University of the Aegean
Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering

“A model for event design under the design thinking and the experiential marketing perspective”.

Io Kyriakati
Dpsd: 13053

Supervisor: Irini Rigopoulou

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and no part of it is copied from any printed or electronic sources, translation from foreign sources and reproduction from work of other researchers or students. Wherever I have been based on ideas or texts of others, I have tried as much as possible to clearly indicate it through the use of references and citations following academic ethics.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This research project will investigate the necessary elements that an event needs to have in order to provoke experiences that satisfy the participants. In the field of marketing called “event marketing”, events are seen as tools of the marketing mix, used to achieve a goal – usually such as, building a brand image, creating fans and loyal customers, or simply promoting a new product or service. In order to achieve those goals, the events are very carefully designed in advance, and special attention is paid to the general “experience” that the attendees will live, while there. Hence, this research will examine some pre-existing constructs around experience and event marketing, and propose a new conceptual model identifying the elements that make an event experientially rich enough for the participants. It will do so while taking under consideration how much the process of event design would benefit from the “design thinking” thought process and from having a designer’s point of view in the entire problem area. The end product will be a very useful guide for anyone in the event management business (P.R. companies, marketeers, organizers etc.) indicating to them all the elements they should include in the experience they design in order to achieve their goals for the event.

1.2. Background

The research area focuses on three main pillars.

- Event Marketing and Event Design
- Experiential Marketing / Experience Design
- Design Thinking

In the last decade many researchers have taken up work focusing on either one of them, with event marketing being a particularly new research subject. “Experience” is usually examined and defined as either a part of marketing called experiential marketing, or as brand experience that is perceptions of a brand from the side of a customer. Design thinking is also a relatively new term that researchers are starting to explore, understanding that there are many benefits to solving a problem the way a designer does. Combinations of the above-mentioned areas are only recently making their way to the surface but still, there is lack in research exploring what is a brand experience within the context of event marketing (Tafesse, 2016).

1.3. Career Fair 4.all

Career Fair 4.all (CF 4.all) is a job fair for people with disabilities organized by Ethelon (a Greek non-profit organization). The event offers the opportunity to people from various backgrounds to participate in interviews with recruiters from multiple companies and try to fill positions based on their skills and knowledge. This year, the event takes place for the third time with the participation of 21 companies and
around 200 attendees. CF 4.all is a great example of an event whose organizers understand the value of experience design and they make an effort to incorporate multiple feelings and activity points despite the limited budget and resources. At the same time there is a great margin for improvement, so a new model could easily be implemented in a future CF 4.all event.

1.4. Reason for study
The researcher is deeply interested and fascinated by the field of event design and event management. From their experience by participating in the organization of conferences and festivals during their university years, they discovered the large impact a fully rounded and immersive experience can have to the people attending an event. At the same time, their studies in design gave them a new perspective on what it means to effectively solve a problem, and the role a designer plays in that process. Their will to incorporate more intensively the design thinking perspective into the area of event marketing is what drove them to pursue this research.

The field of event marketing is a relatively new one, and therefore the literature around it is admittedly limited. Although, event marketing is greatly related to the term of experience, and some notable efforts have been made by researchers in the recent years to describe what a brand experience is, what an experience is, and how it is related to events and event marketing. Some of those researchers have also proposed their own constructs and frameworks of what a “complete” experience should include in order to be deemed “successful” -depending on the goals that the company/marketeers have set. However, since those constructs have never been organized in a conceptual model that indicates an input and an output in a causal form, there is a need to propose such a conceptual model. Additionally, the literature is lacking into the examination of event design and experience design utilizing the design thinking process.

1.5. Dissertation aim
The aim of this research project is to create a conceptual model for event design taking into account experiential elements (experiential marketing) while following the design thinking perspective/process.

1.5.1. Dissertation objectives
- To propose a model, applicable to non-profit events, that assists in experience design and enhances the results of the event in terms of effectiveness.
- To utilize existing constructs and frameworks regarding event and experience in the process of creating the new conceptual model.
- To utilize design thinking in the process of creating the new conceptual model.
1.6. Research project structure

The structure of this research project will consist of several chapters starting from a more general introduction to the subject and leading up to the development of the framework.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter we introduce the problem area that we will study and give a general idea of the approach we will pursue. The reason for study is also presented along with the case study, Career fair 4.all, and the aim and objectives of the project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter we present a critical and detailed analysis and commentary on the existing relevant literature. The main topics examined are: Event Marketing, Experience, Design Thinking and Event Design.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Model Development

This chapter will begin with an introduction to models, and development approaches. Continuing, a detailed presentation of the model development will be featured along with the presentation of the finished, conceptual model being proposed by the researcher, combining statements and constructs found in the literature. The chapter concludes with an identification and explanation of the limitations that apply to the model, and its development.

Chapter 4: Methodology of the primary research

This chapter will serve as a presentation of the various steps and processes that were followed in the execution of the primary research. The various methodologies will be explained, using definitions provided by the literature available.

Chapter 5: Case Study: Results, Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher will present and critically analyse the results of the primary research, obtained through observation and interviews, and will examine them in contrast with the proposed conceptual model.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this chapter we will summarize the entire research project, evaluating whether or not the dissertation aim and objectives were adequately addressed, while recognizing the aspects that are still in need of further research and suggesting future work.
1.7. Summary
The first chapter provided an introduction to this research project, introducing the aim and specific objectives and providing a background of the decision to examine the issue of event design. It also briefly explained why the final result will be valuable for people in the industry. The structure of the project was presented so that readers have a basic knowledge of what they can expect in the chapters that follow. In the next chapter, we will examine and analyse a detailed literature review around the terms in the center of this research project, like event design, experience, and design thinking.
Section A: Secondary Research

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Regarding literature review, Adams (2009, p. 271) mentions that “Literature reviews are an important starting point for all kinds of research projects”. A comprehensive secondary research on the subject at hand, provides valuable information to any researcher and guides them towards coming to conclusions themselves. The researcher performed an in-depth literature review on the subjects of event marketing, experience, design thinking and event design, in order to obtain adequate information, despite the limited available literature, and in this chapter, we will explore a detailed analysis of the collected data.

2.2. Event Marketing

2.2.1. Introduction to Marketing

According to the American Marketing Association Board of Directors, “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” (American Marketing Association, 2013). More commonly, we think of marketing as this “secret ingredient” that defines our wants and “needs”. What makes consumers want to purchase a product or a service.

Influencing or even altering the wants and needs of the market is often the result of a good communications strategy. “Marketing communications” refers to the ways a company / brand communicates their message to the market or a specific target audience, through a combination of channels and tools (Tomse, & Snoj, 2014). Such a tool could be an advertisement, personal selling, direct marketing, sponsorships, communication, promotion or public relations (Tomse, & Snoj, 2014). Tools like these, have been utilized by marketers, very successfully, for decades. But as society advances and technology enables more and more companies to be created, it is now particularly difficult for a brand or a product to stand out. That is why, in the recent years event marketing has emerged as an “alternative form” of marketing communication (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2013).

2.2.2. Introduction to Event Marketing

Businessdictionary.com defines event marketing as “The activity of designing or developing a themed activity, occasion, display, or exhibit (such as a sporting event, music festival, fair, or concert) to promote a
product, cause, or organization.” (businessdictionary, n.d.). In understanding event marketing, many struggle to comprehend “events” in general. Wood (2009), defines an event as a “live occurrence with an audience”, arguing that if someone is present at an event, “then a message or experience is being shared, transmitted, generated and, therefore, all events can potentially communicate something”. Although, since this definition is very broad and could be misinterpreted, in order to understand event marketing, we need to include the communication intent in the definition, or else, the communication/marketing purpose in creating an event. Kotler (2003, p. 576), offers a definition that serves this purpose; “occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences”. Or as Dreger et al. (2008) define it, “a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company’s marketing messages by involving the target groups in experiential activity”. In seeing events as communication tool, we should always remember, that communication is the means to achieve more specific goals. This is something we will explore further within the literature review, but for now, we should remember a statement by Sneath et al. (2006) supporting that “marketing with events, helps to accomplish the firm’s objectives through event-related communications and experiences”.

Through an event, marketeers have the opportunity to approach people directly and much more interactively. As Tafesse states, event marketing is thought to be not as intrusive as other marketing strategies by consumers (Tafesse et al., 2014). Events become part of their everyday life, their routine. Events are a combination of the environment, the people and the activities they experience freely on their own (Altschwager et al., 2013; Martensen et al., 2007, as cited in Tafesse 2016). A key component of events and an advantage they have over other communication tools, is the direct and personal interaction with the audience (Sneath et al. 2006). According to Jack Morton Worldwide (2006) marketing events are “Live events where audiences interact with a product or brand face to face”. Or as Sneath et al. (2006) states “events offer opportunities for personal interaction with products”. An event, if designed correctly, can be the embodiment of a company, a chance for the consumer to come in contact with the company, and its values.

2.2.3. Events throughout history

In order to completely understand the power and value of events we have to go back to their roots, and the multiple roles they have held in various societies. In Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, sporting and cultural events were almost always used to promote political purposes (Moise et al 2008). Having access to large audiences assembled to watch the Olympic Games, or an Ancient Tragedy, or even a battle in the Colosseum, the wealthy of the society could promote their agenda and collect votes. Much later, in 1844, the institution of the World’s Fairs originated, in France, with the French Industrial Exposition, taking place in Paris. Since then, the World’s Fair or International Exposition has always been a place where nations could exhibit their most significant achievements in an international scale. From those very selective examples we can see that events have been used as a means to communicate messages for centuries.
Only now, marketers recognize that they can use events in the same way, but more strategically to achieve their goals.

### 2.2.4. Types of Corporate Events

There is a truly vast variety of events that can be covered under the definitions we provided previously. Depending on the company, the aim, the message, the target audience, the environment, and the general context, a different type of event can serve different purposes. Wood (2009) provides a detailed presentation of corporate event types (table 1) although we should keep in mind that depending on the imagination of the company and the marketer, we can always become witnesses to new, original types of events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive/reward events</th>
<th>Product launches</th>
<th>Open days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Events offered as a bonus for achievements for internal staff, sales force, distributors, etc.</td>
<td>Creating an “occasion” around the development or improvement of a product. Aimed at the media, distribution chain or consumer</td>
<td>Inviting employees, customers, partner, local community to activities hosted within the organization (e.g., Family fun days, factory tours).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conferences</th>
<th>Product sampling</th>
<th>Publicity events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conferences, meetings and seminars can all be used as marketing communication vehicles.</td>
<td>Creating the opportunity to try or experience a product or service. Often combined with product launch.</td>
<td>Designed to gain maximum media exposure often through unusual or controversial activities linked to the product or brand.</td>
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<th>“Created” events</th>
<th>Road shows</th>
<th>Press conferences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Developing an event often as a product in its own right to carry the brand values (e.g., Guinness’ Witness Festival in Ireland and Coca-Cola’s “Street Cred Games” in Scotland).</td>
<td>Mobile events which spread the brand message to different locations.</td>
<td>Inviting the press to hear about some important or newsworthy development related to the company, product, brand, industry etc..</td>
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<tr>
<th>Corporate entertainment</th>
<th>Exhibitions</th>
<th>Product visitor attractions</th>
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Using events to entertain, reward clients and partners. Ranging from golf days to theatre, safaris to paintballing.

Ranging from trade shows hosting a number of organizations to art exhibitions related to a specific brand (e.g., Nike’s One Love photography exhibition linked to football sponsorship).

“Permanent” events developing involvement with the brand and often marketed as a product in their own right (e.g., Dewar’s World of Whisky; Cadbury World; the Guinness Experience).

Charity fundraisers

Linking event marketing and corporate social responsibility.

Competition/contests

An event created around some form of contest and linked to the brand (e.g., Red Bull’s flying machines).

Table 1: Types of Corporate Events (Wood, 2009)

2.2.5. Event Marketing Economy

Sneath et al. in 2006, described event marketing as “one of the fastest growing forms of marketing communications”. And according to O’Sullivan and Spangler (1999) Pine and Gilmore (2012), events should create memorable experiences, by actively engaging attendees instead of simply entertaining them. This is something that marketers and companies have realized, and the evidence shows up in a survey performed by the Event Marketing Institute in the United States, in 2012, indicating that spending on event marketing had increased by 7.8% in 2012 from the previous year. Zarantonello and Schimtt (2013), attribute this growth, to marketers coming to the realization that event marketing is highly effective in “achieving brand, marketing, and corporate-level objectives (as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Though, in order to further explore, why there is such an incline towards event marketing, and why so many researchers are talking about event marketing’s effectiveness, we need to dig even deeper. Wood (2009) goes a step further to analyse this, into three main reasons to which the growth of experiential events is attributed to. Firstly, traditional media have been used excessively in the past, so now competitors are seeking alternatives to attract attention. Secondly, participants always desire encountering novelty and authenticity, while receiving individualized experiences and added value. Lastly, brands recognize the need to create an emotional attachment to their customers, especially since now, the competitors are multiple and with little to no functional difference in between them.

The success of events can be viewed as a process, with certain steps that trigger and facilitate other steps, since according to Wood (2009), marketing events can be potentially able to create “extraordinary experiences” for the attendee/consumer, then based on that experience, create a relationship with them, link the company with a good cause (or a greater vision), and “build, change, reinforce brand image through association with the qualities of the event”. In turn, the perceived image of the brand, has then a greater
probability of being shared through word of mouth if it was generated through a live experience, as Jack Morton’s 2006 Experiential Marketing Study indicates. As we have said previously, and as the research of E. Wood (2009) indicates, event marketing is seen as a more effective form of communication, since it provides the chance for a brand to be brought to life, to interact with the target audience, obtain a DNA of its own, and create “emotional connections” directly with participants, who become possible consumers. Although, brands usually make use of event marketing, as part of their communications strategy, and not as a single tool. This means that event marketing is a part of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).

Yurdakul (2018), says about IMC that it entails “coordinating the company’s many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its products”. In particular, event marketing belongs in the Promotion (or PR) aspect of the marketing mix aiming to increase brand equity. The term of marketing mix refers to a “set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target” (Kotler, 2000). The problem with event marketing being a part of IMC, is that it becomes nearly impossible to accredit a specific result or outcome regarding with goals of an organization or brand, to one specific aspect of their communication strategy. For example, higher amounts of people enrolling at a non-profit organization, after an organized communication campaign / strategy, could be connected to digital promotion, advertisements on the street, or a single promotional event (event marketing). But the organization faces extreme difficulty in identifying which communications tool affected which individual or “types” of individuals.

2.2.6. Event Marketing: Common objectives

Various objectives can be set when creating an event as a communications tool. Some of the most common ones, when it comes to the corporate for-profit sphere, are defined by Sneath et al. (2006) as “sales, awareness and image enhancement”. Additionally, Moise (2008), states a series of more detailed objectives:

1. The identification with a market segment: the customers being segmented from the geographical point of view, demographic, psychographic or behavioral point of view, depending on the event.

2. The increasing of a company or brand’s notoriety: events patronage offering the possibility of exposure in what involves the brand or organization.

3. To create or to strengthen the customer's perception about a brand, but also to enlarge the dimensions of the organization's image: the improvement of perceptions that the organization is pleasant and impressive.

4. To involve themselves in the community and country's social problems where the organization has its business, through the organization of balls for fund raising.
5. To cheer up the important clients and to remunerate the employees, through the organization of events, like parties where the employees should be awarded with different awards consisting in products or services.

6. To allow the merchandising and promotional opportunities usage when an event takes place.

It is important to remember though, that events are not solely organized by brands or companies, but also from different entities such as organizations (for and non-profit). Relevant objectives could include the information on a specific subject, raising awareness, image enhancement etc. Such goals could be set aiming either at partnerships with other entities and organizations, or at attracting attention from the public.

In general, there are no significant differences when it comes to event marketing between for-profit and non-profit organizations. The event remains a “vehicle” which organizations use in order to convey a specific message, the structure of the event (depending on the type; conference, street promotion etc.) does not differentiate, and there are always pre-defined targets that need to be achieved.

Of course, the possibilities are endless, and as long as there are new ideas in what to include in an event, and new experiences to offer, the goals that can be reached will continue to increase in number.

2.2.7. “The Four Underlying Characteristics of Event Marketing” (Tafesse, 2016)

In his research “Conceptualization of Brand Experience in an Event Marketing Context”, published in 2016, W. Tafesse, looks into the common characteristics of events (regarding to events used as event marketing tools), as presented by other researchers, and presents them collectively allowing readers to obtain a complete idea of event marketing.

The first trait that is recognized by Close, Krishen & Latour (2009), and Drengen et al. (2008) is high audience involvement. As we have discussed above, events as a tool are prefect in integrating a brand into “consumers’ everyday environment” at a degree that consumers/the audience seek to come in contact with the brand themselves (Tafesse et al. 2014), instead of a brand representative having to pursue them to offer them promotional flyers for example. This integration happens through various types of events such as trade shows, pop-up brand stores or sponsored events (Tafesse, 2016).

The second characteristic of event marketing is novelty. At their core, events are effective because they differentiate from the usual forms of communications (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2012). Their ability to “bring the audience into a lively engagement with a unique set of concepts, ideas, and activities constitutes the heart of event marketing (Drenger et al. 2008; Wood, 2009, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Novelty can occur through many ways, either because of a new product being launched and presented to the public for example, or through innovative experiences offered to the attendees, which takes us to the next trait.

The third underlying characteristic of event marketing is experiential richness. Experiences are so interconnected to event marketing that we often see event marketing being referred to, as experiential
marketing (Altschwager et al. 2013; Wood, 2009, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Events provide a variety of stimuli to their attendees, making it possible for them to interact with brands in many ways, exploring closely, touching or feeling products and materials, and interacting with brand representatives, while experiencing an immersive and stimulating experience, physically and socially in a curated space by brands (Close et al., 2006; Crowther & Donlan, 2011; Rinallo et al., 2010; Tafesse et al., 2014, as cited in Tafesse, 2016).

The last characteristic of event marketing is spatial and temporal transiency (Donlan & Crowther, 2014; Tafesse, 2014; Wood, 2009; Tafesse, 2016). This creates a sense of urgency to the participants, who, with the fear of the event finishing shortly, or transferring to a different location, are motivated to “become involved and experience the events at the earliest possible opportunity” (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). And although events do not usually last for long, due to media coverage and individual promotion online through social media, the brand’s message can be conveyed for a long after the event has finished (Donlan & Crowther, 2014; Tafesse et al., 2014; as cited in Tafesse, 2016).

2.2.8. Event Marketing Limitations

Although event marketing has definitely some advantages over other forms of marketing communication, we need to remember that every tool needs to be used cautiously, and in accordance to the general context. Researchers argue that event marketing is significantly effective when the objectives are rather long-term such as enhancing corporate identity, awareness, equity or image (Meenaghan, 1991; Brown and Dacin, 1997, as cited in Sneath et al. 2006) although, positive results can be seen in achieving short-term goals as well (Bacigalupo, 1996, as cited in Sneath et al. 2006). Outside of temporal limitations, there are limitations concerning the bare nature and identity of a brand, or product. For example, Sneath et al. (2006) argue that for the launch or promotion of a highly complex and technical product, a brand should avoid a purely entertaining event with “informal interactions”. In contrast, an event with rich intellectual experiences could be more beneficial to the purpose of the brand.

One other critical aspect of the decision-making process should be the target audience. Segments of a target audience might have different levels of certain skills, or knowledge, making it difficult for them to respond to a type of event or an experience within it.

2.2.9. Effectiveness, Evaluation and Measurement of Event Marketing

As we have stated repeatedly, the effectiveness of event marketing is not in question. Multiple researchers have stated the effectiveness of event marketing (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013; Tafesse, 2016; Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2012; Meenaghan, 1991; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sneath et al., 2006; Latham, 2006) over the years. Latham, in particular, names marketing events as “one of the most effective ways to influence behavior” (2006). Of course, we understand that effectiveness is related to the objectives we set out for an event, which we previously divided in short and long-term ones. Clearly defined goals are the most important aspect of evaluating the effectiveness of something, but when it comes to event marketing, evaluation and measurement become particularly difficult (Schultz and Kitchen 2000; Swain, 2004). And
since event marketing remains a relatively new field, it should not come as a surprise, that “objective and reliable” research into the effectiveness of marketing events is scarce (Wood, 2009). It is though, a little contradictory, that according to research, “1 in 4 marketing executives believe that event marketing provides the best return on investment” (EventView, 2006, as cited in Wood, 2009), and yet, “79% of event marketing agencies do not have specific tracking or measurement systems for evaluating their programs” (Business Development Institute, 2006, as cited in Wood, 2009).

Wood’s research on evaluating event marketing indicates the emotional response of the individual, the impact of other communication tools, both part of a marketing strategy, and deriving from the general “social context”, and previous past experiences and/or expectations of the individuals attending, as factors that complicate the evaluation process and results (2009). Her research also identifies “time, money and the need for assumption” as constraints in this endeavor (Wood, 2009). Other researchers suggest that the difficulty of evaluating event marketing lies in the fact that it is usually a part of “integrated marketing communications” (Abratt and Grobler, 1989; Cornwell, 1995) and thus, separating the effects of only event marketing is a challenge. Additionally, research shows, that the companies who do proceed to assess the effectiveness of an event, rely for their results only on measuring “sales and market share, even though, as a communications-oriented activity, event marketing should be evaluated in terms of its relative effectiveness as a promotional element (Javalgi et al., 1994, as cited in Sneath et al., 2006). Solely media coverage is not a reliable way to measure effectiveness either, as it does little to provide data on “attitude change” (Pham, 1991, as cited on Sneath et al., 2006).

2.3. Experience

2.3.1. Introduction to experience and brand experience

The understanding of experience usually depends on the point of view of the examiner. Beginning at the roots of the matter, Siegel (2010) defines it as “the apprehension of an object or emotion through the senses”. Phenomenology, a branch of philosophy dedicated to the study of experience “in its noun form” (Tafesse, 2016), views experience as “the acquisition and interpretation of perceptual content, that is, information conveyed and represented to subjects through their sensory qualities, consisting of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste” (Bayne, 2009; Siegel, 2010; Snowdon & Robinson, 1990, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). From this first definition, we comprehend that the five senses will play a big part in the interpretation, creation and utilization of experience.

From a business and management point of view, experience “involves a personal occurrence with emotional significance created by an interaction with product or brand related stimuli” (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1981, as cited in Wood, 2009). Additionally, Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, officially define brand experience as “subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli” (2009, p.52). Here it is important to note, that brand experience, does not require brand consumption on the part of the consumer, even a contact by chance,
with brand material, can classify as a brand experience (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009, p.54) with a positive or negative impact.

Caru & Cova connect the term of experience with event marketing (or as we have previously said, experiential marketing) by saying that experiences are rendered into experiential marketing only if they offer “something extremely significant and unforgettable for the consumer immersed into the experience” (2003, p.273). Additionally, Wood (2009), indicated that only by offering something “extraordinary” to the target audience, experiential events could be effective towards their “communication goals”. In order to understand how and why an experience could be characterized as “unforgettable”, we need to return to the philosophical examination of experience, and especially on the work of Dubé and LeBel, who were building on the work of John Dewey, identifying four “pleasure dimensions: intellectual, emotional, social, and physical pleasures” (2003). In the following units, we will explore the ways in which researchers of the topic, have addressed and satisfied those four pleasure dimensions. Although, we need to clarify that there is no one-to-one correspondence between types of stimuli triggering specific experience dimensions one at a time (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009, p.54).

2.3.2. The experience economy

Previously, we mentioned technology as the reason why we see so many different companies and businesses making their appearance over the last years. Technology has also allowed people, to access information about the world, and transform their demands from brands and organizations. Schmitt (1999) credits the rise of experiential marketing to a new kind of consumer, “prosumers”, who pursue marketing strategies and tools, customized to them, individualized, that acknowledges their demand for “novelty and excitement”. And even though, people have always sought stimulating experiences, it’s only in the last decades, that marketers have recognized this desire as something potentially successfully exploitable “through more sophisticated experiential marketing techniques” (Holbrook, 2000, as cited in Wood, 2009). More recently, researchers such as Pine & Gilmore (2011), have declared the “experience economy” as “the next economy following the agrarian economy, the industrial economy, and the service economy” (as cite in Gruber et al. 2015). Pine and Gilmore (2011) elaborate on that, by saying that in this context, “memory itself becomes the product – the experience” and businesses should focus on creating “memorable events for their customers” (as cited in Gruber et al., 2015).

2.3.3. Schmitt’s five experiences

Schmitt in 1999 proposed a construct of his own, including five experiences: sense, feel, think, act, and relate.

- The **sense** experience involves aesthetic and sensory qualities
- The **feel** experience includes emotions and moods
- The **think** experience involves convergent/analytical and divergent/imaginative thinking
• The act experience relates to motor actions and behavioral experiences.

• The relate experience describes social experiences and interactions.

(As cited in Brakus et al., 2009).

Schmitt’s work was the base for a substantial volume of research, exploring the dimensions and manifestations of experience, in both brand and marketing context. The researcher wanted to examine other models, loosely related or influenced by Schmitt’s work and present them as resources as well.

2.3.4. The four dimensions of brand experience (by Brakus et al., 2009)

Brakus (2009), suggests four central pillars around which experiences are constructed.

• The sensory dimension refers to the degree to which a brand stimulates the senses of the attendees for example through vision and sound.

• The emotional dimension refers to how appealing a brand is emotionally towards to the target audience.

• The physical dimension relates to the degree to which a brand provokes physical actions.

• The intellectual dimension refers to the degree to which a brand “induces cognitive thoughts”

(As cited in Tafesse, 2016).

We can safely say that the above dimensions, can also be considered as valid in an experience context relating to experiential marketing, even if the objective is not to promote a specific brand.

2.3.5. The four dimensions of brand experiences (by Wodwesen Tafesse, 2016)

Based on the results of his research performed in 2016, Wodwesen Tafesse, suggests types of interactions (interrelated with each other) that in turn, generate types of experiences.

• Multisensory Stimulation triggers perceptual experience

“Multisensory stimulation” refers to the “simultaneous activation of one’s sensory qualities” (Tafesse, 2016). According to Siegel (2010), through the lens of phenomenology, the first process through people experience a situation, or an environment, are multisensory activations. Joy and Sherry (2003) add, that “experience is the simultaneity with which people see, hear, feel, taste and smell [brands]” (p.259). Ideally, in an event a brand or an organizer would strive to activate all senses of the target group, but this is usually constrained by the type of event, the target group itself, and the objectives of the event (for example the launch of a specific product that does not offer strong experience opportunities in one of the five senses). There is relevant research that supports that such stimulations have the ability to facilitate “rich perceptual experiences”, memorable enough that the participants create “positive emotional responses” in their mind (Joy
and Sherry, 2003; Hoch, 2002, as cited in Tafesse, 2016) that could translate into beneficial “long-term relationship between them and the brand” (Brakus et al., 2009; Martensen et al., 2007, as cited in Tafesse, 2016).

- **Bodily performance triggers embodied experience**

A definition for bodily performance comes from existing research saying that “bodily performance represents an active, purposive, and coordinated use of the body to complete meaningful, physical gestalts” (Joy and Sherry, 2003; Thompson et al., 1989, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Within the context of consumption experience, the most common examples of bodily performance are “movement, tactile exploration, experimentation, and others” (Tafesse, 2016). Depending on the type of event, its objectives and others, as we mentioned previously, participants need to be active, and purposively interact with objects and the environment around them, through “embodied actions” in order to be able to “construct their own personal experience and perception”, of the event, the brand, the products, etc. (Gopalakrishna, Roster, & Sridhar, 2010; Rinallo et al., 2010, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Embodied experience is considered to be equally as important and effective in provoking physical and emotional relations/connections with brands/events (Tafesse, 2016).

- **Social Interaction triggers social experience**

Social interaction includes “the various forms of verbal and non-verbal exchanges and interactions between consumers (participants) and stand representatives” (Tafesse, 2016). Tafesse’s research proved that indeed, the various interactions, and exchanges that may occur between attendees and brand representatives or event organizers, can contribute to the resulting experience. In this context, it is helpful to think of representatives, and organizers as spokespersons for the event or the brand in question (Fournier, 1998). There is a considerable amount of research to support that brands, are able to convey complex meaning and value to their target audiences through “mechanisms as anthropomorphism, brand personality, and association” (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). The same can be considered for organizations, or events as entities. A representative can communicate meaning about the brand without even communicating with an attendee, through their “appearance, dress code, presentation skills and gestures” (Aaker, 1997; Borghini et al., 2009; Fournier, 1998, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Hence, a brand or event can be embodied through their representatives, and achieve personal communication through two-way, active interactions, otherwise impossible (Tafesse, 2016).

- **Discovery/Learning triggers epistemic experience**

“Discovery/learning in this context epitomizes the process by which consumers (participants) discover and learn relevant and original factual information about a brand” (Hoch, 2002, as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Since participants seek novelty, this epistemic experience can be seen as part of
this research of theirs, including “self-initiated efforts” such as interactions with representatives, observation, reading informative material, tactile exploration, participation in educational programs, etc. (Tafesse, 2016). As such a process, “epistemic experience can be viewed as a cognitive phenomenon that requires consumers (participants) to absorb new information and ideas” (Tafesse, 2016). Researchers such as Arnould & Price (1993) and Schouten et al. (2007) argue that epistemic experience can be considered a “self-enhancing and transformative phenomenon” (as cited in Tafesse, 2016). Lastly, out of the four types of experience, researchers argue that epistemic experience is of a greater value in terms of narrative and the spreading of word of mouth, since attendees can more easily bring back to memory something they learned and recount it to others (Arnould & Price, 1993; Borghini et al., 2009).

2.3.6. The seven attributes that enhance the experience at an event (by Wood & Masterman, 2009)

Wood and Masterman’s work, focuses on what the success of a marketing event, depends upon, relating to experience. They have indicated “seven event attributes (the 7 “I” s) which enhance the event experience” (Wood, 2009):

- **Involvement**—an emotional involvement with the brand, the event, the experience
- **Interaction**—with brand ambassadors, with other attendees, with exhibits, with the brand
- **Immersion**—of all senses, isolated from other messages
- **Intensity**—memorable, high impact
- **Individuality**—unique, one-to-one opportunities, customization. Each experience is different
- **Innovation**—creative in content, location, timing, audience, for example
- **Integrity**—seen as genuine and authentic and providing real benefits and value to the consumer

The 7 “I” s, are the only construct, differentiating so largely from the rest. It’s also the only one referring directly to event marketing instead of solely brand experience. Even though, some of its aspects relate loosely to the types of experiences we discussed earlier, it also introduces other terms and aspects of event marketing, and the event experience an attendee will “receive”.

2.3.7. Experience in events: limitations

We have previously referred to some limitations at the base of experience creation in events. As we have established, in order for an experience to be effective in conveying certain messages to the target audience, attention must be paid to the details.
Tafesse identifies the issue of “personal experiences”. In his research he indicates that when presented with a large variety of stimuli, individuals will be drawn to different types of experiences, resulting in the construction of different brand experiences and brand perceptions (2016). Consequently, managers in the field of event design and experiential marketing should be aware of this “propensity (on the part of consumers-participants) to construct brand experiences subjectively” and focus their efforts in personalizing “approaches used to enhance consumers' (participants') brand experience” (Tafesse, 2016). Target group segmentation is a good way to achieve such “personalized” results, by dividing consumers (attendees) segments according to demographic characteristics, skills level, “interests, motivations, and desires” (Tafesse, 2016).

A different issue is being brought to our attention by the research of Merrilees (2016), which refers to the identity of brands, and the types of experiences they are usually connected to. Based on the four dimensions of brand experiences by Brakus et al. (2009), the researcher indicates that functional brands, are heavily related to the intellectual and physical dimensions of experience, whereas hedonic brands, lean towards the sensory and emotional dimensions more. Hence, the selection of experiences when designing an event, should be made accordingly, keeping in mind, that types of brands, appeal to specific target audiences who have pre-determined expectations.

2.4. Design Thinking

2.4.1. Introduction to Design Thinking

The term Design Thinking was brought to the spotlight around the beginning of the 21st century, mainly thanks to business authors such as Brown, (2009) and academics like Martin (2009) who introduced the term to the general public “as a tool for approaching business strategy from an innovative perspective” (Orefice, 2018). Lockwood (2009) defines design thinking “as primarily an innovation process aimed at discovering needs and opportunities to create new solutions, but also an approach for business transformation and strategy that connects people and businesses through design” (as cited in Orefice, 2018). Erp offers a simpler definition of the term, saying that design thinking is “creating added value at a strategic and conceptual level” (2011).

Researchers have named the characteristics of design thinking, as follows:

- systemic perspective
- capacity to adapt to emerging problems and deliver quick solutions
- attitude towards experimentation
- empathy
• acknowledgement that design is a transformative discipline and creates something new rather than just improving the existing"

(Brown, 2009; Boland and Callopy, 2004, as cited in Orefice 2018).

• “aim of generating behavioral change” (Brown, 2009, as cited in Orefice, 2018)

• “addressing the triple bottom line, i.e. the social, and environmental implications, as well as the economics” (Elkington 1997; Gruber et al., 2015, as cited in Orefice, 2018).

Gruber et al., offer an additional definition on the term, that highlights the human-centered focus of design thinking. “By Design Thinking, we refer to a human-centered approach to innovation that puts observation and discovery of often highly nuanced, even tacit human needs right at the forefront of the innovation process. It considers not just the technological system constraints but the socio-cultural system context” (Gruber et al., 2015). Brown and Katz simplify this by saying that a critical aspect of design thinking is the observation of users with products, and the right use of resources to produce the best result, or else “doing more with less” (Brown and Katz, 2009).

When it comes to design thinking in the experience field, Brown highlights that designers have begun implementing design thinking processes to consumer experiences and interaction processes across all markets and disciplines (Brown and Katz, 2009). Gruber et al. go a step further to support that the core of design thinking, centers around “the primacy of the customer or user experience and that the products, services, processes, organizational design and business model should be designed to enable that compelling experience rather than the other way around. That compelling user experience should not simply be the consequence of other design choices, it should be intentional” (2015).

2.4.2. Importance

Along with the introduction of the term to the general public, Gruber et al., states “the value of design thinking as a tool for innovation has been recognized by both business and government” (2015). Firms, such as IDEO, organizations such as the UK Design Council and universities like Stanford have all supported and embraced the value and importance of a more “designerly” approach, for business process, and public service innovation, far beyond products and services (Gruber et al., 2015). As Brown and Katz emphasize, the benefits of using design thinking are not limited to designers (2009). In this framework, the researcher wants to explore the implementation of a design thinking approach on the field of event management, exploring the benefits.

2.4.3. Design thinking process

Gruber et al., provide detailed insight into what a “designer’s approach” entails.

• The discovery phase is the first stage of the process where the designers performs an in-depth observation of “users and the systems context and constraints”
• The **define** phase involves the development of insights and the clear definition of the problem.

• The **ideation** phase refers to the creation of prototypes and visualizations that help indicate "alternative solutions and how different types of users and stakeholders might interact with those solution concepts".

• The **delivery** phase includes tests to ensure that the prototype, and in term the final solution, will be able to "fit in with users' needs and the broader context of their lives" beyond basic testing of effectiveness on the technical aspect (Gruber et al., 2015).

The above phases are also described by Brown and Katz (2009) as "inspiration, ideation and implementation".

Additionally, d.school, of the Institute of Design, in Stanford University, has identified 5 steps in the design thinking approach.

![Stanford d.school Design Thinking Process](https://dschool.stanford.edu)

**Figure 1: Stanford d.school Design thinking process**

• **Empathize**: The realization that the issue the designer is trying to address, is not their own, has to come first. Empathy is then employed, through active observation of the users in their environment, in real conditions, interactions with them instead of making assumptions, interviewing them, and trying to experience what they experience inside the context.
• **Define:** After having collected valuable information about the users and the problem, a designer has to use that information in order to re-define the problem with clear borders, parameters, and stakeholders.

• **Ideate:** This stage requires a vast variety of possible solutions and ideas to be generated. The goal is not to have a limited funnel of ideas, but to think creatively of the multiple ways in which the issue could be addressed.

• **Prototype:** Out of all the ideas created in the last stage, the ones most probable to work, need to be materialized in some sort of prototype version (even a wall of post-its representing/simulating a system counts), so that the team can have a better understanding of the proposal, and evaluate its capabilities. A successful prototype is one that allows the designers to interact with it in any kind of way, and sparks conversation around the solution it represents. Multiple ideas should be prototyped in this stage to enable the design team to

• **Test:** Testing consists of examining the success or effectiveness of a prototype, with the users, in real conditions. It allows the designers to identify possible errors, challenges for the users, and indicate the improvements that need to be made. Testing is a crucial step in the design thinking process as it has three possible outcomes very important for the creation of the solution
  
  o By observing users interact with the prototypes, designers might unveil aspects of the context they did not identify on the “empathize” stage.
  
  o This process also allows designers to refine the prototypes and make alterations to the proposed solutions (some alterations might be more drastic than others)
  
  o Testing might also reveal that the designers’ perception of the problem, is totally wrong, and the process may need to restart as a whole.

A general direction that authors provide is to “Prototype as if you know you’re right but test as if you know you’re wrong.” (d.school bootleg, 2018)

Brown and Hutton introduce the term of design in events, through three central pillars; “capturing the audience, providing the foundation for an optimal experience and delivering the event objectives” (2013) and three additional principles like “emotions, authenticity, and surprise (2013).

In the inaugural stage of discovery, Brown and Katz highlight that design thinking utilizes “ethnographic observational techniques” borrowed by the anthropology and reapplied in order to create “practical solutions” (2009).
2.5. Event Design

2.5.1. Introduction to event design
Research around the term of “event design” is lacking at the moment. The term “event design” is a relatively new one, since for years, we have been referring to the activity of creating an event as “event management” but Brown supports that research focus is shifting towards the area of event design, giving birth to a whole new filed ready to be explored in depth (2014). This shift is caused because of the realization that events are a valuable entity, that should be approached purposively, and holistically, with attention to the experience offered, instead of just finding effective ways to manage them logistically and operationally (Brown, 2005; Getz, 2012; Crowther, 2014, as cited in Orefice 2018). Definitions of event design even though varying, they are all centered around experience and its purposive creation. O’Toole considers it a purposeful “arrangement of elements of an event to maximize the positive impression on the attendees and other key stakeholders” (2011, p.183), while Ferdinand and Kitchin state that “event design relates to the activation of sensory and emotional experiences and it is not just a simple matter of production” (2012, as cited in Orefice, 2018). Finally, Getz indicates that design is the “implementation of themes, settings, consumables, services and programmes that deliver experiences for several stakeholders to derive specific objectives” (2012, as cited in Orefice, 2018). Getz’s definition, mentioning the achievement of specific objectives, is consistent with design thinking and the designers’ approach to problem solving. Seeing events as a tool that can be used in order to deliver specific “solutions” to a pre-defined problem, is a great way to value their power, and use them in the best way possible.

2.5.2. Design in events
The role of design in events, for years has been limited to theming, and creation of decorations, which only apply to the “aesthetic aspects of the event experience” (Monroe, 2005; Silvers, 2004, as cited in Orefice, 2018), or the “conceptualization and development of new event products” (Shone and Parry, 2013; Tum et al., 2006, as cited in Orefice, 2018). Although, when the industry realized that design is a powerful tool when it comes to problem solving processes, and when the need is to deliver specific objectives, a shift took place, where people stop considering design as an “extra” element, but as something that needs to come even before management (Orefice, 2018). Brown and James identified five core design principles, scale, shape, focus, timing, and build, (2004) that were then later on embedded by Getz (2012) in the “three foundations of setting, people and management” (as cited in Orefice, 2018), and are responsible for enabling an event concept to transform into a “practical application” (Brown, 2005; Berridge, 2007; Getz, 2012, as cited in Orefice). What this means is, that we are moving to a state where design is responsible for all decisions about planning, and then managing events (Orefice, 2018).

2.5.3. Service Design and co-creation
Service design consists of “the activity of planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication and material components of a service in order to improve its quality and the interaction between service
provider and customers” (Lazier, n.d.). In the recent years, researchers have borrowed methodologies and terms from service design in order to comprehend and design event experiences (Gerritsen and van Olderen, 2014). Tools like journey mapping and touchpoints are being introduced into the event design process to understand how a user would experience an event (Orefice, 2018). Clatworthy defines touchpoints as “the points of contact between a service provider and customers” (2011), although this definition could easily be adapted for use in the event sector and more specifically in experiences, indicating the points of contact with specific stimuli that provoke experiences in an event marketing context. McLoughlin specifies how those tools should be used saying that “a blueprint including the physical and emotional elements of the event must be identified, with a clear idea of the objectives that these activities should deliver, and the level of participation involved” (2015, as cited in Orefice, 2018). Since service design is a predominantly human centered process, adopting such a point of view, event designers are better equipped to “integrate the needs, emotions and experiences of users with the products and services offered thus influencing the way in which value is co-created” (Miettinen et al., 2015, as cited in Orefice, 2018). This introduces ground for suggesting that co-creation of experiences can happen either during the design stages of an experience (for example in organized focus groups), or during the event when the actual experience is being offered to the attendees. Robertson and Brown, (2015) argue that event attendees are not “passive recipients of a designed experience” but instead, they are co-creating the experience, by contributing to value co-creation through the social aspects of the experience (as cited in Orefice, 2018).

2.6. Summary

The detailed examination of the existing literature provided valuable insights for the researcher, helping them establish connections between the various terms and frameworks proposed by other researchers. Event marketing is becoming an increasingly useable tool in the hands of marketers aiming to convey messages to the target audience, through situations where they are encouraged to follow active participation. Experience is being studied through many prisms in order to clarify all of the potential implications of its use in a marketing context. Additionally, numerous academics are forming conceptual models to explain its aspects. Lastly, people are coming to the realization that design thinking can become a powerful resource in many professional fields and especially in the one of event marketing, particularly when it is combined with service design methodologies. It should be noted that the frameworks referring to “brand experience” can also be applied to experiences created in an event marketing context, regardless of whether the intent is to communicate a brand or a cause, or the event itself to the public. This chapter served as a study, and a presentation of the existing academic research into the fields of event marketing, experience, design thinking and event design, indicating that even though efforts have been made to fill in the gaps of the lacking research into each individual field, there is still a need for research studying their interconnections. This research project aims to contribute to this purpose by proposing a conceptual model for event design, identifying different types of stimuli that have the ability to generate different types of experiences in order to render an event “effective” in relation to pre-defined goals, combined with the tool
of “touch-points” from service design. The above-mentioned conceptual model will be created utilizing the design thinking approach
Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework Development

3.1. Introduction to models and Marketing models
Models are viewed as valuable, important and effective research tools that “assist investigators and scientists in relating more accurately to reality; they also aid them to describe, predict, test or understand complex systems or events” (Shafique and Mahmood, 2010). In a public conversation among academics, on researchgate.com, models are described through various definitions and explanations. On the most generalized end, “a model is a more abstracted way of describing a process”. In particular, a “model is a pictorial or graphic representation of key concepts. It shows, (with the help of arrows and other diagrams), the relationship between various types of variables e.g. independent, dependent, moderating, mediating variables etc.”. On the same notion, “a scientific model is a causal explanation of how variables interact to produce a phenomenon, usually lineally organized. A model is almost always an oversimplified map consisting of a few, primary variables that will be tracked, measured, and perhaps controlled for experimentation.”. Shafique and Mahmood introduce the term of “systems” in their approach, saying that “a model is an abstraction, a mental framework for analysis of a system” (2010). “It involves simplified representations of real-world phenomena ”(Busha & Harter, 1980; Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 60 as cited in Shafique and Mahmood, 2010). Shafique and Mahmood continue, saying that “a model is a representation or abstraction of an actual object or situation. It shows the interrelationships (direct or indirect) and interrelationship of an action and reaction in terms of a cause and effect. Since a model is an abstraction of reality, it may appear less complex than reality itself.” (2010).

Lazer focuses his research on marketing models, and supports that “in marketing, a model involves translating perceived marketing relationships into constructs, symbols, and perhaps mathematical terms.” (1962). In addition, “all marketing models are based on suppositions or assumptions.” (Lazer, 1962).

3.2. Model development approach
According to Coombs, Raiffa and Thrall, two approaches exist, in marketing model construction: “abstraction and realization”. Abstraction dictates that “a real-world situation is perceived and then mapped into a model” (Lazer, 1962), hence the creator/builder of the model, has to identify a marketing situation, and then, using their skills, “recognize the relationships between a number of variables” (Lazer, 1962). The aim of the process is to reflect, complex relationships and dependencies of variables, in a clear, and reasonable way so that others can benefit from the model in the future.

The researcher at hand, made use of this approach in order to develop a conceptual model applying to the field of event marketing and more specifically, in non-profit events aiming to impact the society positively. By being an active participant and organizer in multiple events, the researcher identified a “real world
marketing situation” (Lazer, 1962) that was then supported by a thorough literature review, and primary research, consisting of observation, and interviews, that led them to the development of the model.

Additionally, the researcher made use of the design thinking approach when working on this research project, and the development of the conceptual model at hand. Utilizing the model by d.school about design thinking that was previously analyzed, the researcher followed the same steps in their approach of the matter at hand. Beginning with empathy, the researcher developed a close relationship with the organizers of the event “Career Fair 4.all” (that will be reviewed later as a case study), performed interviews, participated in the event as an observer and tried to live the experience themselves as the actual participants were. The results of this first step, along with the literature review, allowed the researcher to define clearly the problem, identify its aspects and sides, and proceed to the next step, of ideation. The conceptual model was a result of the ideation process although there was not a variety of ideas about different models (as it is the case typically in the ideation process of design), the researcher developed a few different approaches to the model before finalizing it. The stage of prototyping was relatively approached by depicting the model as a blueprint instead of just descriptions with words. Testing though, was not realized as the researcher was not able to perform testing of the model in practice, which they mention as a limitation later.

3.3. Conceptual Model

As the literature review supports, there is a clear, positive effect in an event’s participants perception of an event or an event organizer (person, organization, company etc.), originating from carefully curated experiences. This model serves as reflection of the multiple variables and their interrelationships, in event marketing experiences. It should be noted, that although an event, can be characterized as an “experience” in its entirety (part of the reason why event marketing is also defined as experiential marketing), the researcher distinguishes different types of experiences, and examines them separately. The same way designers approach a problem as sub-problems (divided into specific categories), the researcher deconstructs “the experience at an event” to different types of experiences that can be approached, created and evaluated separately.

As various researchers have stated (Brakus et al., 2009, Schmitt, 1999, Tafesse, 2016, Wood & Masterman, 2007), certain types of stimuli can provoke certain types of experiences. Although, since a type of stimuli (input) can provoke multiple or different types of experiences (output) to each individual and generate positive effects in their perception of the event / event organizer, the representation of their relationships, will be non-linear, but it will be filtered through the general context of the event. The hypothesis of the researcher expressed through this model, is that if the types of stimulations, that will be mentioned below as "input", exist in an event (in an event-marketing context), and the event meets specific requirements (that will be described below as "context"), then the event organizers will be able to elicit
specific types of experiences ("direct output"), that in turn, can help them achieve their goals ("indirect output"). The hypothesis is limited to short-term, clearly pre-defined goals and does not offer guidance in achieving long-term results ("outcome").

INPUT

The researcher identified specific types of stimulations that have the ability to positively affect event participants and create memorable experiences for them.

Stimulation of the senses (sensory stimulation) consists of strategically created visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and possibly tasting stimulations for the participants, where they can associate the organization with certain types of feelings.

Emotional appeal (emotional stimulations) with various types of stimuli (material or not) that provoke emotions and feelings to the participants. Stimuli can vary from visual (i.e. images, live -something in the environment- or not), to auditory (i.e. specific types of music), to social interactions (i.e. people that can convey a specific message on behalf of the event) and a vast variety of others.

Cognitive “material” (intellectual stimulation), that provides various kinds of information to the participants (about the organization, the event, a specific matter etc..), is a way to enrich people’s knowledge, and thus increase their engagement with the organization. The ways to provide such informative material also vary since, information can be shared by representatives of the organization behind the event, or material like brochures and leaflets, or through organized seminars during the event.

Bodily performance (physical participation), of a participant, when provoked in the right way, is a way to engage them actively and eliminate any hesitation or intimidation on their part. Providing the space and the conditions for participants to feel free to move and explore the environment or a specific site (booth etc.) can create various types of experiences. Additionally, presenting the participants with specific places, or activities that require them to participate physically in a clearly defined setting can be beneficial and be proven effective in eliciting experiences.

Interactions with people (social interactions) are an imperative aspect of any event. Whether the interactions will be positive, helpful, funny, informative or negative, rude and unhelpful will determine the image the participants will create about the organization or the event. Additionally, the context in which the interactions is very important to take notice of. Will social interactions with staff or representatives be necessary for the participants in order to navigate and participate in the event or will they be optional? Staged or free? Careful consideration needs to be given on this aspect of the event in order to ensure the best possible output.

Lastly, the types of experiences and the way they will be presented (variety of approaches) is key. Knowing the target group, their abilities and limitations, while also taking into consideration the limitations or the possibilities of the venue, or of the character of the event, can provide insight into what stimuli can be
introduced to the participants and in what forms, so that they will take advantage of them, and engage with them.

**CONTEXT**

The researcher, proposes that all the above stimuli (input), can produce a positive output, only if applied in a specific context. The primary research that was conducted, to support the proposal of this conceptual model, was performed in a non-profit event, by a non-profit organization, with the purpose of helping people in need (hence the emotional aspect of the event was a significant one) and with very specific and clearly pre-defined goals. Lastly, the event was held over a single day, with a duration of a full-day event (8 hours) and would not be repeated for a year.

**DIRECT OUTPUT**

Direct output relates to the types of experiences that the participants will have the opportunity to have, by interacting with the various types of stimuli at the event.

*Perceptual experience* consists of what the participants have perceived through their senses about the event. The images they have seen, the sounds they have heard, the smells they have smelled, the surfaces they have touched and the flavors they have tasted, all have the power to create a personal experience for someone, and paint a specific picture in their minds, about the event or the organization.

*Emotional experience* relates to the feelings the participants will develop, and experience throughout their various types of interactions with the event and the organization behind it. For example, the excitement that someone can feel when presented with an interactive experience (like a Virtual Reality activity), or the feeling of empathy and affection that can be provoked, when participants receive information about the work of a non-profit organization, benefiting people in need, are all experiences with a strong impact on the individual.

*Epistemic experience* relates to the knowledge the participants will gain after participating in a specific event. Anything new they will learn, as a result of their participation, and through all kinds of stimuli, consists of the epistemic experience they will have. Researchers like Arnould & Price (1993) and Borghini et al. (2009), have argued that epistemic experience is the most important because objective information and facts are very easily recounted by participants to others so that word of mouth can increase.

*Embodied experience* allows for the participants to experience the organization and the event in general, actively, moving around in the space, or in a booth, sitting, or standing, testing products (if they exist) etc. The way in which the participants will move, and the degree to which they will be challenged to move, can create various types of feelings to them (i.e. excitement, adventure, nostalgia, boredom etc..) that translate into positive or negative experiences.
Social experience is a unique way for the participants to create an image of the organization, or the identity of the event, by personifying it. The event, or the organization, is reflected through the image, behavior, and activities of the people representing it. This allows participants to create a bond with the event or the organizations, since they can relate characteristics of the people, to the event or organization. Thus, creating a stronger memory and perception of it, instead of a passive experience without any interactions.

Individuality comes from the subjective eyes of each participant. Not everybody will be stimulated by the same thing, or even have the same experience with someone else. Even people who belong in the same target group, have various different characteristics that will affect their perception and their experience of the various stimuli.

INDIRECT OUTPUT

Indirect output relates to the immediate, short-term effects, of the direct output. The variety and quality of experiences each participant will have, will determine the degree to which the pre-defined goals of the event will be achieved or not.

Figure 1: conceptual model
3.4. Touch-points

Although it cannot be integrated in the visualization of the model, the researcher also supports and suggests the use of a touch-point analysis by event organizations in the process of designing an event for marketing purposes. Identifying the exact points/locations where the stimuli are placed, can be proven valuable in understanding a little more about how the participants are going to notice and interact with them. It also facilitates a more curated experience in total, since the designers/creators also have an idea of the sequence in which the participants will come in contact with the stimuli. This could be particularly helpful in events whether the participants are obligated to follow a specific/linear route throughout the event, and the designers want to control a little more, the “timeline” of the experiences of the participants (though as we have previously discussed, no specific stimuli is guaranteed to elicit the same experience to two different people), or not, and the participants are free to explore the surroundings on their own.

3.5. Value and Significance

The value and significance of the conceptual model is in the fact that until now, researchers have focused their efforts, in suggesting constructs regarding the aspects/dimensions of experience and stating its importance in an event’s effectiveness. This conceptual model takes into consideration the existing constructs and analyses the ways specific types of stimulations (input), can generate types of experiences (direct output), which then translates to the general effectiveness of the event relating to the pre-defined goals around it (indirect output), all while taking in consideration, the specific variables of the event, like duration, purpose, identity etc. (context). The above parameters of input, direct and indirect output, and context are presented for the first time in a diagram that clearly demonstrates their relations in an “easy”, clear, visual way for readers to comprehend the interconnections.

3.6. Limitations

This conceptual model was created after careful research, secondarily: through the available literature on experience, event marketing and event design, and primarily: on the event of Ethelon, Career Fair 4. all which had very specific characteristics. Therefore, the proposed conceptual model, can only be implemented in similar events by organizations corresponding to the identity of Ethelon, until further research allows for expansions or more generalized applications. It should be noted that the researcher decided to present the literature around corporate events in the previous chapters, since the available literature around event marketing focuses on corporate events. The researcher hypothesizes that the characteristics and the relations to experience, that were discussed previously, apply to a certain degree, to experiences at a non-profit event as well, although future research is needed to confirm. The researcher recognizes that the above, is a preliminary study, based on research by other academics and their approaches and statements on experience and event marketing, that needs to be tested in practice, evaluated and validated since the testing of the model was not possible to be performed. Although, the proposed conceptual model, allows us to be optimistic about the results.
Additionally, the researcher focused their attention at the output of an event instead on the outcome. According to Deborah Mills-Scofield (2012), outputs for an organization, are something they produce “be it physical or virtual for a specific type of” audience, whereas outcomes are “the difference our stuff makes” (2012). In the event marketing field, this would translate to immediate impact made by an event, such as, attendance, or achievement of specific short-term goals, such as new enrollments to the organization producing the event, whereas outcome looks at the long-term “effects” of an event, such as distinct improvement on the equity or the image of the organization, or the active participation of those new enrollments long-term, after the effects of the event have stopped influencing any decisions and behaviors.

Event marketing outcome is particularly difficult to be determined and requires long-term research with broad access to both organizations and individuals associated with them. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to focus their research and conceptual model development on examining the outputs of an event and proceeded to divide those outputs to direct and indirect. Direct outcomes relate to the experiences participants will have by interacting with the various stimuli at an event, and indirect outputs describe

3.7. Summary

This chapter, presented us with the theory around models and marketing models, allowing us to understand the context, and introduced us to the proposed conceptual model by the researcher. The limitations of the model where also recognized and a call for further research was made for future researchers.
Section B: Primary Research

Chapter 4: Primary Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction
This chapter serves as a guide through the chosen methodologies and research approaches regarding the primary research. In addition to presenting the methodologies and research process, the researcher will provide the reason behind their choice. A reason for why the case study approach was chosen will be given as well as a reason for the semi-structured observation and semi-structured interviews. This chapter includes approaches like qualitative research, methods like observation and interviews, reliability and validity of the research as well and limitations and more.

4.2. Primary Research
The primary research was conducted in the form of interviews and observation of the organization of CF 4.all. Primary research refers to any information obtained personally by the researcher through investigation, observation, interviews and more. Since CF 4.all was selected as a case study, the primary research began in the month prior to the event by attending meetings of the organizing team and performing interviews, continued at the day of the event again with interviews and most of all, observation, and finished a few months after the event with close communication and interviews with members of the team. The close relationship with some of the members of the team allowed for direct communication and easy access to important data of the event.

4.3. Qualitative and Quantitative Research

4.3.1. Qualitative Research
Qualitative Research is known to examine the why's and the how's of a decision rather than just looking at facts alone like the when, who, where, and what of that decision (Given, 2008). It is a scientific research method that can manifest in ways like observation or interviews etc., where the aim of the researcher is to obtain non-numerical data (Babbie, Earl 2014, p. 303-304). The use of qualitative research methods extends to a variety of scientific fields but mainly focuses on studying human behavior, so social sciences are the principal field utilizing such methods. It should also be mentioned that this type of research allows for the examination of behaviors, attitudes, opinions, values and perception of participants regarding the research topic (Grbich, 2012). According to Lashley and Best (2001), there are various ways and methods to collect qualitative data, such as: observations, interviews, focus groups, case studies and questionnaires.
4.3.2. Quantitative Research
On the opposite side of qualitative research, we have quantitative research methods. It focuses on gathering numerical or countable, distinctive data that answer questions like what, when, where, and who. Such data is any kind of data that is in numerical form such as statistics, percentages, etc. (Given, 2008). According to Kerlingger (1964), quantitative research is mainly used as a hypothesis-testing research. It proves really valuable when there is a need to quantify a problem or topic, and/or compartmentalize it more easily. Methods to collect quantitative data include: surveys, online polls, systematic observations and longitudinal studies (Thomas and Thomas, 2003) (Creswell, 2013).

4.4. Inductive and Deductive Research
No matter what research method a researcher chooses, they are also bound to (voluntarily or involuntarily) follow either an inductive or a deductive logic to create their research project.

An inductive logic follows a flow from the specific to the more general. Starting from specific observations, a researcher advances to noticing patterns and then gradually continues to a general and broad theory or conclusions. On the contrary, a deductive theory begins with a general theory that goes on to formulate more specific hypotheses. These are then examined using specific data through observation and/or other research methods and eventually we produce a confirmation or contradiction/denial of those hypotheses and by extension the original general theory (Web Center for Social Research Methods, n.d.)

4.5. Selected Methodology
The researcher chose to use the qualitative approach while at the stage of Primary research because the aim was to observe, study and gain an in-depth understanding of people’s individual experience and perception of events and event experience, qualitative research and thus, this approach was deemed to be very valuable and the most suitable.

A quantitative approach would not have been useful as in this case the need was to evaluate all data as individual cases and examine the information separately and not as a total in a quantified form.

As a whole, this research project was built upon a deductive logic, meaning that the researcher begun with a hypothesis, a theory, that was then strengthened and backed by the literature review, and ultimately also verified through the Primary research.

4.6. Case Study Approach
“As a research method, the case study is used to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena… it allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events”

(Yin, 2013, p.4)
The single holistic case study approach using CF 4.all was selected by the researcher for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the uniqueness of the event and the various objectives and target groups it had, would provide a framework where many hypotheses could be tested to examine their effectiveness. Secondly, the fact that the event was being organized for the third time meant that the organizing team had already had the chance to test tactics and processes on their own and reach a better level on the end result. Thirdly, the “size” of the event (organizing team, volunteers, attendees, participants-companies, venue etc.), was big enough to provide information on many aspects but also manageable for the observation and interviews by just one researcher. Lastly, the close relation with the organizers offered an invaluable opportunity for insight into the organization of the event that in other cases wouldn’t have been as easy to achieve.

Also, choosing a single case study would provide more in-depth insight into the entirety of the event instead of trying to cover multiple case studies.

4.7. Research Method: Semi Structured Observation

As there were many points that the researcher had to pay attention to, the method of semi-structured observation was chosen as the most suitable. The method was selected because it enabled both free observation of the surroundings (environment, people, interactions etc..) and a general structure of this observation at the same time so that the researcher was able to keep track of what they observed. Having an outline of the main points that needed to be observed allowed for a margin of control in the process. The most crucial points of the day had to be noted, and then the observant was free to take notes of anything else that sparked their interest.

Observing from a distance, without invading in the activities, movements and interactions of all the participants was selected as an effective method to get valuable and honest qualitative data about their behaviors, experiences and activities. It allowed for a simultaneous observation of various scenes, for example, interactions between the team members, interviews with recruiters and attendees based on the ability of the researcher to pay attention to multiple things at once.

A fully structured observation model was considered unsuitable as it would entail firstly, that the researcher would have past experience doing observations, and would have detailed knowledge of all the points they should pay attention to, and secondly it wouldn’t allow for the freedom of any unexpected emerging information to be taken into account. At the same time, completely unstructured observation was also deemed unsuitable, again partly due to the lack of experience of the researcher who would not be able to come up with all the important aspects they should be taking notes of, while being overwhelmed from the environment. There would be an increased risk of missing important aspects of the day.

Thus, the semi-structured format provided a combination of the safety of preparation before the day of the event, with the freedom of the researcher to experience their surroundings and collect as much relevant data as possible.
4.8. Research Method: Interviews

In addition to the main research method of this case study which was the semi-structured observation during the day of the event, the conduction of short interviews was also considered very useful to provide in-depth insight.

The first stage started by interviewing members of the organizing team a month before the event. This allowed for a better understanding of the event and the process that the team followed in order to prepare for it. The interviews provided information about the identity of the event, the evolution it had gone through over the years, and most importantly, the objectives the team had set for the event. The interviews were conducted at the offices of Ethelon, while the rest of the team was also present which allowed for them to discreetly interrupt and provide additional information when they felt something was being left out. This resulted in a plethora of information being collected in a very short period of time. The semi-structured method of interviews was selected as the most suitable allowing the researcher to prepare the basic outline for the interviews considering they would not have ample time to conduct them, but also giving them the freedom to take advantage of emerging information and make follow up questions to collect in-depth data.

The second stage consisted of the interviews conducted the day of the event. This time, the researcher selected the form of unstructured interviews due to the fact that they did not know exactly what they would be faced with during the event. The researcher took the time to perform an initial observation and then proceeded to perform the interviews starting with the organizing team members and continuing with the recruiters from the participating companies. After observing the flow of the event for a few hours, the researcher was confident they were in a position to know what was important to ask and collected significant data about the experiences and perceptions people had about the event.

The last stage regarded the interviews conducted after CF 4.all, with members of the organizing team. For this stage, the form of the interviews was structured as the researcher wanted to focus on very specific data. Also, since the researcher had obtained a relative experience on the process it was proven that the questions they posed, were enough to collect all necessary information and there was no need to extend the interviews. Additionally, the interviewees had developed a familiarity with the researcher and were more direct towards them.

4.9. Sampling Strategy

Two sampling strategies were combined when selecting research sample participants. Firstly, purposive sampling, which occurs when the research participants are chosen based on the judgement of the searcher and their belief that they can provide useful information to the project without being financially compensated for their time (Black, 2010). Secondly, convenience sampling which meant that the participants were selected “on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond” by the researcher (Gravetter and Forzano, 2011, p. 151)
Research sample is divided into three groups: interviewed members of the organizing team of CF 4.all, interviewed recruiters from the participating companies at the event, and the entirety of attendees, participants and staff at the event that were the object of observation.

Regarding the observation, the researcher decided to expand it to all the attendees, participants and staff of CF 4.all.

4.10. Sample Size

Sample size and composition varied depending on the stages of the interviews as the researcher had to be flexible with each stage and new type of data that arose.

In the first stage of interviews, three members of the team were interviewed, the CEO of the organization and person in charge for the event, the Social Media Manager of the organization (and by extension of the event), and the Sponsorships Manager who was responsible for all communication with the companies and non-profit organizations participating in the event. The interviews lasted around ten to fifteen minutes due to lack of time of the interviewees, but that time was enough for all necessary information to be collected. The interviews were not recorded as the researcher was able to quickly take notes of everything.

In the second stage, the researcher interviewed the same three members of the organizing team as well as two recruiters, to gain insight into their experience and perception of the event. The interviews lasted from ten to fifteen minutes due to the pressing schedule of the interviewees, and all data was collected by taking handwritten notes.

In the last stage, multiple short interviews through the phone or online were conducted with the Social Media Manager of Ethelon. The first round of communication was a week after the event when all the information and personal experience was still fresh for the interviewee which allowed for in-depth insights about personal perceptions of the entire day, the interactions and the outcome of the event. The second round of communication occurred a month after CF 4.all to check on any updates regarding feedback for the event, and possible collaborations born out of it. The last round was three months after the event again to check on updates regarding the success or not of the objectives of the event.

4.11. Reliability and Validity

“Accepting qualitative research as being reliable is difficult especially arising from semi-structured interviews because of the lack of standardizations and possible bias” (Charles, 2017 p.30). This extends in this case to the semi-structured observation as well since it also provided qualitative data that never translated into quantitative generalized data.

Reliability is closely related to the possibility of “repeatability” of research results (Bryman, 2015, p.41, Social Research Methods, n.d.). When it comes to such a small sample size of interviews many could argue that reliability does not exist since the results are based on personal perceptions and ideas.
On the contrary Saunders et al (2016, p.398) say that “interviews are not necessarily intended to be repeatable since they reflect reality at the time they were collected.”

By examining the results of both methods, interviews and observation, future researchers can find patterns on their own, and possibly relate them to their research.

Validity refers to “the appropriateness of the methods used, accuracy of the analysis of the results and generalizability of the findings” (Saunders et al. 2016, p.202). When it comes to the interviews, since they were almost all performed face-to-face, their validity is based on the ability of the researcher to interpret the honesty in answers, and feelings of the interviewee and make sure the results are valid and useable. Because of the close relationship between the researcher and the participants, even at the last stage where the interviews had to be performed online, the researcher could feel confident in getting honest and valid answers out of the interviewee. The validity of the observational research relies upon the ability of the researcher to accurately interpret the object of observation and all its details (DeMonbrun et al. 2015). Such feat is arguably difficult even for experienced observers, but the researcher in this case, chose to verify as much of the data collected as possible, after the observation, during the interviews either with members of the organizing team, or with the recruiters of the participating companies.

4.12. Data Analysis

The process of analyzing all raw data from the interviews and observation required a high level or organization skills on the researcher’s part. The process required a close study of all data collected including margin notes in order to obtain a general sense of the information. Data from both interviews and observation were combined to create a complete result report instead of dividing them and then requiring double effort to analyse the data. On the next stage, of coding, the researcher had to separate the information into categories that emerged (from the first stage of overview), which then named after the activity or process they examined (i.e. “arrival”, “atmosphere”, “interviews” etc.). This enabled the researcher to compartmentalize all the information and uncover pain points, or points of interest for the next stages of this research project. After having divided the data into categories it was easy to review it again, make comparisons and notes based on the literature and test the theory and hypothesis.

4.13. Limitations and Constraints

The primary research was completed during a period of three months. This was because the researcher had divided the interviews in three stages in order to get data on a longer period of time to check the results of the event regarding the initial objectives.

The sample size even though small, proved to be enough to provide all the necessary information the researcher needed, and despite the lack of availability of the participants (especially at the last stage where only one member of the organizing team was available for the interviews) and the short duration of the interviews, the familiarity of the researcher with them, was a strong factor that enabled them to communicate
freely and effectively. Recognizing that the sample size was relatively small the researcher understands that it is impossible to proceed to generalizations about the results but this is not a problem in their perspective as the aim of that research is not to “generalize to a population but to gain an understanding about the experiences of groups of individuals or of a particular phenomenon” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.213). The in-depth insights obtained from the interviews provided enough data for the researcher and can be utilized by others in the future as well.

The researcher made the decision to not interview any of the attendees of the event directly due to their lack of experience in communicating with sensitive social groups like the one at hand. In order to avoid involuntarily harming or insulting the interviewee in any way, the researcher chose to obtain information about their feedback through Ethelon and through observation the day of the event.

4.14. Summary

This chapter served as detailed presentation and justification of all the methodologies used during this research project. From Primary and Secondary research methods, to the decision of a qualitative approach using a case study, this chapter analyzed in depth the research sample, the data collection methods such as interviews and observation (mainly semi-structured), the analysis process as well as recognized the limitations in place. The researcher also argued about the reliability and validity of their research. The next chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the results along with further discussion.
Chapter 5: Case study: Observation Results, Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Introduction
This chapter will present and analyse the results of the observation and interviews that took place in the context of Career fair.4all by Ethelon as well as discuss the possible implementation of the conceptual model on the event. What will follow, is an in-depth report of the notes the researcher was able to make, by observing and interviewing the organizing team of CF 4.all, before the event, during, and after. The discussion around possible implementations of the conceptual model, will be combined with the analysis of the results so that the readers can make associations more easily, and to avoid repetitiveness. The aim of this process is to see if all the types stimuli mentioned in the model are found in the event. The resulting (or not) elicited experiences will not examined as this would be considered testing the model, which was impossible at the time. Lastly, the discussion around the conceptual model will be limited to the actual day of the event, and not the two seminars that took place the week before, because the researcher was not present then, to observe first-hand, instead the results derive from interviews with the organizers. The same applies to promotion and materials on other channels of communication prior to the event.

5.2. “Ethelon”

5.2.1. History
“Ethelon” was born in 2016 after the union of the two non-governmental, non-profit organizations GloVo and Volunteer4Greece. The two organizations were created in 2012 and had similar action for the 4 years of their operation. The new organization aimed to become the main reference point for volunteerism in Greece”. (Ethelon, n.d.)

5.2.2. Vision
“The consolidation of volunteerism as a way of life and as a main value in the society.” (Ethelon, n.d.)

5.2.3. Mission
“We strive to be the reference point for volunteerism in Greece. We make it possible for everybody to have access to volunteering acts. We create the framework for collaboration between volunteers, organizations and companies while we aim for a positive social impact”. (Ethelon, n.d)

5.2.4. Operation
The operation of Ethelon is very wide. It extends from connecting volunteers to events, to organizing their own volunteering events. Such events could be the renovation of a park or organizing a night out to the theater, for the residents of a retirement home.
5.2.5. 4.all
As a part of their community outreach initiatives, Ethelon operates a "4.all" branch specifically designed to create equal opportunities for people with disabilities in volunteerism. Ethelon makes sure, wherever possible, that people with various kinds of disabilities can participate as volunteers in events as well, while at the same time organizing events designed to cater to the specific needs of this community.

5.3. Career Fair.4all - People with Abilities, Companies with Perception
Career Fair.4all is a job fair targeted to people with disabilities organized by Ethelon. This year, 2018, it was organized for the third time at "Serafio - Sports, Culture & Innovation Center", from 10:00am to 18:00pm on Saturday 12, May.

200 people attended and 21 companies along with 12 non-profit organizations were present with booths and recruiters.

The tagline of the event this year was "People with abilities, companies with perception". This specific tagline aims to change people’s minds about what a person with a disability can and cannot do, and whether or not a company can benefit by hiring people with disabilities.

5.4. Event objectives

5.4.1. Direct (Indirect Output)
The main objective of the event is to help people with disabilities, enter the workforce, utilize their skills and help make them active members of the society. At the same time, they want to facilitate a change of notion in the companies’ mindsets and establish a new way to evaluate people based on their actual abilities and skills while utilizing them in the best possible way.

5.4.2. Indirect (Outcome)
By organizing an efficient event, where the program goes according to plan, and the goals are met, Ethelon also wants to show the participating companies that they are capable of executing events in the best possible way, and they could do it for them as well. Since Ethelon’s activities include the organization of employee volunteering programs (EVPs), where employees of a company work together to contribute to the society and local communities, Ethelon is always looking for ways to communicate with companies to organize such events for them as well.

5.5. Target Group
The target group of this event is divided into 3 different categories:

- people with disabilities (and their close family/friends)
- companies
• the public (people without any ties to the problem of unemployment of people with disabilities but generally interested in the issue)

By communicating the event to the public (through social media, press, posters etc.), Ethelon also managed to raise some awareness around the issue of unemployment on people with disabilities.

5.6. AIDA Model

"The AIDA model is widely used in marketing and advertising to describe the steps or stages that occur from the time when a consumer first becomes aware of a product or brand through to when the consumer trials a product or makes a purchase decision" (Wikipedia, n.d).

In this case, the “action” is the attendance of the event.

We will examine the AIDA model separately for each target group.

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<tr>
<th>People with disabilities</th>
<th>Companies</th>
<th>Public</th>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>They become aware of the event through one of the mkt channels.</td>
<td>They are contacted by the organizing team and invited to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>They research further on their own the details of the event. (Participating companies, venue, date and time etc.)</td>
<td>Once they express interest, they are informed thoroughly about their participation and what it would entail. The companies could participate by choosing a sponsorship package (silver, gold, platinum) which allowed for different size booths at the event and more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>They sign up for the event (declaring the disability they have so the team can be better prepared) and the preparatory seminar. They regularly check the FB page of the event to stay updated about any changes.</td>
<td>They agree to send representatives and material at the event and attend the preparatory seminar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>They attend the event.</td>
<td>They attend the event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: AIDA analysis for CF 4.all

5.7. Issues that arose during the preparation

In general, since this was the third time that the career fair was organized, the team did not face many problems while they were preparing for the event.

Although, since the policy about hiring people with disabilities had changed and the subsidies the companies would qualify for were new, the team decided that it would be very useful to include presentations from the Manpower Employment Organization in both seminars (for the attendees and for the companies) in order to clarify the new situation, the rights and the responsibilities of each party.
One of the biggest problems proved to be the finding of the venue. Finding a venue completely accessible and near a metro station was the first thing the team had to secure. They decided on “Serafio - Sports, Culture & Innovation Center”, but the 5min walking distance proved to be a hard task for some of the attendees as the team noticed they had complaints during the event.

Additionally, and even though the team does not consider this necessarily an “issue”, it is worth noting that the entire set up of the event was done by the organizing team. No outside partners/contractors were hired. All the technical production, the artistic installations, everything, was done by members of the team that consisted of 11 people and 35 volunteers the day of the event.

5.8. Before the event

5.8.1. Process
The event was communicated to more than 200 companies and 20 non-profit organizations out of which, it was finally presented to 100 companies and 15 non-profits.

5.8.2. Promotion
Prior to the event, Ethelon promoted it strongly on social media, for a few weeks, through posts on their official accounts on Facebook and Instagram, and through social influencers on Instagram. Besides social media, the event was also heavily promoted on traditional media like the radio, the television and online press.

Through the social media, Ethelon chose to publish a few interviews with people with disabilities, who are currently employed. They discussed their experience, the difficulties they faced on their first steps, and what they would advise they would give to companies thinking about employing someone with a disability.

5.8.3. Seminars
Ethelon organized two seminars the week before the event, in order to prepare all participants and make sure they would be able to make the best out of the career day.

5.8.3.1. Companies’ Seminar
The first seminar was designed for the participating companies and took place on 4th May, a week before the career day. 25 HR managers were present at the seminar. The seminar included various presentations around the employment of people with disabilities and how employers can make their incorporation/inclusion easier and more effective:

- Representatives from the Manpower Employment Organization were there to talk about the legal aspects of employing people with disabilities, and to inform companies about the subsidies they can qualify for.
Representatives from “Apivita” and “Vodafone” that have such employees talked about best practices when employing a disabled person and how valuable they can be for the company.

Representatives from the “Job Pairs” organization, that help people prepare their CV were also present, and spoke to the attendees about what they can expect from the CVs of people with disabilities, and how they should treat them.

The organization, “Labyrinth of senses” had prepared a workshop to simulate certain disabilities, such as the loss of sight, or someone who is in a wheelchair.

Mr. Nikos Galanis, the founder of the non-profit organization, “Dro”, who was the first deaf person in Greece to teach Greek sign language to hearing people, delivered a speech regarding do’s and don’ts when it comes to interacting and managing people with disabilities.

Representatives from the non-profit organization “ΠΕΨΑΕΕ” were there to give advice on interacting and handling people with psychological illnesses.

Following the seminar, all guests were invited out to dinner, to meet each other, and further discuss on the subject while creating a friendly atmosphere that would help during the career fair.

5.8.3.2. Attendees’ Seminar
A different seminar was organized 3 days before the career fair specifically for the attendees of the fair. The aim was to better prepare them for the career fair and advise them on how to best present themselves and their CVs. Around 35 people attended the seminar.

Speeches were delivered from organizations like “Job Pairs”, and “Kariera.gr” who focus on battling unemployment.

Attendees had the chance to receive advise tailor made just for them on their CVs, and counselling one – on – one for their interview. This way they had a better idea of what the recruiters would be asking, and how to respond.

Representatives from the Manpower Employment Organization were there to inform people on various programs regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

The entire seminar was translated live in Greek Sign Language.
5.8.4. **Newsletters**
The attendees who have pre-registered online for the event receive newsletters about the event in the weeks leading up to the career fair. Firstly, they receive a digital booklet which has all the information about the companies, their activities and especially, what positions they are looking to fill and the requirements for each of them. Secondly, just a few days prior to the event, they receive “the toolkit” which is a different newsletter with practical information about the event, advise on how to make the most out of it, and reminders about the available positions at each company. They also receive a smaller version of this information on the Facebook page of the event.

5.8.5. **Setup of the event**
The setup of the event happened the day before where the organizing team put up all the booths and the promotional material. The representatives of the venue arrived the day of the event a little earlier to put up their banners and promotional material of the company.

5.8.6. **Non-Profit Organizations**
The representatives of the non-profit organizations did not participate at the seminars since they were already informed about the state of the employability of people with disabilities. Their aim was to further inform people about their activities and services whether it was talking directly to people with disabilities who could benefit from them, or other participants (friends/family, or even recruiters) who could network and possibly talk about collaborations.

5.9. **Observation – day of the event**

5.9.1. **Branding – Visuals**
The branding of the event, the name “Career fair 4.all” along with the tagline “People with abilities, companies with perspective” was visible throughout the exterior of the venue. Large signs were up on both entrances of the venue indicating the name of the event and the date. As a visual the signs featured a photo from the photographic campaign for the event, showing 4 people with different disabilities. This could be interpreted as the first touch-point with the identity of the event for the participants, as it features visual stimuli (*sensory stimulation*) representing the “brand” of Ethelon in general, and of CF 4.all in particular.

As the attendees enter the venue, they are given a map of the event (with the booths, the bar, and the activities) and a gift bag with promotional material. The map is also available in braille for people with visual impairment so that they can move independently in the space. Here, the researcher identifies both *sensory stimulations* through the visual aspect of the map, and the fact that is an object that participants can touch, as well as *intellectual stimulation*, since the participants are presented with information.

At the entrance hall, the attendees can find the Ethelon booth with clearly marked visual signs.
All the volunteers and the organizing team wear distinctive T-shirts of the same color, so they stand out and are easy to locate. Again, the existence of branding visuals both in marked signs at the booth, and on the T-shirts of the organizers and volunteers, relates to visual stimulation (sensory stimulation).

5.9.2. Layout and assistance

Volunteers are placed at every entrance of the cultural center. They can help direct the attendees to the entrance of the venue and assist with everything the attendees might need. At the main entrance of the venue we also find multiple volunteers helping the attendees enter the venue (they can set up a mini ramp for any wheelchair users since there is a small step). There are 5 volunteers at the registration desk helping the attendees check-in. Multiple volunteers are circulating around the entire venue offering assistance if needed. All of the volunteers are familiar with the details of the event, the layout, the activities etc., so they can offer information to anyone who asks. Additional to the volunteers, the attendees can also address the organizing team if they need any assistance (they are all wearing the same t-shirt, so they are all accessible to the public). The above-mentioned visible presence and availability of the volunteers and organizing team is characterized by the researcher as both a visual cue (sensory stimulation), a social stimulant (social interaction) since the participants can interact with them, and a cognitive trigger (intellectual stimulation) since through those interactions, the participants can obtain valuable information about the event and its practical details.

It should also be noted that the team and the volunteers are all in position to assist anyone with visual impairment in the appropriate way.

5.9.3. Atmosphere

The space is large and there is enough room for everyone to move freely. There is ample natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting, Upbeat music plays in the background, loudly enough so it brings a vibrant feeling to the event. Everyone is energetic and smiling. The music in the background is also another clear sensory trigger (sensory stimulation) for the participants, but the researcher, goes a step further to characterize it as an emotional trigger as well (emotional stimulation) since music is widely known to affect the moods of people, and as we mentioned, in this particular event, the music playing was in purpose upbeat and energetic.

5.9.4. Activity points

The team tried to incorporate some activity points for the attendees whether it was for a completely functional purpose, or just as a fun activity in between the interviews to decompress.

The first few remarks relate to rather functional/practical measures the organizing team took, in order to ensure that the stay of the participants at the event would be comfortable and easy.
At the entrance hall, the attendees had access to a computer and a printer to print out their CVs if they had not brought them in a hard copy, or if they ran out of them at some point during the day.

There was also a small lounge with a sofa, chairs, and a table for anyone to sit, talk and take a break.

Inside the main hall two sofas were placed on either ends of the room so that anyone who needed to sit for a while had the ability to. This was widely used by the relatives and friends of the applicants who waited while their friend/relative was at their interview.

Besides offering comfort and practical benefits to participants, the organizing team made an effort to include some entertaining or calming activity points as well throughout the space.

Close to the sofas there were also two full size mirrors encouraging the attendees to take photo with the positive messages written on them such as “We are full of abilities” and “People with high probabilities!” The mirrors did not have an assigned volunteer to them. Those mirrors are characterized by the researchers, as sensory stimulation, because a mirror is a predominantly visual stimulant, emotional stimulation thanks to the motivational messages displayed on top of the mirrors, and lastly a physical stimulant (physical participation) since the participants are encouraged to move, to pose, and take a photo interacting this way actively with the mirror.

It was noted during the event that the interaction with the mirrors was minuscule.

In the meantime, there was a different “photobooth” set up by the organization “Humane” (an organization empowering vulnerable groups), called the “Wall of Fame” project, with a polaroid camera and a backdrop where people could take photos using the instructions given by the volunteers of Humane and post them on the wall or take them with them. This photobooth was very successful as people were able to see the photos of others and be motivated to do the same. Similarly, this activity is considered sensory stimulation, a trigger for physical participation, and emotional stimulation. Additionally, after a few hours when the activity was at the highest point of use, and people where gathering to look at other people’s photos, social interactions among them increased.

Adjacent to the main hall was a smaller room where the Ethelon team had set up a calming area, a “sensory corner” for people with sensory disabilities, who could be triggered by all the noise and the people. If at some point they felt overwhelmed by the environment, they could retrieve to the sensory corner and “recharge” before re-entering the main hall. Mats, and pillows were set on the floor, along with calming lights and music. A volunteer was assigned to that activity as well to assist anyone who would need it. Throughout the day this activity point was not used largely. The room was not very visible from the main hall, but it was mentioned in the map of the venue. The sensory room is also a case where multiple types of stimulation co-exist. Firstly, that area was a sensory stimulant, thanks to the various tactile stimulants (mats, pillows), the music, and the appropriate calming music. Secondly, thanks to the atmosphere the team tried to create, and the purpose of the room alone which was to allow people to relax, the sensory
corner is also considered an *emotional stimulant*. Lastly, the researcher characterized it as a place where *physical participation* was encouraged because people were motivated to move in the way they wanted, freely, to lie down or to sit at a mat, hold a pillow or lay their heads on it, and express themselves as they wished in general.

Lastly, at the entrance of the main hall there were booths from the organizations that were present at the attendees’ seminar helping them with their CV prep. This was for anyone who did not attend the seminar and needed some last-minute help. This feature of the event was characterized by the researcher as both an *intellectual stimulation* (since participants where provided with guidance, and information on how to best prepare their CVs for the interviews, and a *social interaction*, with the representatives/counselors.

Around halfway through the day, the organization “Labyrinth of senses” presented an activity to all the attendees where they could simulate the loss of a sense (like sight) or the inability to walk and try to experience the event this way. They provided blindfolds or wheelchairs to the participants and assisted them in navigating the event exactly as someone with a disability. The activity was successful as there was a steady flow of people participating. Friends and family of the attendees, volunteers and recruiters were the ones who participated the most. This activity was the only one that provided all five kinds of different stimulations to participants at once, and even some of the stimulations to the people who were watching the people participating in the activity. *Sensory stimulation* was present because of the different senses used by the participants, as well as *physical participation* since people had to be active in their participation. *Social interactions* were present as well, since participants were assisted and guided by representatives of the organization “Labyrinth of senses”, and *intellectual stimulation* was a result of the information presented to the participants about the realities of people with motor and visual impairments. Lastly, participants were also *emotionally stimulated* by their participation/experience, seeing what other people’s life feels like. Observers of the participants on this activity where also *sensory* and *emotionally stimulated*, and, more passively, *intellectually stimulated* as well for the same reasons as the participants.

Flowers and plants in pots were also placed around the room, next to activity points (like the mirrors, or next to the entrance of the “sensory corner”) to make the space more beautiful. The flowers and the plants provided various kinds of stimulation to the participants such as *sensory* (visual, olfactory and tactile), *emotional* (the benefits of natural elements in the environment are widely known) and *physical participation* (for those who opted to move more closely to them, touch them, or smell them.

Although it cannot be considered an activity, it was a strong part of the experience and we should also note that there were also representatives from the “Greek Guide Dogs” organization along with some trained guide dogs. The presence of the dogs in the venue lightened the mood and allowed for anyone who felt stressed to pet the dogs and relax. The existence of the guide dogs in the event also provided various types of stimulations to the participants. *Sensory stimulation* (visual and tactile), *emotional stimulation* (since animals and dogs in particular have the ability to create emotions and calm people), and in some cases *physical participation* when participants decided to pet the dogs.
5.9.5. Arrival

The event begins at 10:00am. The first guests arrive at 09:50am and even though they cannot enter the venue, the volunteers at the entrance offer chairs so they can sit and wait more comfortably. The volunteers at the door, wish each attendee “good luck” with their interviews. As we discussed earlier, the interaction with the volunteers (to the degree it happened for each participant) was a social interaction, but also an emotional one, since the volunteers tried to engage the participants in a positive way.

Once the doors open, the attendees go through the registration desk (they have already pre-registered for the event), to check-in and get their gift-bags and maps of the event. Out of the 200 attendees, only 65 had pre-registered through the Facebook event.

It should be noted that throughout the day, the main point of interaction between the team/volunteers and the attendees is the registration desk. Secondary, is the Ethelon booth at the entrance hall where people address the team to know more about the organization or to find information about the event. We have previously mentioned that the interactions at the registration desk and at the Ethelon booth are both social interactions and intellectual stimulations. What was not mentioned is that the Ethelon booth was the main touch-point with the organization, and where participants would be able to access the most information about the organization, their work, possible opportunities for them to participate.

They then proceed to the entrance hall where they can find coffee, water, lemonade, cookies and bananas. Food is also a very strong sensory stimulant (visual, olfactory and through taste).

Most of them go directly in the booth hall where all the companies are located and then during the day, they return to get a coffee as a break from the interviews.

5.9.6. Interviews

Even though only a minority of attendees have pre-registered and have received newsletters with information about the companies, most of the attendees are already prepared and know exactly who they want to come in contact with, and about which positions (-this information was also available at the social media of the event, so the public had access to it). They approach the booths on their own and start conversations with the recruiters. It is clear for everyone that these are not just conversations to seek information about the company. It is an interview, the applicants have their CVs with them, and are ready to present themselves to the recruiters. The recruiters noted that even though in some cases the attendees did not know exactly about the activities of the company, they were prepared on personal level for the interview.

In some cases, a relative, or a friend was also present during the interview.

On average, every attendee had a total of 5-6 interviews.
Although interviews were not a constructed part of the “experiential” aspect of the event (they were the main purpose of the entire event in the strive to provide work positions for people with disabilities), we have to recognize them as both a social interaction and an intellectual stimulation but since those interactions were not with representatives of Ethelon, and the information being dispersed was not Ethelon-related, the researcher does not take them into account.

The only aspect that the researcher decided to take note of, is the number of companies being present, and how that affected the amount of information (intellectual stimulation) available to the participants, regarding their possibilities and potential professionally.

5.9.7. Team and Volunteers
The interactions among the members of the team, the volunteers, and between the two were very positive and efficient. The leader of the team and main manager of the event was always communicating with team, was always approachable and ready to handle any minor setbacks, but at the same time, it was noted that all the members of the core team were ready to take initiative and solve any minor problems themselves.

5.9.8. Interactions between the team and the companies
Most communication between the team and the companies, was limited to the two members of the team responsible for the recruiters, although all team members were familiar with the recruiters and could assist if anything occurred. Throughout the day there was a constant communication between those two people and the companies’ recruiters. They checked on them, to see if they needed anything (even a glass of water or food at lunch time – which was seldom provided to the team, volunteers and recruiters), and they asked about their experience and their feedback. The interactions between them were very friendly and not forced.

5.9.9. Promotion
On the day of the event, the social media accounts of Ethelon were very active. They were posting photos of the event, the attendees, and the companies’ booths.

The event was also heavily promoted on social media of the participating companies and non-profit organizations.

5.9.10. Flow
In general, the event had a very steady flow of people arriving at the venue and participating in the interviews. It was also important that all the companies (besides one) had people showing interest in them and taking interviews with the recruiters. Halfway through the day, there were queues formed for some of the more popular companies, but the energetic atmosphere did not allow anyone to express complaints about the wait.
5.10. Feedback

5.10.1. Attendees
In general, the feedback from the attendees was very positive. Most people mentioned that as they came they thought that the event would not have an actual impact and that it would not be effective. But as they left, they said that the interviews and the interactions with the companies had gone very well, and this was a valuable opportunity to access companies and have an equal treatment at the interview process.

They also mentioned that their perception of Ethelon and those companies was impacted positively.

On the negative side they mentioned that they wished there was a larger variety of companies and available positions and that the venue was a bit far from the nearest subway station.

5.10.2. Companies
Since most companies had participated in previous career fairs of Ethelon, they had a clear picture of the applicants. They mentioned that the level of the applicants was very good, they were well prepared for the interviews, and even better prepared compared to past events.

They were also very pleased by the level of the organization by Ethelon.

5.11. Results post - event

5.11.1. Introduction
The researcher has previously stated that a practical appliance of the conceptual model, and its evaluation was not possible to be performed. Therefore, the results that are going to be presented below, are not in any way a result of the conceptual model of the researcher. They are simply the results that Ethelon identified in the short amount of time that passed after the event, and the time of the last round of interviews.

5.11.1.1. Hiring
Ethelon reports that they have no valid data for any hiring that may have happened as a result of the fair. The organizers mention this has been a problem all the years of the organization for various reasons.

- The attendees fail to respond to the emails for feedback because of lack of time or their lack of interest.
- The person of contact in the company does not have the time to respond to Ethelon or they disregard the communication as not greatly important.
- Oftentimes the person of contact in the company changes, and their replacement does not have the necessary information to communicate with Ethelon in order to inform them about updates.
5.11.1.2. Collaborations

As we stated in the indirect goals (outcome) of the event, Ethelon wanted to promote their organizing skills and establish relationships with the companies that participated in the event in order to organize EVPs for them. Three months after the event, the organization reports that only one collaboration has been achieved between them and a company that attended CF 4.all. Though it is impossible from this research to determine if that collaboration was a result of the event itself and not a combination of other communications strategies or the work of Ethelon.

The organization recognizes a different complication in the process of knowing whether or not the event was successful on that note, which takes more time than a short three-month period. That is the different timetable for activities and actions that every company and every organization have of their own, hence, even a year later Ethelon could yield results of this event and other communications strategies. The organization of the career fair made a good impression on the recruiters of the companies and that could be proven enough for them to recommend to their colleagues a possible collaboration with Ethelon in the future even if a longer period of time has passed.

5.12. Overview - Discussion

By reviewing the results of the observation, the researcher was able to make some remarks and reach specific conclusions. Regarding the existence of the various types of stimulation (input) that the conceptual model describes, the researcher made the following remarks. The most dominant type of stimulation throughout the event was the sensory stimulation. The researcher also noted the organizing team achieved to engage all five senses of the participants in various touch-points. Emotional stimulation was next with various touchpoints eliciting affectionate emotions in participants, aiming to empower participants with disabilities, and further educate but also sensitize their escorts (relatives and friends). Intellectual stimulation, although not present through multiple different ways, was a notable one. The necessary information for the participants, was provided to them in crucial times/points of the event, enabling them to continue experiencing the event, navigating the space, and profiting the most out of the interviews and activities. Physical participation was a little limited, since opportunities to participate actively, bodily, were not that numerous. Although, the type of the event, and the target audience in particular, justify that completely, since Ethelon recognized that depending on their disabilities and impairments, participants would be limited in the way they would be able to participate. Social interactions were also a big aspect of the event. Although the ways in which they existed where not many (in terms of variety), the number of possible social interactions alone was significant (due to the number of volunteers, and members of the organizing team available at the space).

The one variable of input that we have not discussed yet, is that of “variety of approaches”. This relates to the different ways, a single type of stimulation will be made available to the participants of an event, so that different types of participants will have the opportunity to be engaged by one of those available types. As it
has been noted earlier, this is important because even among a specific target group, people still have different characteristics, personalities and traits, and may not be triggered by the same thing. Here, the researcher notes that Ethelon was successful at offering a large variety of types of stimulations, and through various different touchpoints.

In conclusion, all the types of input the researcher proposes in their conceptual model, are present in the event, allowing for optimism in the effectiveness of the model.

5.13. Summary
This chapter provided a detail report and presentation of the results of the observations and interviews, performed in the context of the event Career Fair 4.all, organized by Ethelon. Th researcher presented their research covering the identity of the organization in general, the identity of the event alone, and all the information concerning the event, beginning with the preparation stages, (from promotion and communication with companies, to set-up the day before), continuing to the day of the event, and ending a few months after the event. The intent of the researcher when providing all the information was for the readers to obtain an accurate image of the event (context) and Ethelon, to better understand the conditions of the theoretical implementation of the conceptual model. Along with the presentation of the results, the researcher presented their notes, on locating the corresponding types of stimulation (input) thus confirming the existence of all of them. Lastly, an overview of all the notes was made, presenting the degree to which the various types of stimulations existed compared to others. The theoretical implementation of the model is the last step towards the conclusion of this research project, and the continuation to the final chapter.
Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations

6.1. Introduction
The final chapter of this dissertation is going to serve as a conclusion, reviewing the results of the research, evaluating the degree to which the aim and objectives were accomplished, and provide insights and suggestions for future research. The limitations of this research project will also be recognized while also identifying the contribution of the researcher to the field of event design and experiential marketing.

6.2. Research Aims and Objectives Revisited
The researcher successfully accomplished the general aim of this dissertation, to create a conceptual model for event design, considering experiential elements (experiential marketing) while following the design thinking perspective/process.

Additionally, the individual objectives that were set by the researcher were accomplished.

- The researcher proposed a model, that can be applicable to non-profit events, (as it was, theoretically applied to the event of Ethelon, CF 4.all, which model assists in experience design and enhances the results of the event in terms of effectiveness (although, the evaluation of the model in terms of results achievement needs further research).

- After performing an in-depth review of the existing literature, the researcher was in a position to successfully utilize existing constructs and frameworks regarding event and brand experience, in the process of creating the new conceptual model.

- Lastly, the researcher utilized design thinking in the process of creating the new conceptual model. The typical process followed by designers when tasked with solving a problem, was adopted by the researcher throughout the research project in the process of creating the conceptual model.

6.3. Summary of Research Findings
This research project has contributed significantly to academic literature on event marketing and event experience by collecting and presenting constructs and frameworks from past researches, and most importantly by introducing a conceptual model that connects types of stimulations, to types of experiences, which in turn, translate to effectiveness towards specific pre-defined goals.

The key findings of the literature review are:

- Attention on event marketing has been increasing for the past 2 decades and both academics and professionals consider it to be the most effective form of marketing communication.
The effectiveness of events remains difficult to measure and evaluate and thus research on the topic is severely lacking.

Experience economy is considered to be the next significant economy after the agrarian, the industrial and services economy.

The most prominent constructs around experience all revolve around senses, emotions, an intellectual, physical and social aspect.

The value of design thinking is being widely recognized across multiple sectors and fields at the moment.

Tools borrowed from the field of service design (like touch-points) can greatly benefit an event designer, providing them an easy way to locate the stimulations that will generate experiences throughout the event, so they can design the event coherently and more effectively.

Event design is suggested as a "better" approach than event management, implying the need for holistic design approaches in event marketing.

The research findings from the development of the model are:

- First and foremost, we can say that the model is valid, in what concerns the input on the specific context that was examined. The variables of the input (the types of stimulations mentioned) were all present at the case study.

- Experiential stimuli have the ability to increase participants’ engagement. As stated in the notes of the observation, we can see that the stimuli presented opportunities for the participants to be more active and engage with the event.

- We see efforts from event organizers towards including experiential elements even without having formal knowledge of the dimensions of experience, as they are presented in the literature.

- The previous statement leads us to the realization that a holistic and strategic approach should be adopted towards event experience since it would be beneficial in the efforts to achieve maximum effectiveness.

- Tools borrowed from the field of service design (like touch-points) can greatly benefit an event designer.

6.4. Limitations

This research project is a preliminary study based on research by other academics. Limitations are firstly found, on the matter of the interviews, in terms of availability of the organizers at the various stages of the event context (preparations, day of the event, after the event). Due to the limited amount of time (on the part of the organizers), the researcher had to limit the interviews to only a few members of team, possibly
sacrificing a different point of view from someone else. Regarding the conceptual model, the researcher recognized as a limitation, the inability to perform an evaluation of the conceptual model in order to measure its effectiveness. This was largely due to lack of time, money, and access to the organizational core team of an event in order to co-create it. Secondly, the conceptual model is limited to only non-profit events by non-profit organizations in the general context mentioned (yearly organization etc.). Lastly, even though literature is focusing greatly on aspects of “brand experience”, the researcher focused their study on experience, without taking into consideration the effects of the brand.

6.5. Recommendations for Future Research
The researcher identifies a need for further research in the following aspects:

- The construction of a model for evaluating the effectiveness of events in terms of their goals. Such a model is lacking and could prove greatly valuable for professionals and academics on the field of marketing in general, and event marketing in particular.

- An evaluation of the conceptual model, in regard to the resulting experiences and the degree to which those result in achievement of pre-defined goals.

- The possible expansion of the conceptual model to other types of events (for-profit). Special attention needs to be paid on the differences between the characteristics of the two types of events, and how that could possibly affect the implementation of the model. For example, assumptions and emotions on the part of target audiences could differentiate, and thus challenge the results of the conceptual model.

- The wider adoption of design thinking, in the creation of an event. Since design thinking is being adopted as an approach across multiple industries and sectors, event design (experiential marketing) could also greatly benefit by it. A close examination of how such an approach could benefit the field of experiential marketing would be needed to support the decision.

6.6. Summary
This research project provided a new conceptual model for event design by taking into account the existing literature around experience, experiential marketing and design thinking. The chapter provided an overview of how effectively the researcher succeeded to achieve their aim and objectives, what the limitations were, and also what future research could focus on.
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