Virtual Events - Fact or trend in Brazilian Scenario?

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ABSTRACT
The main goal of the research that originated this article was to investigate how Brazil is in line with other countries in the use of virtual events as a bet for holding special corporate events. Therefore we conducted a literature review and documentary - addressing contextualization on the very evolution of area events - and a field survey with a sample of 86 Event Organisers (PCOs) on the subject. Another objective was to analyze secondary data extracted from two studies on virtual events applied in the international sphere and draw a parallel with the Brazilian experience, thus initiating the intensification of reflections on this new type of events in the XXI century.

KEYWORDS: Events, Virtual Events, Events Hybrids Communications.

EVENTS AND SOCIETY
Man is a social being who needs to live in the community and are vital for their survival communication with his fellow man. The word communication comes from the Latin communis that brings the idea of communion. Communion means communion, participating in common, transmit, share, and that is what communication is perceived: become common, conveying, establishing communion through the exchange of information.

The vehicle for the realization of this transmission of ideas and information are divided into verbal language (as is done by words, either in oral or written language) and nonverbal (when messages are transmitted through gestures, the look, the way of dressing, etc.). One of the most significant and expressive media, which has the characteristic to be addressed, or focused on a particular group of people with similar peculiarities, is the activity of Events.

The conceptualization of events is large and complex, not limited to a single definition for your full understanding, because due to the wide connection stocks in its structuring and planning, today became the greed of various service areas such as Marketing, Management and tourism, and science itself the Media, enabling several contextualization totally correct and related.

The epicenter Event attendance is the grouping of people gathered at a particular physical location, environment and time, where through a methodical planning all participants will be tuned to the same interest, with something in common, at least in that particular period. The conceptualization of events presented by Giacaglia (2003, p.3): Meetings created in order to expand the sphere of human relationships, both in the spheres family and at work, school and leisure activities ... main characteristic is providing an extraordinary opportunity to meet people with a specific purpose, which is the main theme ... and the justification of its realization. There is a sharp increase in the integrative sense of great social appeal, in which human differences are respected, but it is precisely the symbiosis of their common interests, the event activity, finds its basis for a full understanding.

According to Meirelles (2003, p.21) event is:
“An institutional, promotional, with the purpose of creating the concept and establish the image of individuals, companies, products, services, ideas, through a previously planned event, to occur at a single time with the closeness between participants, whether physical, whether through technology resources.”

The human element is the root of every event, being an activity that includes the technical efforts and material resources originated and executed by people whose goal is to satisfy goals of the target audience.

Allen et al (2003) define specific events such as celebrations and deliberately planned, created to record special occasions and achieve certain goals, whether social, cultural or corporate. Zanella (2003) told for better sorting and productivity, the events are presented in numerous types or modalities according to their nature, generating factor, goals, qualifications or level of participants, scope, location, etc.

Currently one can account for more than 60 types of events, which in many cases have subtle differences in scope and structure, is vital to achieving successful results, total mastery of this form of classification by the professionals responsible for managing the business. Nakane (2000) uses a metaphor to explain the event activity, showing that it can be considered a work of art as sublime as a form of expression, induces humans to deep reflections, awakens sensations, thrills and also motivates. The more talent, creativity, imagination, effort and dedication of time, the greater its efficiency and effectiveness. Logical that an event not only works with the emotional side, it also includes the rational side, dominating especially some types of events.

But unlike the classic works of art, its creators did not pursue community acceptance, because the goal was to inflate his own ego. In events, customer satisfaction side (participants that is your target audience) will by extension achieve customer expectations primary (the contractor / event promoter) - and hence the manager of the event (the organizer / director .) The creator of events does not work for your own satisfaction, he extrapolates individualism starting to generate links to the receivers of their work.

Another feature of the event activity contrary to art, with respect to its frequency, while a work can become eternal, the events - a most remarkable are his productions - will have a limited duration to the time scheduled for execution , and you can extend your recall by guidelines that can turn it into something pure enchantment and magic. The resumption of the studies of hospitality in the mid-twentieth century expressed the latent need of man to rescue the real nature of human relationships, in which the harmony of the collective welfare should be your goal, finding fertile ground in traditional physical means of achieving the events, ie, in the presence way.

However, in line with the advancement of technology of the XXI century, the realization of virtual events, , on the unit web platforms are on the rise, showing a specificity own monitoring focused on human evolution.
Evolutionary Aspects of the Activity and Worldwide Events in Brazil

The evolution of activity events occurred in parallel with the development of humanity itself, since its beginnings more times already used the special events, initially without a professional plan, meeting the intrinsic needs of a particular group.

There are records that after a few million years the fruit, leaves and grains, the prehistoric man began developing methods of fighters, introducing their food meats, primarily through hunting circumstantial, ie individual. In the middle Paleolithic era (200,000 to 40,000 BC) slaughter concentrated on large animals - bears, rhinos and elephants - the aspect of collective action overcoming individualism, according to studies presented by Flandrin (et al 1998). The author also presents information on Upper Paleolithic perpetuated community organizing regiments with socioeconomic informal, that grouped several families to take care of large herds of animals towards traps collectively assembled.

These data together intensifying the interaction between human tribes that did not have any allowed the food obtained was shared by all, for the use of hunting would be complete without chances that the food went into rapid decomposition, generating even a way to ensure their future survival, as with the social ties established unconsciously already practicing the theory of reciprocity, supported by a tripod - to give, receive and reciprocate - and then be rewarded by the generosity offered.

In the year 776 BC was the first recorded Olympic Games. This special event was held every four years and showed high content of divine rituals. The popularity of the Olympic Games was perpetuated throughout the ancient world for a long time, but in 393 BC, the 293 th Olympiad was prevented by decree of the Roman Emperor Heodosius I, who had forbidden all worship of idols in temples.

The festivals of the ancient Saturnalia - which served as the inspiration for the popular festival called Carnival - is also considered as an important milestone in the evolution of events. Festivities were organized to honor Saturn, the God of Agriculture, demonstrating the desires, hopes and cultural traditions of a region in periods of land preparation to receive new fruit or crop production. The Carnival of today is a celebration that combines parades, decorations, folk festivals and beverages, commonly kept in Catholic countries the week before Lent.

The strengthening of Christianity in the Middle Ages and the ticket, with the proliferation of trade, brought humanity's full economic and social development, resulting in a greater need for meetings, which encouraged the circulation of the participants, a determinant for the emergence and further development of the Tourism Event. As Mathias (2002) religious events, such as councils, theater performances and exhibition fairs and product sales were the types of events greater interest and achievement in this period.

Strong (2004) propagates the Catholic Church itself, through the Gospels, in a natural and casual approach, encourages well-being among the guests, considering the numerous human encounters as a means of engendering the bond of brotherhood and coexistence.
With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, sought new markets integration and intellectual exchange was a relentless pursuit, allowing the execution of technical and scientific events, in addition to enhancing the continuity of trade fairs.

The emergence of the first pavilion and exhibition in the world was the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, England, built in 1851, using materials bold for its time, such as glass, iron, steel and concrete of a single time. This innovative architectural design inspired other towns to invest in adequate infrastructure to host exhibitions and trade fairs, as in New York, Paris and Vienna. According to Canton (2002) in 1895 was founded the first structure for capturing events through outreach strategies of a city, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, in Detroit, a city that was undergoing financial difficulties and sought to resume its growth by investing in branch meetings between traders.

After a thousand years, the Olympic Games return with the same splendor this time seeking global integration among peoples through the practice of various sports. The promoter of the first Olympic Games of the XIX century was the Baron de Coubertin, who chose the city of Athens for the first version of the event of the modern era.

Another sporting event worldwide projection was created in 1930: the World Cup, an event type, called championship, in which previously ranked football teams in regional tournaments across the continents, competing matches among themselves as sweepstakes and subsequent classifications.

The Brazil - new country, discovered in 1500 - already had records that the first inhabitants - before the arrival of Portuguese ships - held celebrations, especially related to nature, because the Indians had animism religion as polytheistic (worshipped various elements habitat). Later with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family, the nation has indeed started its evolution in Event Marketing, through the trade fairs win new status as heretofore were held precariously and archaic.

In 1908, the pavilion shows the Red Beach, a National Exhibition was held, making it a landmark for the segment in the country, as idealized in the manner of the great Universal exhibition, planned in several countries.

Another important date was in 1922, when the centenary of the independence of the country, when it was designed to implement a Centennial International Exhibition, attracting numerous visitors coming from countries like Argentina, Portugal, United States, France, Mexico and many others.

The great national hero of the field events, Caio de Alcântara Machado presented to the market in 1958, the First Auto Show on national lands, following other innovative special events such as the Hall of Child and Housewares Fair.

Despite first editions generate deficits, the owner of the Alcantara Machado Trade Fairs and Promotions, affectionately called Caio not faltered and gave up their beliefs, continuing its investments, because he was certain that this market was extremely successful and that in the near future, the Brazil would discover his vocation for holding events.
But it was in 1992 that Brazil owes his ordeal was actually was able to host international mega events scale, when the city of Rio de Janeiro was chosen to host the World Conference on the Environment, known as Rio 92, gathering more 140 heads of state in 13 days. From 03 to 14 June, no gravity or negative circumstance was reported in the city, at a time when the country was going through a delicate moment for not collaborating at all with the release of a good image (civil violence, allegations of government corruption and a country stagnated in the index of industrial development and economic).

In recent years, Brazil has been highlighted with the constant ICCA - International Congress and Convention Association - the most important entity in the segment of business tourism and events. Founded in 1963, the association is responsible for managing the largest and most respected database of world events. Annually publishes the ranking of the countries that hosted events in the base year prior to the announcement date.

In 2012, Brazil reached the seventh place, leaving the rarefied TOP 10, with the completion of 360 international events on national lands, which represents a growth of 10% over the period 2011.

The movement of economic transformations - subsequently reflected in the social sphere - known as Globalization has introduced a new order production and trade worldwide. The competition became increasingly macro, requiring investments in intellectual capital and technology.

Companies that have always sought increasingly agility, productivity, quality and market share - English expression meaning market share, showing the share of sales of a product that each manufacturer has in the consumer society - with this new challenge and structural economic forms needed to find more accurate differentiation. Events with its proposed service to niche specific groups was envisioned as a tool of spreading image, corporate brand and / or product, the institutional promotion of services and / or products.

Currently in the mix of instruments used by companies to communicate with their consumers, the publicity and advertising that hitherto had supremacy over other tools such as direct marketing, merchandising, promotion, point-of-sale, among others, has divided attention with the activity of events, according to a survey of Promotional Marketing Association, stands as the second item of investment of the communication plan of a company and is projected as a strategy of continued growth in consumer companies in the country, in order to approach with the public at a lower cost when compared to the amounts necessary to produce commercials and advertisements.

With high indispensability to relate not so massive, but customized with its stakeholders, modernly called stakeholders (stakeholders), the event thread stands as one of the most important components of integrated marketing communication and the current contemporary setting. Mainly due to its characteristic of contacts, to be more engaging and enabling a possible integration not only physical, but above concepts, values, principles and solutions. According to Perez (2002), the measure increases the interactivity between high tech and everyday life, society seeks to find new and more flexible ways to access information.
Following this direction, a new type of events begins to gain more space and adhesion, particularly in the international arena: are virtual events.

**The Virtual Events**

The definition of virtual events is partly enters the concepts already provided initially, which differs is the way in which these special events are conducted. As a means, it is understood the environment in which the events are held, classifying them as physical or virtual events virtual specifically addressing the environment used is the web platform, today popularly common in almost all regions of the world.

As Perez (2002) since 1993, the reality of videoconferencing was already becoming popular in the corporate environment. Currently software, mini cameras, graphical interfaces, among other items, are now commonly available, allowing, among other things, that professionals around the world can discuss plans, conduct business meetings or even visit international fairs.

This includes the possibility that it was labeled a new digital media collaborative, a concept that has emerged over the 80s and requires a great agility in business communications. Interactivity in virtual events is its main feature, even excluding the eye contact, face-to-face. Initially used only by large corporations due to the high investments necessary for its implementation, virtual events currently democratized its use by the significant decrease of the costs involved in its planning and the demand itself can reduce expenses in the holding of events, since there is no direct implication of corporate costs related to geographical displacements, lodging and meals.

In times of "savings", with all the recent economic turmoil, many companies held a realigning their strategies and particularly their operating expenses, as a result bringing perceived the introduction and / or increased use of virtual events as an alternative to face events, getting, well, keep your goals connectivity, sharing, learning, research and wellness.

In a survey conducted by Forbes in 2009 with 760 executives from small, medium and large companies around the world, rose to 58% of the interviewed group witnessed a breakthrough of performing routine virtual events in your enterprise.

Incidentally, the year 2009 was considered as the milestone consolidator relevance of virtual events as a trend in the corporate market internationally.

Virtual events can offer a diversified portfolio for participants to connect and communicate. As main tools are the webcasts - including live performances or pre-recorded, online chats or discussion forums with full availability of interaction with the speakers or facilitators who are available for questions and answers at the end of the session expository. Another activity that has gained participants in virtual events is the use of their own social networks to expand contacts and then continue the discussions and reflections initiated the event, and therefore, the life cycle of the special event periods.

Another feature touted by the use of virtual events is to broaden the scope of participation of people, not only in terms of quantity, but mostly on a global scale crop diversification.
This specificity was part of a survey led - also in 2009 - the Event Marketing Institute, which showed 10 Insights regarding this new medium for conducting events. Among the topics that were listed highlight the latent need to keep the audience's attention, which can provide more properties distractions and divert your focus, requiring focused planning in the audience and their real intentions, besides providing scenarios and lay-outs attractive to boost the motivation of their concentration.

With consolidated research by Forbes, that same item was reinforced as 58% of respondents assumed that often perform other tasks parallel to their participation in virtual events (browsing the internet, checking emails, reading other materials and different reports, etc).

This information is extremely valuable for the purpose of professional improvement of Event Organisers (PCOs) in order that these challenges will become more common and will require appropriate and effective solutions.

This scenario depicts a reality already in vogue in the contemporary world, but how is Brazil in this context? Virtual Events are already a fact or are in the category of Trend?

METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the size of familiarization, size and scope of virtual events in the country, carried out a field survey in the period of 10 to 23 April 2012, through a technological platform with a questionnaire with 05 questions 03 closed and semi-open questions covering to obtain the behavior of respondents, whose profile was identified as professionals of events and the hospitality of the city of São Paulo.

Attempt was also made an analysis of secondary data, represented by previous research, but we found no studies directed to this level, the fact that even with a universe limited to 86 people, collected information is extremely valuable to the early studies on the theme.

The number of experiences as participants in a virtual event is only 25%, showing that the universe has this experience is still very restricted. When asked about the organization of a virtual event, the number gets bigger and projection indicates that 92% of professionals have not worked in the planning of this modality.

Figure 01 - Graph You’ve participated in a virtual event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25,6%</td>
<td>74,4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 02 - Graph Have you organized a virtual event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8,1%</td>
<td>91,9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Author
When asked about what are the main attractions of the choice of conducting a virtual event, respondents scored the first item the fact that such events generate a further optimization of time, followed by 59% I have declared to be the absence of dislocations and only subsequently the item economy was cited, with 50% of the votes. These levels are very similar to those obtained with the research FORBES, reversing only the third position, since in international research, the economy was the second item, leaving the question of shifts in third position.

Under the vision of those surveyed also were awarded the characterization greater diversification of participants and greater seal of internationality of the event. When asked about the perceived disadvantages, respondents mostly guided the lack of contact over approximate the participants, followed by ease of loss of concentration, with 54% of opinions. Fact winning similarity search the Event Marketing Institute.

Other visions of respondents included the fragility of thematic and organizational reliability and also the difficulties of a greater commitment from the audience.

As the research developed by FORBES in 2009, has envisioned a strong clue to events that worked equalization content with virtual classroom, a kind of mix or hybrid (face event with a lineup that also includes a virtual platform, designating as a true symbiosis), called hybrid events, research on the national scene also asked whether the respondents had already told some experience in this category and the numbers keeps the distance with the trend that already applies internationally, as only 20% of the public has.

When the inquiry focuses on the figure of respondents as professional event organizers, this recent classification and emerges as international trend, it becomes even more distant from the Brazilian reality, with only 08% of the accumulated experience.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

Analyzing the results drawn from research on Virtual Events applied at the national level, it is clear that Brazil is not fully inserted into this new reality when compared with other countries that already use this medium for holding events.

Although not the preference of most people, as evidence of Research Forbes, which showed that only 16% of the public have the preference virtual events, compared with 84% who prefer face events, this new type of events should be considered, can not underestimate their strength and their potential, since technology is essential in every business and needs to be optimized.

This research has national significance as the issue has not been studied in depth and demonstrates value to the world market, since Brazil, now regarded as a country of projection, it attracts investors around the world increasingly needs to be known, with their culture and identity.

According to Professor Sergio Amadeu in a story published in the magazine and the SESC SP, "The Internet has inverted the communication ecosystem. The hard part is not to talk. Now the big problem is to be heard. However, when someone says something that everyone wanted to hear, immediately forms a wave in the ocean informational and can generate concrete actions in the streets, in markets, stock exchanges"
Undoubtedly, virtual events exhibit this vector greater democratization, and an action considered hospitable, regarding the characteristic of greater inclusion and participatory tune with new technological paradigms. According to Perez (2002), the twenty-first century will not be the spectator was the man of the technology, but the century of man inevitably interacts with it. And events earn another modality for interaction, not forgetting the technological horizon of virtual universe only accomplishes what has been programmed, set by human wit, since the man will always be the great character of the events ... whether presencial, virtual or hybrid.

REFERENCES


