matches with customers’ needs. For instance, one of the characteristics of the event promotion agency **Ludico** is its capacity to link work and fun. Indeed, the CEO says it himself “Getting fun what is important and… boring”, so we can guess this “work philosophy” is a criterion that leads customers to choose **Ludico** and not another agency. Moreover, in this set of questions the customer talk about the reasons that lead her to use event promotion. Once again, she speaks about the benefits of such operation: “We use event promotion because it allows us to gather a lot of potential customers and talk about our company and our products: we have a direct contact with people”. So when a company decides to set an event up, it has in one hand the possibility to gather many people (potential customers) to show them its products but in another hand the company has also the possibility to discuss about the firm itself, in addition of its products, and in that way build a relationship with those potential customers. Another interesting fact is the customer’s answer about the use of event promotion in her company: “Event promotion is a communication tool which is included in our political communication…” . This answer means for this company event promotion is a full-fledged communication tool totally integrated in its communication plan. To be concluded, we have seen in this part what the added value of event promotion is for our three interviewees: a privileged contact with customers, a good corporate image and become well known in a market.

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<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
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<tr>
<td>8. Could you replace event promotion by another communication means that would yield the same results? Why?</td>
<td>6. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as used as advertising is? Why? 6. It is already the case because the ROI begins to be measurable and that creativity often compensates the relative weakness of allocated budgets.</td>
<td>4. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as used as advertising is? Why? 4. Sure, budgets are lower and the outcome just as good.</td>
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<td>8. No, we are talking of a very specific promotion. For instance the benefits in term of corporate image are way better when you make an event than when you use traditional media as TV, radio...</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as important as advertising is? Why?</td>
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9. It’s a possibility, our company uses event promotion more and more years after years because often costs are even lower than those from others kinds of communication.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 4-3: Answers about event promotion in comparison to advertising</th>
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</table>
| The aim of this part is to do a comparison between event promotion and the other traditional way of communication. Here, all the three interviewees are agreed on one fact: the event promotion is going to be used as much as others communication means. Indeed, according to them there is no reason to prevent this trend: “budgets are lower and the outcome just as good”. The customer goes further by saying you can’t replace event promotion by another communication means. We can see here event promotion has an important added value for the customer because she adds at the end of her answer “benefits in term of corporate image are way better when you make an event than when you use traditional media...”. We have here a perfect example of why people use event promotion rather than traditional media: there are some characteristics peculiar to event promotion that are not achievable for the other way of communication. As a conclusion, we have seen with this set of answers that all the interviewees are agreed to say event promotion is becoming a promotion tool as used as the others thanks to its special characteristics which make it almost essential for companies (at least the one we interviewed in this thesis).

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<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
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<tr>
<td>10. Do you always work with the same contractor? Why?</td>
<td>7. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies?</td>
<td>5. Do your customers call back you after a first collaboration? Can you explain why?</td>
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<td>10. Generally yes because we know him, we know the quality of his service, and we can work with him more easily.</td>
<td>7. Mainly SMEs with a network structure.</td>
<td>5. The agency has clients who seek on a regular basis; we can say that most of them are loyal. If they come back, that means they have adhered to the “Concept” playful. It was a way of working, a way to operate, they stick with the playful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Have you ever organized events by yourself?</td>
<td>8. Are you used to make business with those customers?</td>
<td>6. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Yes, but we prefer appeal to event promotion agencies because they know how to create an event which matches with our expectations.</td>
<td>8. Yes</td>
<td>6. Small Business</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. Do you communicate your business to attract new customers? Why?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. No, because the demands of our customers are sufficient... so far.</td>
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<th>Table 4-4: Answers about loyalty on the event promotion market</th>
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<td>In this part, we talk about loyalty and customers’ profiles. We can see here that the CEO has a particular strategy because he doesn’t communicate about his own company. He just says: “the demands of our customers are sufficient... so far”. He really counts on the loyalty of his customers to keep his company alive on the market. In another hand, this strategy makes sense according to the customer’s opinion: she says “because we know him, we know the quality of his service, and we can work with him more easily”. Thus we can think it’s easier for both part to work with people they know: the customer knows the way of</td>
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work of the event promotion agency and the agency knows its customers and their needs and also, and maybe the most important criterion, it knows their expectations and the kind of performances they are waiting for. For instance, Ludico is on the “playful” segment, therefore, people who appeal for this agency know they will have an event where there will have a mix between work and fun, and like the project manager says: “If they (the customers) come back, that means they have adhered to the “Concept” playful”.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>12. Do you work with event promotion companies to organize in-house events? External? Both?</th>
<th>10. Event promotion is divided into two types of events: business tourism and event promotion to purely commercial ends. What type of event do your customers usually call you for?</th>
<th>7. What kind of events do you usually hold?</th>
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<tr>
<td>12. We sometimes use event promotion companies for in-house and external events, and sometimes we do it by ourselves.</td>
<td>10. Event promotion to purely commercial ends that rather should be called “ephemeral”</td>
<td>7. We usually organize events: congresses, conventions, seminars, team building...</td>
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<td>13. How often do you work with communication agencies?</td>
<td>11. Can you explain why?</td>
<td>8. Are they usually small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events?</td>
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<td>14. For which sort of event principally?</td>
<td>11. Because our positioning resolutely playful is better expressed in company meetings.</td>
<td>8. Medium and large</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Fairs, personnel seminar, inauguration</td>
<td>12. Most often is it small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events?</td>
<td>9. On average, how many events do you organize per year?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. Medium and large</td>
<td>9. About 50</td>
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| 13. On average, how many events do you hold a year? Is this number the same each year? Increasing? Decreasing? | 13. Increasing at around 50/year. |

Table 4-5: Answers about the kind and the frequency of events

This set of answers is more “practical” and talk essentially about which kind of events the agency does the most and their frequency. Apparently the demand for events is increasing for Ludico especially for events promotion to purely commercial ends. M. Colmez justifies this fact by saying “our positioning resolutely playful is better expressed in company meetings”. We can link this quote to the previous set of questions about the loyalty, the agency has to choose a positioning on the market which insures it a competitive advantage to develop a strong and sustainable relationship with its customers.

We have seen in this chapter all the interviewees’ answers and now we are going to analyze those results in our last part and try to highlight the existing links between our answers and the theories seen in the theoretical part.
5 Analyze

In this chapter we interpret and analyze our empirical material by using our theoretical framework. We analyze the written interviews we built up in order to find out an answer to our purpose by showing different facts and trends on the event promotion market.

To analyze our written interviews, we study each set of questions one after the other to keep together the five main themes of our written interviews.

5.1 Interviewee’s experience

The first set of questions is about the trends of the event promotion market and also about the interviewees, to know when they started to be in this market and what their motivations were. Both the customer and the CEO are present in the event promotion market for 25 years. Interesting fact because we stressed in the introduction (part 1.2) that the event promotion has known in France a growth since the 80’s. The CEO justifies his choice to start his business by saying “A mere will to exploit dispositions”. It shows he noticed the market was growing up and he took the opportunity to create his own company. Moreover, he gave us information about the competitiveness and the demand’s trend. “Struggle for low prices, tough loyalty; all of these for an increasing demand”, the struggle for low prices shows once again the increasing number of event promotion agencies which shows also the increasing demand for event promotion (by the way the CEO says himself there is an increasing demand).

Another interesting point in this part is the experience of the CEO in the event promotion market: as we build up our thesis from these written interview, we need to have reliable data. The CEO has been working in the event promotion market for 25 years, therefore we can consider that his answers are trusty. As a conclusion for this first set of questions, we have seen the CEO’s opinion is quite reliable and we have the confirmation that the market is very competitive and the demand for event promotion is increasing.

5.2 Key success factors of event promotion

In our theoretical framework (part 2.4), we stressed mainly two goals of event promotion: corporate image, staff motivation (P. Boistel, 2005). According to the customer, one of the reasons that lead companies to use event promotion is the relation between companies and customers during an event: “during an event the company is getting closer from its customers and you can more easily speak to them and create a relationship”. Here there is a link with the image of the company, during an event, the company can speak to its customers and it looks like being more “accessible” for them: being involved in an event, having the possibility to speak with the company give a better corporate image than a TV ad for instance. To the customer we interviewed, the real added value of event promotion is the power to gather potential customers and create good relations with them. That’s why in the customer’s company they already included even promotion in their political of communication even though it’s really hard to measure the benefits of such communication mean.

To the CEO, there are two main advantages to use even promotion. In our theoretical framework (part 2.3), we explained the difference between event promotion to purely commercial ends and business tourism. We have seen also that the aim of business tourism is mainly the staff cohesion: have a good work atmosphere in a company in order to work more efficiently and then make more profits. The CEO is the only one among the three interviewees to stress the staff motivation as a reason of the event promotion success. Indeed, he says “it’s important to federate these teams, consolidate or even create links between employees in order to provide an optimum production’s efficiency to the company”. It shows the other
aspect of event promotion designed, not to the customers, but to the work force of the company (Boistel, 2005). The CEO stresses another advantage of event promotion highlighted also by the customer: the corporate image. Indeed, for him event promotion is one of the best ways to communicate on the corporate image because as he explains “they (companies) have the possibility to create a real relation with customers”. This answer matches with what Arcan (1994) said about event promotion “event promotion provides a positive image, increases the prestige of the firm, increases its capital of sympathy and confidence among the public, strengthens the internal cohesion of the staff who takes a matter of pride”.

Finally, the chief project talks about corporate image as well but also of notoriety. We have seen in our theoretical framework (part 2.4) that Boistel said notoriety was one of the event promotion’s goals. Indeed, the chief project says “create an event is a good way for a company to be known because when your event is a success, everybody is talking about it and you enjoy a good reputation as well”. As a conclusion for this part, we can summarize the main reasons of why companies want to use event promotion as a promotional vector. First of all, companies use event promotion to have a good corporate image, all three interviewees agree on this fact. Then, come the notoriety and the staff motivation.

5.3 Event promotion in comparison to advertising

In the introduction (part 1.2) and in our theoretical framework (part 2.3), we explain what exactly traditional media are and we show, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Economical Studies, this kind of media are the most used in France. At the question “do you think event promotion can be used as much as advertising?” all the three interviewees agree to say yes. Indeed, they justify their choices by saying budgets are lower than those for advertising and the outcome is as good. Moreover the customer goes further when she is doing the comparison between the two different communication means: “the benefits in term of corporate image are way better when you make an event than when you use traditional media as TV, radio...”. We can see once again the importance to have a good corporate image for a company. Furthermore, the customer highlights another point we already stressed in the introduction concerning the trend of the event promotion market: the demand is increasing especially since the 80’s. So the customer’s answer confirms this last fact when she says: “our company uses event promotion more and more years after years”. As a conclusion for this set of questions, we have seen the results of this communication tool are very satisfying and its costs are even lower than those for advertising, therefore we can say event promotion is getting important to companies and they use it more and more.

5.4 Loyalty in the event promotion market

In the theoretical framework (part 2.5) we have defined and explained the concept of loyalty. We also explained that a company can organize an event in two ways, either with their own means or by using an event promotion agency. In the second case, if a company is loyal to an event promotion agency, it means this communication tool provides benefits or advantages to the requesting company that the others communication tools do not provide. Consequently the loyalty has a key role to respond to our purpose.

We have also explained in the theoretical framework (part 2.5) what the criteria that lead to the concept of loyalty to a brand or a service are. In the case of event promotion, loyalty exists if the customer appeal always to the same service provider, and also if the repurchase behaviour of the service is combined with a good attitude about it (i.e. if this behaviour is a consequence of a positive feeling due to the service). In the responses we observe that the customer works with the same specialized agency, because she knows it, she knows the quality of its service and it facilitates the relationship and the final result can be better. As a
conclusion, we can say that loyalty is an important factor on such market. Indeed, in order to get the best event as possible, companies that need event promotion appeal most of the time to the same specialized agency because they know each other. In this perspective, event promotion agencies can offer a service totally in adequacy to the customer’s needs and it provides to those agencies a competitive advantage: if the customer is glad of the results, he/she is going to appeal to the agency again and again.

5.5 The kind and the frequency of events

In the introduction of our thesis, particularly in the problem, we talk about the evolution of the event promotion’s phenomenon and we can say that since its inception in the 80’s until now it has noticed an increase in the realization of events. It means that the event promotion is a communication tool that has been gradually expanded and agencies are increasingly using it to promote themselves. In the answers, respondents told us that from their point of views, they have noticed an increase in the realization of events, since the birth of their respective companies. The CEO says that the demand for his event has increased “at around 50/year”. This answer confirms the trend highlighted in our introduction, therefore this information is consistent with our secondary data. This positive trend implies that event promotion is successful, and it offers to companies others benefits or advantages that do not provide the traditional communication tools. To conclude, we have seen thanks to our written interviews we have both the customer and the CEO who say for the first one her company appeals more and more to specialized agencies and the second one has also a growing demand for event promotion, therefore, there is an increase of the demand for event promotion.
6 Conclusion

The purpose of our thesis was to explain why companies are using event promotion as a communication tool. In this chapter, we present the conclusion of our study.

In order to give an answer to our purpose, we made three different written interviews we sent to an event promotion agency’s CEO, Mr Jean Pierre Colmez, one project manager of the same company, Mrs Marine Coroller, and finally an executive assistant, Paulette Drumez, who works in a company which uses event promotion agencies to set its events up.

We interviewed three different persons in order to have three different points of view and to compare those answers, to see whether they match or not. We asked almost the same kind of questions to our interviewees. By interviewing a specialized agency, we know the CEO is going to tell only the advantages of this communication mean but the customer is more objective: if she doesn’t like this way of communication she won’t hesitate to tell us. Therefore, if all of the interviewees agree on the benefits of event promotion and if the answers are perceptibly the same we can more easily believe the veracity of those answers.

All three interviewees agree on the fact that the most important reason for which companies use event promotion is the corporate image. Indeed, when you set an event up, you have the advantage to be closer of your customers by customizing each event for each one of them. In this perspective, event promotion agencies create unique event for their customers that match to their needs and expectations. A second reason stressed during this study is the staff motivation. Companies demand always more to their workforce in terms of profitability and efficiency by sometimes putting a lot of pressure on them in order to accentuate their output. Mr Colmez was explaining that during his interview and for him, the solution found by companies is to use the event promotion to internal ends: set some internal events up allow to federate and create links between workers from the same company. Thus the work atmosphere is improved, employees can work in better conditions and the results for the company are better as well. Finally, the third reason according to our interviewees is the notoriety: companies, in order to be well known, set up events to communicate about the company or the brand just to be in the customers’ minds. In this perspective, companies improve their capital of sympathy that has a positive consequence in terms of benefits for them.

According to our theoretical framework (part 2.4), companies use mainly event promotion in order to have a good corporate image, raise the company’s notoriety and also to federate the work force (Arcan, 1994). Thanks to our written interviews, we have seen our answers match to these goals.

In order to have deeper information about event promotion market, we decided to go a little further in our research field by asking questions about event promotion agencies. Considering the event promotion market is very competitive, it is interesting to know how specialized agencies work to keep and convince customers to use an event promotion agency. By stressing their assets and their know-how agencies try to secure the loyalty of customers. This last point is really important for the agencies in order to stay competitive: the customers’ loyalty. Indeed, we have seen for instance that Mr Colmez doesn’t communicate about his agency; he counts only on his particular positioning and also on his loyal customers. Therefore, when a company works on a competitive market such as event promotion market, loyalty is real important factor to be successful.
Nevertheless, our study presents some limits. Indeed, to answer to our purpose we based our work on three interviews. This is not the reliability of the interviewees which is reconsidered, but rather the lack of interviews: to have a richer study in terms of data and in order to bring an explanation as complete as possible, it would be better to have couple of interviews along. Thus we should have had more points of view and we could have found out others reasons at the question of the event promotion success.
7 References


Boistel, P., 2005. La communication événementielle, plus stratégique que commerciale, Management & Avenir (n° 6), p. 27-47.


*Websites’ list*


http://www.insee.fr
http://www.ludico.fr

http://www.tour-eiffel.fr/documentation/dossiers/page/illuminations.html
Appendix

✓ Customer’s written interview

1. Since when have you been working with promotion agencies? Since 1987
2. According to you, what is the added value of these agencies? They have a deep knowledge in events set up; in general, they master event organization and they are of great help.
3. Why do you use this communication means? Do you think it is more efficient than usual communication means?
4. Are you happy with the results brought by those actions talking of profit, media penetration, and customers’ loyalty? We use event promotion because it allows us to gather a lot of potential customers and talk about our company and our products; we have a direct contact with people. I don’t know if event promotion is more efficient than usual communication means because it’s really hard to measure the results of one action.
5. Would you say that those promotions yielded you significant results in terms of good mood, atmosphere, and group cohesion in your company? Yes, during in-house seminars involving the entire personnel, and externally, during giving best wishes to our suppliers.
6. Do you think event promotion is essential to your company in terms of communication? Event promotion is a communication tool that is included in our political communication; of course we are still using others media as press, radio...
7. Why, do you think, event promotion faces a great success currently? Event promotion is a good way to communicate for us because it gives a good corporate image. Indeed, during an event the company is getting closer from its customers and you can more easily speak to them and create a relationship. In my opinion it’s the best advantage of event promotion.
8. Could you replace event promotion by another communication means that would yield the same results? Why? No, we are talking of a very specific promotion. For instance the benefits in term of corporate image are way better when you make an event than when you use traditional media as TV, radio...
9. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as important as advertising is? Why? It’s a possibility, our company uses event promotion more and more years after years because often costs are even lower than those from others kinds of communication.
10. Do you always work with the same contractor? Why? Generally yes because we know him, we know the quality of his service, and we can work with him more easily.
11. Have you ever organized events by yourself? Yes, but we prefer appeal to event promotion agencies because they know how to create an event which matches with our expectations.
12. Do you work with event promotion companies to organize in-house events? External? Both? We sometimes use event promotion companies for in-house and external events, and sometimes we do it by ourselves.
13. How often do you work with communication agencies? It depends on our needs; this can vary quite much.
14. For which sort of event principally? Fairs, personnel seminar, inauguration
CEO’s written interview

1. How long have you been on the event market? 25 years
2. Why did you decide to work in this area? A mere will to exploit dispositions and a personal approach to animation.
3. Have you noticed a significant change in the events market over the past ten years (high demand, increasing the number of agencies...)? Fast increasing of one-person's structures, market spread, struggle for low prices, tough loyalty; all of these for an increasing demand
4. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset? Getting fun what is important and… boring
5. What, do you think, are the reasons why event promotion is currently successful? Companies are looking for new ways to impress their customers. They don’t want to sell just a product, they want to sell values, beliefs...they want to convince the customer that their brand is the best one. In this perspective, event promotion gives to companies a huge advantage: they have the possibility to create a real relation with customers. Another big advantage of the event promotion is the business tourism: in a world where the profit race and the productivity don’t stop to accentuate to the detriment, sometimes, of team workers’ psychological health, it’s important to federate these teams, consolidate or even create links between employees in order to provide an optimum production’s efficiency to the company.
6. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as used as advertising is? Why? It is already the case because the ROI begins to be measurable and that creativity often compensates the relative weakness of allocated budgets.
7. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies? Mainly SMEs with a network structure.
8. Are you used to make business with those customers? Yes
9. Do you communicate your business to attract new customers? Why? No, because the demands of our customers are sufficient... so far.
10. Event promotion is divided into two types of events: business tourism and event promotion to purely commercial ends. What type of event do your customers usually call you for? Event promotion to purely commercial ends that rather should be called “ephemeral”
11. Can you explain why? Because our positioning resolutely playful is better expressed in company meetings.
12. Most often is it small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events? Medium and large
13. On average, how many events do you hold a year? Is this number the same each year? Increasing? Decreasing? Increasing at around

Project manager’s written interview

1. Why, do you think, your customers do not organize their events themselves instead of involving you? For the added value of the agency (playful positioning), the solutions we bring to problems, the ideas we propose them, file management and problems upstream and downstream
2. What is the added value of your agency, its differentiating asset? Its positioning “playful” Some are successful thanks to their added value, their creativity.
3. What, do you think, are the reasons why event promotion is currently successful? I guess one of the most important reason is companies know that they must have a good corporate image next to customers and event promotion provides a good corporate image. Moreover,
create an event is a good way for a company to be known because when your event is a success, everybody is talking about it and you enjoy a good reputation as well.

4. Do you think event promotion will become a communication means as used as advertising is? Why? Sure, budgets are lower and the outcome just as good.

5. Do your customers call back you after a first collaboration? Can you explain why? The agency has clients who seek on a regular basis; we can say that most of them are loyal. If they come back, that means they have adhered to the “Concept” playful. It was a way of working, a way to operate, they stick with the playful.

6. Are your customers usually large, medium or small companies? Small Business

7. What kind of events do you usually hold? We usually organize events: congresses, conventions, seminars, team building...

8. Are they usually small (less than 50), medium (between 50 and 200 people), large (between 200 and 500) or very large (over 500 people) events? Medium and large

9. On average, how many events do you organize per year? About 50