



**ULBS**

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## SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AS CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

Paradigm Shift in Communicating Cultural Organizations and Events

Doctoral student:

**CRISTINA-MARIA GHINEA**

Scientific coordinator:

**PROF. Dr.CRISTIAN RADU, Ph.D**

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Doctoral thesis entitled „, THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AS CULTURAL REVOLUTION. Paradigm Shift in Communicating Cultural Organizations and Events” contains the following key words: marketing, communication, PR, performing arts, storytelling, brand, strategy, target audience, cultural revolution, digital revolution

## 3. INTRODUCTION

In my research I analysed the context and environment in which the marketing, communication and PR specialists who work in promotion of performing arts, have to find the strategies and right networks to reach the target audience. I searched and identified those elements, which put head to head, fulfil the communication process and bring thus the benefits from the force of communication, when we are talking of performing arts.

The performing arts use creativity in a process where the imagination helps transform into action or concretely an emotion, a thought or words. Artists, who are directors, choreographer, scenographers, composers, actors, dancers, painters or singers use their imagination and creativity to express their states of mind and thoughts. Arts work with the creator's soul and the consumer's soul. In arts are illustrated elements that we, the people, know from daily reality, even if the imagined form is abstract or minimalistic, even if symbols or concepts from various cultures are used.

When we speak of promotion of performing arts, it is only natural that the marketing, communication and PR strategies and actions are in line with the promoted field, to contribute to the information, training and development of audience, but also to bring extra value by creativity of approaches.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is called the speed century. But perhaps it would be more suitable the information century or the technology explosion century. The capacity to make things more easily and efficiently, to transmit and share with an unlimited number of people the ideas, work, image, our thoughts: the "super-powers" of the people of 21st century are possible by technology. The Internet has created a true virtual world, with plenty of things and very populated.

In order to do marketing nowadays, specialists have to understand very well "what catches the audience", how the mentalities of people have evolved and what weight should fill the online in the marketing mix. Although the entire strategy is influenced by the budget we have available, we have to be aware that we live in digital era – the place where another world developed, in which we live and we all access.

Hence, people have adjusted fast. We integrated technology in our lives and with the "population" of online area grew in parallel the interest of marketing departments to promote themselves in this area. The target audience has moved there. The studies performed by the International Telecommunications Union, specialized body of United Nations, shows that in the year 2014, at world level there were almost 3 billion Internet users and in January 2019 the number grew to 5.1 billions. According to the data of National Institute of Statistics, in 2018, the number of Internet users in Romania reached 11.7 million persons with age between 16 and 74 years old.

Technology has changed our life, our thinking way, the method of approaching things, the communication and perception method, gave us a new optic and gave us the chance to connect, wherever we may be. Nowadays, the Internet is no longer an unknown, an innovation, a trifle, but became an important communication channel, a cord which ties us together, became a way of acting and learning. People are anchored in online environment for personal reasons and their daily activity depends on the existence of Internet in many trades, thus their receptivity in this area can be very large. Across time, however, the experts in the field studied the behaviour of users and developed certain techniques which teach us when and how to launch certain messages in the virtual environment to have visibility and wide coverage. Also, we have a lot of information about the content that the message should have. On the other hand, there is a population who does not

have Internet connection, but we can reach them by technology, by television or radio. Therefore, technology has changed the face of things and everything evolves so fast that we came to make and print 3D pictures, we can speak with another voice on telephone, the smart telephones and smart television sets are so complex that most of people have at least a function they have not discovered yet in the products they own and use every day, and the list can go on. It is not easy to keep the pace with the accelerated pace of discoveries and possibilities when it comes to marketing, because the final purpose is to make everything more efficiently, with less resources and a wider spread, but this involves first of all good knowledge of technology and the method of functioning of each communication instrument and we understand the opening that comes with technology.

Anyone finds on Internet what they are looking for, for this reason, it is so used by everybody and for this reason the institution search there the target audience. The communication channels in this environment are very diversified; from Facebook to Youtube, Twitter, *blogs*, websites, online newspapers and the list can go on and on.

In this work I analysed the way in which we integrated technology in our lives and how much it influences us and we highlighted the element *promotion* of marketing mix because it became a true challenge for the marketing and communication departments of institutions (in this case artistic) who have to study and experiment a multitude of techniques to be able to choose what helps them most in communication and promotion. On the other hand, this is the time for the cultural operators, especially those from public environment, to make a marketing mix at another level, to face the competition, but to take into account own possibilities.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS IN THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

##### **PART I - REAL TIME CULTURAL MARKETING OR THE NEW DIGITAL PARADIGM. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.**

In the first part of this thesis I sought to clarify the concepts I considered relevant in promotion and communication of performing arts, the main concepts with which the professionals in the field work, evolution of environments, communication channels, from tradition to digital, with the new communication methods developed by online environment, and development of behaviours of users with accessibility.

In order to analyse the communication possibilities in the promotion of performing arts and the most efficient way in which the professionals in the field and the event organisers can make and implement their strategies by maximizing the results, taking into account the new information and communication technologies, but also the constant use of Internet by a large number of people (the number is on the increase), it is essential to understand the principles behind the technological and social evolution, but also the specificity of the field we are talking about.

The advantage in promotion and communication of show art events is that we do not have to find outside the elements which generate an emotion because these products are built around it. The challenge becomes the identification of adequate communication pathways not to alter the value of emotion and to succeed in giving the viewers both the *chest* and *keys* for elevation of vision and understanding of culture. The fight is fought for the training and education of viewers in the direction of opening the appetite for art and culture.

The responsibility of cultural institutions is vast and includes issues relating to education, social environment and recreation. Let us not forget that they are addressed in general to the persons over 16 years old, and a show art festival can include events for all ages. Every year, for the existing audience, we have to keep their interest, a new generation is added who has to discover the pleasure of being consumer of cultural events and last but not least, we have the people from the target groups who have not developed so far a preference for the consumption of culture and artistic acts. Full halls confirm the quality of the acts presented and the interest of the public for the events carried out. Between *awareness*, *box office* and *sponsorship*, the promotion and communication of cultural events has to contribute by content, to the development of imagination and the formation of taste in viewers. The creation of loyal spectators, fans for certain cultural events, a community who increases the expectation for the moment of carrying out the event is important.

This is achieved by offering not to be missed experiences for the public, which will connect it emotionally to the event or company/institution if it had repeated experiences. The perception of carrying out an activity such as going to theatre changed over time, and it came to compete with a very wide and diversified range of activities, from 3D cinemas to bowling or arc shooting, in times when the leisure time is very limited for everybody. The entertainment variants are as many as the persons who have to choose are younger.

When the competition has higher promotion budgets and more human resources to conceive and implement its strategies, a variant can be to let aside the rules and tactics used so far and to find our own variant of expression, by taking into account only the perception way of target audience and the specificity of what we promote. The implementation and measurement of results are just as important phases such as the correct conception of strategies. The wrong strategy is a point which cuts from the start the chances of success, the wrong implementation (unmonitored, unadjusted mid-way where applicable) cancels a strategy however correct it may be, and the not measuring of results will lead us to keeping wrong conceptions about audience, which we will take into account for the next strategy, and thus, in cascade, errors will follow in chain.

More and more people are connected to Internet and purchase various devices depending on their needs, to access whenever it is necessary or whenever they want the online environment. In this environment varied communication channels have gradually developed, populated with people with common interests (chat forums, blogs, vlogs). On the other hand, the social media gather on the same platform millions of people who build inside the network groups on the criterion of common interests, form their circle of friends depending on the people they know from real life and those they meet online and are from the circles of friends of acquaintances or compatible with the user from various points of view.

This means that we have the online environment populated with Internauts and for the people who communicate artistic and cultural events, this environment is very tempting. They can bring the information they want to communicate to the attention of a large number of people from their target groups, but the challenge is high, and the efforts must be constant, first of all, because of intense competition, and then because the number of those with whom they interact is large. The more prompt are the reactions which come from both directions (sender-receiver) Cu, the more efficient the communication is, the image created is better, and the chances that the conversion rate is higher are growing.

The show art events are experiences which people can choose to live outdoors, for the most of them participation is a recreational activity. Thus, they compete with all the other things that people can choose to their detriment. The online environment, sometimes overcrowded with advertising messages, makes the aggressive promotion methods not work, most of Internauts ignore directly the pop-up messages, for example or renounce directly from accessing a website which contains too many advertising ads.

The variety of communication channels developed in online environment, the increasing number of users, the frequency by which they access this environment and the time they spend there made the importance of online communication be higher and higher. The presence and communication of brands, public persons, show institutions and cultural and artistic events in online environment is very important and can be extremely efficient if it is well done.

The correct application of functioning principles of this environment attracts a positive and transparent image of what we want to promote; customers, sponsors or people who want to participate in the projects proposed; various partnerships; credibility for our audience; new opportunities of developing the project proposed. The main advantage of online environment remains the fact that we can transmit instantly and simultaneously a message to a very large number of people, and certain things can become viral. We have to mention that we can transmit messages to a smaller or larger number of people, in target, we can make our message reach directly the targeted persons. In online environment we can juggle with communication channels, the information flow, the geographical areas where we want to transmit the message, we can personalize the campaigns for men and women, for adults and children, for people who are in the proximity of the place where an event happens or for the international audience. The online environment can allow us all these things and can offer us against a fee, a higher visibility than we have ever dreamed of.

At the same time, the marketing, communication and PR campaigns became more complex with the population of online environment and with the appearance of various technological devices. They are conceived so that the messages are adjusted to each communication channel, they are built depending on the rules of each platform, its functionality and the online behaviours of the users from that virtual space.

Beyond the set of standard information that needs to be communicated on each channel, the necessary minimum for the meeting between spectator and event should take place – name of event, date, time and place of event – it is very important that the messages are unitary, from the same family, from a common belief of the members of the organization and communication team, the strategy. In order to maintain a correct and real time relationship with the wide audience, the communication team has to be included in the information chain of the whole operational activity of the institution/organisers.

Another advantage of online environment is the possibility to promote the events with reduced financial resources. We need a professional creative team who can make and implement the marketing, communication and PR strategy. The technical devices and software they have available, the promptness, spontaneity, adaptability, availability of time and constant analysis of online environment in view of understanding in time the trends are vital aspects on which the success of campaigns and image depends. Above all these issues we have to take into account that a community is rendered loyal, is maintained and developed by a constant quality communication.

The traditional media, sometimes the term used is the *media*, represents all the mass information sources and became of wider scope with the development of the first technological inventions dedicated to communication. Any form of mass communication used before the appearance of digital media is considered the traditional media. The most widespread channels of the traditional media are the printed press, the radio, television and cinema, which are disseminated with different frequency, in variable paces, depending on ages, the technological development and the specificity of each communication channel.

It has taken long until the mankind evolved sufficiently to have the data and necessary means for the invention of the first technological devices which facilitate communication. Then, they developed fast by inspiring the invention of others, and from the appearance of Internet everything became of wider scope. The technological *Big Bang* is in full expansion, the projects they are working on now and the research that scientists do in various fields (medical, automobile, robotics, astronomy, artificial intelligence, quantic physics etc.) suggest that we are far from stagnating and not being impressed by the performance brought by technology.

Marketing is a challenge, taking into account the variety of services and providers of services. Those who can find the most efficient and original solutions for outlet, communication and promotion have the best chances of maintenance and success. A true challenge is the way in which the marketing team of a cultural institution has to find balance and originality of campaign, with very limited time and staff resources, so that it can deal with the continuous changes of online environment, and competition. It is like a game with changing rules in which the first who feel the new trends are winners. The development of online environment has not ended and it has a route with constant changes.

In the context of a (virtual) environment in continuous transformation and a cultural sector which is so important for the development of communities, it is vital that the cultural institutions

adapt to requirements, to exist in online environment and be the promoters of creative marketing strategies. But because there are persons from the target group for the performing arts who do not use the Internet or the new technologies, it also needs the traditional communication channels: the printouts (flyers, posters, articles in newspapers and magazines) or radio and television. For these channels the variants are diversified, and the quality of content depends on the creativity of teams.

The more and more trained behaviours of Internauts determine the programmers to conceive new functions and utilities, in line with the devices from which we access the online environment. Practically the mentalities and habits of use of users, technological innovations, the development of online environment and the marketing, communication and PR strategies are mutually influenced, modelling one another.

The users can promote their work, own image, ideas, can find communities with whom they share the same values and beliefs and can unite more easily for certain purposes. On the one hand, we lost certain interhuman capacities, there was a division at a certain level, but on the other hand, the Internet has created a bridge between us, connected us however far we may be physically from the others, in the virtual world we all access.

The "new" world has become a wider and more populated territory, more and more easier to use and adjust to individual needs. People already know how to use the new technologies by instinct. They do not need to learn how to use the new telephone, they will intuitively know how to use it. For the marketing people, the virtual environment is a large playground, but we have to know how to juggle with the instruments (toys) we have to persuade, to transmit exactly what we want, to whom and when we want, for the purpose of increasing the conversion rate. Why the comparison with a game? Because this is exactly what it is, a place where we try, discover and find combinations of images and texts, adapted, formulated for groups we want to reach. We can promote the same show, by messages at different hours, on different social media, with different images for men and women, for teenagers or children. Therefore, the target area by target groups can be achieved against a fee in most cases, by different categories, on very small niches.

In order not to create a utopic situation, all these opportunities together with the fact that the world around us is connected, have a reverse side: the overcrowdiness and excess of information, correct or wrong, true or not. In an archi-full framework of information, which is updated in real time and which informs millions of users, including by alerts in the second when the change was made, you have to know and fee very well the rules of the game. The marketing

specialists have to form a very good intuition, to feel constantly the directions of the trend. Online environment is a cameleonic environment. Its rules are constantly changed because it is used by millions of people, with different needs, mentalities and approaches.

In online environment, the users take many decisions of the moment. The marketing and communication experts who can draw the attention in a few seconds, who can awaken the interest, who can generate constantly the adequate and sufficiently interesting content to keep fans close, those who spend sufficiently long time by answering to the reactions, messages, comments and desires of those with whom they interact, by monitoring the behaviour and reactions of the audience from virtual space, can tell the trends the first and are winners. This involves that the marketing and communication specialists have to keep up with the changing rules of the online environment.

Things have evolved so far that we are in a stage in which we cannot almost keep up with the flow of novelty and information which comes to us. The spreading of traditional devices was crowned by the access to Internet, at wide scale. After billions of people connected, they adapted their lifestyle to it, many of us are connected 24/7, the interest of marketing departments has grown so fat to present more professional the products and services in online environment. It is unconceivable nowadays to sell something and not exist online. In fact, it is no wonder a few years ago the expression "You do not have a Facebook account, you do not exist" was very popular.

The adjustment of tonality, language and approach, in general, is different in online environment depending on the channels used. In a way we write and promote materials on and from the official website of a cultural institution, in another way we write on the official website of Romanian Police and in another way in the social media accounts. The target audience has moved online, is vigilant and very well-informed, and competition is fierce.

The daily use of Internet has influenced and later changed the way of thinking, of approaching things, of solving situations, gave us another opening, made us more confident and feel stronger, gave us the chance to connect from a distance and gave us the framework by which we can make available to others plenty of things by a few clicks.

We self-educated and developed our discernment to filtrate the large flow of information coming from all over the place and gradually developed an immunity to many things from online environment. Many of them, information coming from news, a lot of people are trying to escape by reflex, in the first three seconds, when we open a website – the commercials.

In a framework where the creativity, promptness and transmission of information are the main conditions for power and productivity, the information and communication technologies contribute to the formation of a new type of society. The media history started with the invention of radio, television, the written press and carried out in the pace of needs, evolutions and lately, even the claims relating to form, colour or weight, when it comes to *gadgets*. On the other hand, the digital media history appeared in another context.

If at the appearance of new devices we related to the "new technologies" not long ago, these technologies have altered our reality and gave us other directions. We integrated them in our private life and in the fields of activity and moreover, our comfort depends on them. The expansion of the new technologies is related to the development of software sector and telecommunication sector. In essence, the largest difference between the traditional media and the digital media is that the latter is based on multimedia and interactivity. The devices fulfil many functions quasi-simultaneously. We can read, we can listen to music in parallel, we can search for information or calculate distances, parities, anything. The form and utility of devices is more and more practical, adjusted to needs and the experts in the field are always looking for new solutions, the appearance of a new model comes shortly after the launch of the previous model. The development is very fast also because of intense competition. The "game" exists also on the side of investors and manufacturers.

Both for the promotion in online environment and for the promotion in traditional environment, the marketing, communication and PR teams make strategies adapted to the specificity of these environments and target groups they reach through them.

Depending on the year of birth and the historical context and the society in which they grew and were trained, but also the technological evolution, the people who live now on Earth and fall within the main groups of consumers, were divided into six categories: Boomers I – Baby Boomers (1946-1954), Boomers II – Generation Jones (1955-1965), Generation X (1966-1976), Generation Y – Echo Boomers/Millennials (1977-1995), Generation Z (1995-2012) and Generation Alpha (began in 2010).

The 2000s changed the face of online environment, which became furnished with more and more websites and social media. In time, they became more and more complex, both regarding the design and graphics, but also functionality and content.

The social media enjoyed from the start a large popularity because of opportunities they offer the users to make online exchanges, to interact with several persons at once, to have fun, to learn news etc. These exchanges, either we talk of transmission of messages or distribution of links or the sharing of experiences are part of daily triviality for the majority of youth today, but also for a not negligible number of adults and elderly. Each user of social media can express himself/herself freely, can bring the attention of the group of friends to things in which he/she participated, can make live transmissions or can talk about their moods and thoughts.

Web develops the framework for original exchanges, each posting is followed by a series of answers and debates, a visit on the personal profile or a private message. People have started to translate the behaviours of the other users from the signs they give depending on the content and style in which they post messages, how they organise their personal profile, to understand more about the person who intervenes. In many cases, in online environment, people manage to emphasize better certain issues which remain in the shadow in the ordinary society.

Across 2000s, the Internet by blogs and social media has increased the interhuman exchanges, by favouring the conversation with close persons and extension of potential contacts.

Either we block in front of the large flow of postings and do not feel the need to contribute much, by satisfying ourselves with the position of observers or we are moderate in communication of activities and personal experiences, or we cannot take a step without taking a picture and we cannot take off until we give check-in from airport, all can be considered variants which give us certain social behaviours that are completely different from us, the first generation. Always people have connected and kept their connections with others by communication. We share personal experiences or family events, we ask for advice or tell the most trivial matters of actuality, we make comments and we gossip. Transposed on the web, this ordinary sociability is from a certain point of view, the extension at wide scale, with the mention that the Internet makes us visible before a large number of people and keeps the trace of our multiple conversations.

The social media are very accessible to the wide audience, does not require training and the programmers who conceived them make efforts so that they are more convenient to use. This overlaps with the already practised intuition of the youth to adapt to the use of new technologies and user interfaces. On the social media the flow of posts and information is random for the user. When we access an account on a network, we never know what we will see next, it is wide place with a variety of proposals and subjects. The human body, the self-portraits and the daily activity

are the main elements we find constantly on the social media. Christopher Lasch speaks of this obsession of self-image and continuous search for recognition that he formulated by the syntagma: "narcissistic culture"<sup>1</sup>. Our online identity reflects our own visibility strategies and reputation.

Considering the frequency and diversity of reasons for which the users access the Internet, the applications they use, accounts and profiles they hold, we understand the volume of personal information that Internauts constantly provide. Here both valuable data "are hiding" which are definitory for the realization of strategy and for identification of adequate channels and for evaluation of results. Because we know exactly who we address to, we identify the messages, the tone, channels, content and campaigns we expose in the online environment directly to those interested or those who have all the data to be interested, in order to achieve the results proposed. In the marketing campaigns, these data and technology have helped the specialists carry out personalized campaigns.

It is clear that in online environments, visibility has a very large potential, but the competition is fierce. The possibility to choose in detail the characteristics of persons from the target groups emphasizes once again the importance of knowing the profiles of consumers for rendering efficient the campaigns and obtaining results.

As for the cultural and artistic events, it is essential that the organisers manage to render loyal the audience. The events represent, first of all, an experience for participants and this is the main reason for which they make the decision to purchase a ticket, to reserve an hourly interval or to take a few days off to participate in event. In the end, they can draw the conclusions and can say if it was worth it or not, if they are going to repeat the experience or not. What the organisers do between these stages, from the announcement of event until it ends contributes to the increase of interest, influences the decisions of people and the general impression which can assure their comeback. Each individual can relate to a certain aspect from the offer proposed by the event, the participation decision is not taken for the same reason, but a unique experience can bring you fans, satisfied participants and automatically, visibility.

Thus, for a show art event carried out in a show room, the experience begins from the foyer or from the entrance – we will see in the next chapter, that it begins a long time beforehand, but here we are talking about the people who definitely got to participate. From this point, the marketing, communication and PR experts can think things which complete or support the idea of

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<sup>1</sup> Rémy Rieffel, *Révolution numérique, révolution culturelle?*, Gallimard, 2014, pag. 51

event and which add extra elements to experience. A person who comes to see a "random" theatre show, influenced, for example, by the group of friends, can be so pleasantly impressed that he/she comes back even if he/she had no intention until then.

In case of a show institution, the emphasis should be placed on its image so that it becomes a quality brand. The more a show institution is recognized and validated by a larger number of people for the events presented, the more encouraged the spectators will be to purchase tickets and view shows regardless of the title. If an institution is recognized internationally (see the Sydney Opera) it becomes an objective for tourists, as compulsory experience, it becomes a *must see* and a landmark for the reputable event organisers. Even if a part of tourists who get there take a picture of the famous building, the entire promotion of the place maintains visibility and increases the value in collective mentalities.

A festival in exchange, and in this work we analysed mainly this category of events, comes with a much wider offer of activities which offer a wide range of experiences, and the general atmosphere created by participants, encouraged by sponsors and mediated by organisers, makes them spend a quality time which will make them come back. The fans and participants who had a positive experience in cultural and artistic events in which they participated contribute substantially to promotion, being a source of inspiration both for the organisers and for the potential audience.

If the marketing and communication agencies work with many teams to make a story (a concept) for the product they want to promote on the market and then to exploit it to stir the emotion, the cultural events come automatically with this key resource. The events of this kind work with emotion and the story. Emotion makes us react, act and thus we make the conversion. Therefore, the stirring of emotions, the formation of the connection begins when we start the communication of event.

People function for emotions, for the states of mind they obtain when they do something: they want a good car because this will give them another status in society or in their group of friends, they want modern clothes because this will give them an attitude, they want to participate in a cultural event because this will give them a state of satisfaction, will make them think, enjoy or relax. And they will be willing to pay for all these things as long as their needs are satisfied.

The challenge of marketing specialists, in this case for cultural event, is to determine them to choose to see a show that evening to the detriment of other activities or events which happen in

parallel. The competition is fierce, because a theatre for instance, rivals not just with the other theatres from the same city, but also with cinema, with cafes, sports halls, philharmonics, television or XBOX.

In an age of visibility culture, the marketing specialists focus on the realization of the ideal strategy for each campaign they carry out. We know what we want to cook and we choose the ingredients and quantities depending on how many and what kind of people we invite for dinner. After the realization of marketing strategy, we can conceive the marketing mix, by choosing the optimal channels for the campaign so that we achieve our purpose. The right communication channels are chosen to complete each other. The message has to reach many times a larger number of persons from the ideal categories, by using a minimum of resources, especially financial resources. This is the challenge. The emotion we identify, the strategy we make, but the limitation comes in most cases for financial reasons.

The biggest challenge for the marketing specialists is to take into account all the elements in realization of marketing mix, from the target audience/audiences to the specificity of event and the totality of communication channels depending on the resources they can involve. Among the elements that they have to take into account are theorised by Philip Kotler, as basic: PRODUCT, PLACEMENT, PRICE, PROMOTION. These are the 4P valid for products and services, important landmarks in the marketing mix. All of them influence the audience in making the decision to participate. The marketing department of an institution tends to extract and emphasize what persuades the fastest and definitely from the whole they present. For example, for the performing arts, the "P"s, regardless of the number we should take into account are the elements we have to analyse to offer a unique experience to spectators. With the diversification of services, we can take into account at least three other elements: PARTICIPANTS, PRESENCE (physical proof) and OFFERING PROCESS OF A SERVICE in order to have a correct overview which reflects as best as possible the reality and all the stages an individual goes through until the consummation of experience.

The opinions about the mix are divided, some specialists consider that the 3P can be treated individually, others consider that they are included in the first 4P. It is certain that the extended variant taken into account from the start made in many cases the difference between competitors when they analysed the results. The marketing teams are free to imagine, depending on the activity of brands for which they work and the services offered, what issues should be more analysed.

Practically the show experience for cultural events is the brand experience. Therefore, the future belongs, in an age of transparency of instant communication online, to those devoted to consumers, in case of cultural events, the spectators. The expectations of customers grow each time and above the product or service, the realization of good relations – personalized, when applicable – between the spectator (customer) and organiser (supplier) is essential.

The Internet, by social media, has opened the door to customers, spectators, consumers. Many times, they are those who look for us. This is an extraordinary occasion to come in direct contact with those interested in the activity we carry out, to connect more closely with them and to give them reasons to stay close. By the social media and the profiles, we all have in this virtual world, we can function, we can have access to information and to very personal things of their life, which we would not have learned otherwise.

The dialogue, the opening and creativity allow us to make this audience loyal, to offer them interesting, captivating information, which would make them want to come back not just on the page, but also in the show hall. The experience of spectator does not mean just what he sees on stage, it means the whole comfort given to him, the atmosphere from the foyer, the smell, the attitude of staff, all the related services which can be offered to him – a bottle of water, a fan. His expectations exist anyway, each time and it is sufficient that he gives his trust to purchase a ticket for an experience, not knowing exactly what he will consume. Nothing is tangible, he cannot "test" beforehand what is offered to him, thus we are directly liable for the image that the spectator creates in his head and the expectations he comes with. All this refers to the strategy adopted and the approach chosen.

Quality has to increase both for the service offered, but also for the relationship of institution with the spectator. The frame in which he comes must be warm and pleasant, and if the audience has founded suggestions for us, it is very important to take them into account as much as possible. In order to have a growth from this point of view, we have to take into account the new "indicators": "STAFF, PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES (which can facilitate or make more difficult the specific activity of employees) and the physical proofs (which can optimize the communication process between the suppliers and the customers)."<sup>2</sup>

Also, the marketing plan includes a series of elements which, analysed together, offer an overview from which we can extract both the problems we have and the solutions for development.

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<sup>2</sup> Aura Hazotă – <https://aditusvero.wordpress.com/2010/05/11/cei-7-p-mixul-de-marketing-in-servicii/>

Communication involves a road with two directions. Apart from visibility and the prompt transmission of information, dialogue is the most valuable aspect in social media and even its strength. A few years ago, companies and institutions launched promotional messages and analysed the results at the end for conclusions and to correct certain issues in the future. Now, the consumers and spectators have other expectations, the technological development has changed their perception and approach in online environment. This is for the advantage of those who promote. We can learn directly from the source what preferences the viewers have, what they like or do not like, what they want or what improvements can be made.

In essence, marketing remains a challenge by taking into account the variety of services and providers of services. Those who can find the most efficient solutions of outlet, communication and promotion, have the most certain chances of maintenance and success.

If we do not speak of a start, for the marketing people it is very important the way in which the brand is perceived. Recognized in legal terms as "trademark" and taken from English, the word *brand* means *quality*, but also *sign made with the red iron or the printing of a symbol*, in order to establish its belonging.

In the promotion of cultural events, the brand is as important as any product we consume, but the connection is much more delicate and fragile if we do not have a communication sufficiently focused on spectators. If we like the chocolate Milka, we will definitely see all the "mauve areas" from the sweets shelves of the supermarket. Made by a standard recipe, which they use every time, a certain assortment of chocolate will every time have the same taste. In theatre, however, the "assortments" are different – some cultural institutions enjoy a very diversified repertory and as we mentioned, the experience is unique every time, even if we see again the same show. It is important that the events are promoted as realistically as possible, they create the story and the image that helps people form or outline the right expectations. Otherwise, it might be that the disappointment makes them not come back to the show hall.

It is an art to induce the target audience the essence and functionality of a show institution because they have to acquire the opening to participate in very different products, on various themes, some easier, others more difficult, but they are all part of our lives and realities. The communication persons have to be able to extract from each event what is more suitable for its target audience and to help them to form the necessary habits to accept variety, different opinions and different visions.

The people who come to theatre or consume cultural events in general, come to relax in most cases. It is an evening activity, does not last long, can be practised during the week and in weekend, by themselves or with the group of friends and moreover, they have the chance to start over again with fresh forces, charged with energy. They are ideal situations, there are certain shows which *sell themselves*. What do we do when we have a psychological theatre show, very complex, maybe tiresome, with a lot of text and many symbols hidden in scenery, costumes and gestures? Its success depends also on the marketing people in terms of audience perception, once its expectations are correctly set up. Coming back to experience, we have to put ourselves in the place of spectator and guess his interests, give him the right keys.

To the virtual world we always connect with an account. Either we are identified by IP, or we use the email address or the account of a social media, for those who collect the data things are clear, information comes and connects. When we speak of "those who collect data" we do not refer to a number of individuals who do that. The performance is sufficiently high so that they use the artificial intelligence for the analysis of a high volume of data.

*Cookies* from websites collect this kind of data. Let us take the following example: of we search for a plane ticket to a destination from a certain area of the globe, even if we do not buy it, for a good period of time we will receive in the social media advertisements from airline companies, accommodation offers in that area, tourist packages and anything that targeted a company in its campaign, related to the visit of someone in the area. When we go on Internet to search for something else, the web banners which will display ads will always have connection with what they identified of interest for the user. The correlations are larger and larger, and the strategies made are the key of company success.

The development of technology has determined the development of all sectors of activity. Internet was a kind of fire breakthrough, which took the mankind to another level. By this whole emancipation, in the cultural artistic sector we have to take into account all the aspects when we make the marketing strategy. In theatre, philharmonics, opera, cinema, circus, ballet, people do not enter, purchase a product and then leave. They come with high expectations, with own perception, with baggage of knowledge for an intellectual challenge, for something intangible. Each spectator feels and perceives differently what he sees, but there are clear lines that the marketing experts have to take into account in the realization of marketing, communication and PR strategies.

About the process of offering the service we can say that it is important the way in which the spectators can purchase their tickets. How many variants they have, how many purchase points they have in the city where the event takes place or other cities for those who can practise cultural tourism, how kind and informed the person from the tickets Agency is, what this space looks like and how attractive it is, what related services they have in the location where the event takes place, what state of mind each individual comes and goes out with from the show, all these issues contribute to the experience offered by the event itself and the decisions the spectator will take in the future in relation to the participation in similar events.

When it comes to the sale of tickets, it is very important that the procedure is not difficult, complex, lasts long or requires a lot of information from the buyer. If it is not so, the risk that he cancels the purchase at any time is high and if he wants very much to participate, he will stay with this feeling of a very complicated and discouraging process, about which he will definitely talk in his circle of friends.

The attitude, reactions, behaviour and capacity of staff to solve certain situations matter a lot for spectators. They have different characters, exigencies and visions and thus, the training of the staff to deal with any situation is essential.

Most of companies measure the results of a campaign in the way and period in which the persons who were involved remember and recognize the identity of the brand. A better and realistic method of evaluation would be the measuring of units which formed a preference for the brand after the campaign.

When we realize the marketing strategy it is essential that we have concrete and complete information about the target audience. In order to have results which matter, things must not be suspected, approximated or collected from other periods or from other similar events. We have to know concrete personal data to find optimal variants of communication. Efficient communication, accomplished according to the personalized strategy for the target audience involves that we know who we want to persuade, what interests the target persons have, where they spend their time, what preferences they have, where they live, their age and other similar data from which the marketing specialists can understand the mentalities and activities of respondents and can come to welcome them. The more we hold and analyse more data about the persons who we want to step on our threshold, the higher the chances are that they become loyal spectators. It is very important that we are discrete with the data we hold, that we respect the GDPR rules (General Data Protection

Regulation) and only help us with what results from their analysis. The customer-oriented marketing is the only functional variant in a world of technology, during the digital revolution we live.

The information flow we come daily in contact with is very high, and in a period of fight for visibility and priority, the organisers of cultural events have the right messages and right strategies for their audience, will be those whom the individuals will notice and will accept by letting themselves persuaded by their campaigns, as long as the marketing strategy created is complete, correct and the message reaches them plenty of times, in the right moments, on the right channels.

It is a very delicate issue the way in which we obtain and use the personal data of people who give us their trust. The effects can be opposite to what we expect if the people feel exposed, if they feel that their private space is invaded.

All the departments which deal with the promotion of services and products have to start from knowing the profile of each category of audience or customers - *persona / buyer persona*. If for the cultural events, there are many categories of audience, for each category we have to outline the related profile.

Most of performing arts offer an intangible experience. The spectator undertakes the purchase of a ticket for something that he will not know if the investment in time and money was worth it or not and sometimes, even more the recommendation in the circle of friends, than at the end of performance, when the experience was consumed. He purchases a ticket (for various reasons, which should be learned and analysed by the marketing people), makes the decision to take part in the event without knowing exactly what expects him, but something makes him want to participate.

This is not negative, the mystery kept can be the attractive part. Certain things communicated by posters, articles, interviews, trailers, posts in social media, are under the control of organisers and have the purpose to increase the expectation, suspense, but also involve the preparation of the state of mind of individual for what he will see. If we know concretely what, when, how, by what path and especially to whom we transmit the message, the results from the campaign will increase, the general satisfaction in institution will be different, and the audience in turn will be satisfied. This is not just about sales, the occupation ratio of the hall, but we are talking, first of all, of the satisfaction of viewer's expectations, who, after the experiences he had in cultural events spreads information and impressions which can do good or bad, depending on the experience he experienced.

As a start stage of marketing and business strategy, each company should identify and develop the buyer's profile, *persona*, by obtaining concrete, not suspected data. Otherwise, it is like we would go on our way, against the chronometer, without knowing the destination.

Time is the most necessary resource for analysis and interpretation of these data. The more careful we are, concerned and interested in this kind of information, the better we will understand it and it will inspire us more to find more adequate and creative promotional solutions.

The knowledge of buyer's profile, his behaviour including online and the things which make him take decisions favourable to the institution/company represents a big advantage, and *buyer persona* is generally used with collective meaning, the representative persons for the category of audience, who model behaviours. Since all these efforts are made to learn the information, it is clear that the audience becomes a very important element, the key element, which in many cases changes the business strategies, the basic strategies or the cultural policy by the answers offered.

The term *persona* or *buyer persona* designates the ideal customer for what we promote, especially in online environment, because there the costs can be a lot smaller if we have frequency, generate content and know how to react. The details can make big differences, one of the direct results would be the simplification of approach in communication and the faster determination of the spectator to make the decision of participation.

The information needed to establish the buyer's profile is personalized depending on needs. The structure is largely the same because, regardless of field of activity, the marketing specialists need a series of landmarks. The more we can learn more information directly from the source, the faster we can come and many times with the right content, to welcome the audience.

By collecting the information about *buyer persona*, the creativity, ideas, promotion solutions and deepness of content will come more easily. We know exactly for whom we write, who we prepare for to receive in the hall. Therefore, in online environment, it is never too late to start to have a presence, and success comes from an open communication with viewers and the application of tactics which result from the analysis of all the answers.

As long as for the buyer the cost incurred justifies the service received in exchange, just as the whole experience, from access to theatre hall, to comfort of chair and visibility it has from the chosen place, he will definitely come back. We have to take into account, first of all, those who will consume the events proposed. The anchor in reality, flexibility and constant adaptation are very important elements for the marketing specialists of today. They are constantly subject to

changes both in the functionality and perception of online area, and the change of target audience depending on event. But these things excite them, give them vision, new ideas and the developed capacity to mould fast to new approaches.

The devotion for spectators is very important in the relationship which can develop between the institution and them. In performing arts, experience is different anyway, because people come ready to feel, to feel vulnerable in front of the proposals on stage, but the disappointments have a very high *price* for the organisers. The dialogue and development of public relations give the spectators safety that in a situation with inconveniences they will find solutions and can rely on the team of an institution. The trust is gained by both Parties.

Therefore, if we want a development of audience, if we want to attract new categories of audience, the loyalty of the existing audience or a strong marketing campaign, it is mandatory that we start with this analysis and we do not ignore *persona*. We have to understand, first of all, to whom we communicate, in what context they will care about our service and what we will tell them to be relevant, and the campaign should not be just checked. Starting from here, to have the answers, we will feel the steps during the action and in the end, we will have the necessary data for realization of strategy and attraction of audience.

Useful online communication channels in the promotion of show art events: website (about 1.8 billion websites at global level), Facebook (10 million users in Romania), Instagram (over 4 million users over 18 years old, in Romania), Twitter (less than 50,000 users in Romania), Blog (over 16,000 active blogs), YouTube (over 3 million users in Romania).

## PART II – PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION MODELS IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

In the second part of work, we pursued to clarify the way in which we can promote the cultural events in order to understand as best as possible the way in which the conversion is made and the audience makes the decision of participation. Also, we analysed a few structures to see how they place the central point on online environment: Electric Castel, Sziget Festival, Sydney Opera House and Edinburgh International Festival. In the research we identified also other examples of good practices, in other festivals or companies of world calibre. In this part we pursued mainly the identification of the area where, from creativity point of view, the organisers of show art events should *get into*.

In digital promotion, the most frequently used communication channels when it comes to artistic events are own websites, the social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, the *video hosting* services such as YouTube or Vimeo and the mobile applications designed for various events. Last, but not least, the radio and TV spots are still used both by the organisers of events and especially the sponsors who promote various projects they support in own campaigns. The implementation activities in online campaigns which the communication, marketing and PR teams make can be completed and mutually supported by a uniform distribution on the channels used by the organisers of those events. Taking into account the advantages of the integrated marketing we can communicate online and offline, on all the channels we use.

The moments of disclosing the information about an event must be scheduled and prepared in order to have coherence. All the subjects we want to communicate until the end of the process, whether we talk about a show or a festival, must be included in a planning, scheduled and transmitted so that they assure a constant flow of relevant information expected by the public. The receptiveness of people is naturally very important for the fulfilment of communication process. For this reason, it matters what, when, where, to whom, how and on what channel we say.

The most stimulating aspect of online environment was constantly the possibility to move further, to discover more, to try new approaches, revolutionary concepts, to communicate in a more creative and interactive way the principles we promote. Different approaches defined more types of marketing, branches which in turn have sub-branches which satisfy each type of interaction. This development was influenced by various cases they had to handle or the marketers managed to take advantage of, over time. From the cumulation of habits and energies of consumers, from the evolution of things, something in the intersection point of all, sparks and appears a new form of expression, a new type of marketing, of niche, which covers the area opened there.

The study with the title the *Constructive Theory (or Law)*, of the Romanian scientist Adrian Bejan, amazed since 1996 until now the researchers and not only by his theory of tree-like development of all living systems animate or inanimate, in which there is a flow and discharge of energy. From the propagation of lightning to the building of roads, from the mould of growing of a tree to the circulatory system, all these systems are hierarchized under the form of a tree with divided forms from power poles in the system or ecosystem in which this discharge of energy takes place. The development is from the basis to extremes and takes the form of imperfections it finds. As the vegetation between the cliffs finds its path to anchor on the ground and to expand, in the

same way work the remaining systems in their evolution. For example, the National Theatre „Radu Stanca” Sibiu (TNRS), by the International Theatre Festival of Sibiu (FITS), collected for 26 years capital of image, which means energy, by growing in the same geographical place, and the way in which it was formed reflects the imperfections identified in the system in which it developed. The need of founding a Show Exchange came from the absence of a meeting point for dialogue and exchanges of projects, ideas or services on the show art market of Eastern Europe. The cumulation of energy formed by the evolution of things requires a discharge in a point. Bejan defines the constructive theory as follows: ”For a system of finite sizes to persist in time (to live), it has to evolve so that it offers an easier access to the currents imposed which pass through it.”<sup>3</sup> According to wikipedia, ”The constructive theory was conceived to describe the natural tendency of flow systems (for example: rivers, trees and branches and built forms) to generate and develop structures which increase the access to flow.” Practically, marketing specialists generate and maintain a flow of information and have the responsibility to facilitate the access of target groups to the flow.

For more than 20 years, digital marketing has developed, has kept up with all the changes online and encouraged the implementation of campaigns thought by norms which each time broke the moulds. The digital marketing uses the functionality, techniques and tools of Internet, focusing on different business models. The measurement of results can be done more easily and more precisely, and things can be easier to change if errors were made or subsequent completions are desired. In online environment something will take us to something else, we can start from a banner, a video or an image, a text or a melody and we get to whole albums, galleries, articles or websites with original designs. We have the opportunity to find and make available, in attractive forms, a lot of information. The adoption of digital marketing strategies in the promotion of cultural events is vital, otherwise, the likelihood that people do not notice their deployment is very high.

The specificity of event/events/institution we promote, depending on the place where it is carried out, who it addresses, what it presents, what concepts it promotes, where they get the financing or the profile of the buyers from, help us identify the communication tactics, and also the right channels for the promotion of the offered service.

Competition will always exist; it is without doubt that someone will carry out other activities in leisure time apart from the participation to shows or a certain cultural event. The purpose will never be to form fanatical spectators. On the contrary, the multitude of experiences

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teoria\\_constructual%C4%83](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teoria_constructual%C4%83)

they have in their day-to-day life makes them better spectators, with a larger baggage of knowledge, with vision and developed capacity of understanding the states of mind and situations presented on stage.

The digital marketing concept covers a variety of marketing strategies between what is important to make the difference to deal with each of them. It has many components, some of them successfully apply in the promotion of performing arts: Search Engine Optimization, Marketing by content (Content marketing), Social Media Marketing, Video Marketing and E-mail Marketing.

Unlike the products or other types of services, the performing arts offer and ask for something else from the target audience. First of all, the promotional budgets for very many cultural events are very low or sometimes non-existent. If we speak of a festival there are chances that the budgets are very consistent in some cases, but if we speak of theatre shows, the public institutions or the independent companies come across great challenges in the attempt to reach the target audience. A theatre, an independent company, a show or a show art festival will be promoted differently, and the more they address a community used to cultural manifestations, the easier it will be for them to find the spectators they are looking for.

Then, the performing arts ask for a series of things from the spectator, apart from the purchase of ticket(s) of access:

- Availability of time – spectators or participants make a time investment once they make the decision to participate in an event. Whether we speak of a production which lasts for a few hours or a festival with three, five or ten days, it is an hourly interval when the physical availability of the ticket buyer must be for the event. This involves the investing of leave days.
- In some cases, the participants will have to assure their transport and accommodation – if we speak of an event which takes place in another city than the city where the participant lives, it takes a new investment to assure these things.

The communication channels that we use must be chosen so that they help us transmit as best as possible information about the event, but also the other issues which would help the participants have a better experience and more likely to repeat. Even if it does not make the direct object of event, we have to come halfway to participants with information that helps them choose from the logistic variants they have in the place where the activity takes place.

The training and education of audience are continuous processes which any organiser of events should take into account. These issues must be constantly included in our communication and PR strategies, considering that the entire activity we carry out in the field of performing arts is finally for viewers.

The Guerrilla Marketing campaigns have long-term impact, and following them the brand remains in collective memory. Chris A. Hughes, founder of A Nerd's World, reputed Canadian company of digital marketing and *web development*, which has among its customers Toyota, The University of Toronto, Oxford Properties or TEDx, says that this type of marketing is when we speak of a creative idea, something nobody thought of, a way of presenting the product or service "*outside the box*", making a new connection, putting everything in an original spotlight.<sup>4</sup> The immediate effect is that people will talk about the brand, it is an opportunity of growth which will reflect in sales, but not only. Sometimes we are interested in building a brand, growing its reputation, but this can be done by skipping rows, "dancing with the wolves", when everyone around us walks. This makes of guerrilla marketing the element by which we can make the promotion not be at all boring and predictable for the consumers. But for those who implement the strategies it is imperiously necessary, as we showed above by related theories, such as Constructive Law, the predictability is a key factor in development of the project.

Practically, guerrilla marketing is that type of marketing which makes you stop and stare, amazes you one way or another, stirs instantly a reaction, without understanding that any exposure of a brand which makes you stop is guerrilla marketing. Creative thinking helps us make new associations, make connections that we have never made until then. To get out of our comfort zone and take the risk of trying other answers to our searches means innovation, inspiration and last but not least, development. Our imagination is the limit, other creative barriers we do not have when we conceive strategies and campaigns for promotion.

Cultural events, by their nature, have a fixed set of information to communicate, which answers the basic questions: who, what, when, where, information about access. Then, we have a set of information which can or cannot apply as requirements, depending on the type of event: edition, theme under which it carries out, slogan etc.. The third component is related to the variable information from one edition to another or from one show to another, but which comes up with a

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<sup>4</sup> Expression in English which refers to unconventional thinking, a different kind of thinking out of the frame in which we usually use it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTK4m040whA>

minimal communication kit of a cultural event: description, trailer, photographs, special mentions, sponsors and partners.

When we speak of a festival, we have to take into account that the promotion is done both for the framework event and for each event or section in it, depending on strategy, but it will go at least on two large lines, very closely connected. The good image of festival will start an attraction for the events presented in it. The participation in a good show will matter for the image of the festival, and an unpleasant experience will attract a dissatisfaction of the spectator which will reflect first of all on organisers.

That is why, in communication in general, but especially when we have a creative and daring approach, also other departments are involved many times in organization, which have to bring their own contribution, in line with the strategy which is implemented. In Constructive Theory, this point is associated with the method of formation of large rivers which are based on an entire hydrographic network which uses attraction and chooses the best route to unite and gain the best flow.

The more important or of wider scope the event is, the more we have things to communicate and we have to be organized in what we do because the force and possibilities are different. The audience must be helped to understand the way in which the event is thought to make it for them more convenient to perceive it, and to see more easily what interests them and motivates them to participate.

### PART III – Case study: FITS (International Theatre Festival of Sibiu)

The case study was made on the International Theatre Festival of Sibiu (FITS), in order to analyse concretely a certain setting, complex and tempting by its variety and openness. FITS makes now the passage to digital, by planning first of all the construction of a new game space, revolutionary not just for Sibiu, but also for the whole country, a self-sustainable space, with varied possibilities of game spaces and spaces for spectators, which will be construction with mobile inner walls, and the external walls will be smart. The steps for the realization of this construction were started and the duration for such a project is assumed to stretch over the next seven-eight years.

Nowadays, one of the most visible problems for mankind is related to climate changes and the environment.

Considering the reputation of TNRS, but also the prestige and scope of events organised by it, the fact that it prepares to occupy a building such as the one described above, its possibility to find financing from sponsors for a project which matters, but its need of increasing its notoriety at international level, a possible extremely convenient variant from the point of view of communication and PR side is the Project of Live Theatre and Park of Celebrities. It fits perfectly the needs and specificity of event and brings an extra value to the experience of the public and their interaction with it.

International Theatre Festival of Sibiu (FITS) is a show art festival which has been carried out for 26 years and managed to impose all this time as a model event, which develops year after year and brings to Sibiu some of the most respected artists in performing arts. For ten days, the city turns into a giant stage on which are carried out theatre shows, dance, contemporary circus, opera, music and conferences, film projections, exhibitions, workshops, shows, reading, book launches, and student shows, all presented in 75 indoor and outdoor game spaces. FITS is composed of events dedicated to a varied audience of any age. The big challenge of the marketing and communication department is this **high number of events** - in 2019 edition they included in the programme not less than 575 – and their **diversity** which gives the variety of the profiles of participants.

Another specific point of event is represented by **sponsors and partners**. FITS promotes dialogue and encourages interaction and cooperation, which makes possible the presence of five banks on the poster of each edition. Each partner has clearly defined the area in which it is exposed and the manner in which it is visible in FITS, in an optimal and personalized formula, adapted to its communication needs, brand values, marketing strategy etc. All the show art events are made with the financial support of institutions or sponsors. Thus, the communication of these partnerships is an element we have to take into account in the realization of planning to make sure that each of them is well-positioned and visible. Each edition is carried out under the umbrella of a theme which becomes a motivational message and a call to action transmitted to the public.

The festival takes place in a city with a population of 147,245 inhabitants, according to the 2011 census. The number of inhabitants has increased since that date and is on the increase, the city develops constantly. The persons who move to city must also be integrated in the festival strategies. In case of Sibiu the numbers are significant, migration is among the students and on the labour market. Tourists come to Sibiu all through the year.

**Info Desk**, the only fixed point of information of the festival is positioned in the precincts of Theatre Agency, in the city centre. Such a centre in an event must work perfectly. For some spectators it can be the first contact with the event, so the staff must be very well-trained and prepared with answers for all the questions that people may have. Sometimes persons who are not satisfied with certain issues get here, so diplomacy must not miss from the attitude of the staff who needs to be informed both before the festival and up-to-date during the event, in order to be able to provide correct data.

**Access to FITS** is assured by procuring individual tickets for events. As we speak of an event where the seats in the hall are limited, fixed, clear, we cannot issue tickets with general access as a music festival, for example. For FITS, the tickets are put for sale in three shifts, for different shows, starting from 27 March, the World Day of Theatre. From this point of view, the festival is accessible, the prices of tickets are between 25 and 50 lei. In the history of the festival, the tickets for a single event had the unique price of 100 lei. Many shows presented in the festival are played in other countries with much higher prices. Only for the indoor shows they charge ticket at entrance and in some cases, in exhibitions or films, in exceptional cases. This decision to keep the prices at an accessible level was made so that people can participate in as many events as possible and comes to support the idea of festival of being about and for the community. The access to outdoor events is free.

The festival is thought as a mosaic, a complex event which is created around the main products and invited personalities, related events which help the audience capture the cultural diversity and understand more about various visions and themes proposed by the shows presented. Thus, a show considered highlight will generate more special events by inviting as speakers important names who created the production, in special conferences. Also, among the invited artists there are film creators or actors, which means the projection of a film in the film section.

The festival has three major components, which divide the events presented into: **indoor shows**, **outdoor shows** and **special events**. Depending on the type of indoor shows presented, they form the following sections: theatre, dance, musical, opera, contemporary circus or music. The special events are divided in their turn into: conferences, exhibitions, film, book launches, reading, shows and workshops.

**The Festival of Universities of Theatre and Cultural Management** developed naturally in FITS and grew from a simple section with student shows to a festival which brings to Sibiu shows made by important theatre schools all over the world.

The Festival has two own projects developed since 2013, **The Alley and Gala of Celebrities**. By these events we recognize and mark the contribution to artistic field brought by people who are acting in this field, playwrights, composers, actors or film directors. Each star is offered by one of the festival partners and they are unveiled in a ceremony which takes place on the Celebrities Alley, in Parcul Cetății from Sibiu. The event takes place in the last but one day of each edition and lasts about 30 minutes. It is followed by a session of photographs and press declarations, then the Celebrities Gala takes place in which distinguished artists on the Alley come on stage and take the floor to transmit their message. Last but not least, in this event the prizes "Virgil Flonda" and "Iulian Vișa" are offered to an actor and a director, but also a few special prizes for sponsors and partners or persons who have a special significance for the event and its deployment.

The marketing, communication and PR department has to take into account the various projects that FITS develops year by year, **Therme Forum** or **Micro-Folie Sibiu Hotspot Cultural BRD** are among the latest examples. These events are big, important, involve novelty, dialogue between professionals, dedicated to the audience, whether we speak of speakers and guests to Therme Forum or the cooperation between 12 cultural institutions and national museums from France which put up Micro-Folie, the virtual museum, which contains 500 masterpieces which can be visited in over 200 cities of the world. In Sibiu it includes, apart from the digital museum, a space of virtual reality in which, by VR glasses, state-of-the-art telephones and headphones, those who get there can access about 40 videos taken from the channels Arte, and Fab Lab, a space dedicated to creativity in which the groups with prior appointment have access to 3D printers and smart markers to create or personalize various objects or even drawings.

The communication in FITS involves the communication for the two large structures associated with the festival, the **Volunteering Programme**, and the **Show Exchange** from Sibiu. These two structures are so big that they need separate strategies, their specificity and audience are different from FITS. While the volunteering programme is addressed first of all to high school students (over 16 years old) and university students, with a major component of education, the

Show Exchange is addressed to professionals in the arts of show, from managers and directors of institutions or festivals to programmers, producers or financiers.

Therefore, in communication we have to transmit the way in which FITS is conceived to have a common language with the audience. The better the spectators understand the architecture of the festival and the way in which events complete one another, the more active audience we will have, who participates by searching for answers to the questions they have about what they see and finally they can find the answers directly from creators.

**Dialogue, diversity and multiculturality** are the pillars on which the festival was built and this remains from year to year the philosophy by the organisers guided themselves. The development on the principle of communicant vessels makes FITS be a complete event, formed according to the needs of community and society. These levers can be exploited for the marketing, communication and PR side, they contribute to the transmission of the spirit and atmosphere that the artists and spectators create in the festival.

A few **characteristics of FITS**, depending on what the event is, beyond the surface, in the relationship with the public, can be formulated as follows:

The modern identity of people is on a continuous search for interesting sources of inspiration to which they belong, apart from their life, which is a community, a belief or an event. Many of us do not have time to update their knowledge about everything that appears on the market, whether they are material or intangible goods. In exchange, we rely on what we see around us, on trends/advertising. We watch them whether we want to or not, they are useful. And some of us are worth our entire attention. This is exactly what did and continues to do FITS: it brings up, attracts attention, but also curiosity and love for complexity and beauty of performing arts which exist at world level, about which we know very little. **FITS is trendsetter.**

By the productions and events presented, the festival brings in front of the public some of the names who brought a significant contribution to performing arts, by their vision, by their own perception of life and art. Thus, another task of communication becomes the way in which these artists are disclosed or even presented to viewers. We have to constantly keep in mind the audience who knows and the amateur audience who needs more information, **FITS makes every year a world radiography of performing arts.**

Across time, FITS has inspired the community by challenging it to a process of urban regeneration triggered by culture, stirring its appetite for cultural events and increasing the need

of culture. As it is a show art festival, FITS offers strong states of mind and images which remain in the heart and mind of viewers for a long time. **FITS means emotion.**

FITS reunites theatres and famous companies, directors, scenographers, actors, playwrights, choreographers, dancers, but also a large number of spectators, passionate or not about performing arts. In the programme of each edition we find original events and multi-prized shows, in 2019 which come from 73 countries. **Multiculturality and diversity** of this cultural event is an occasion for organisers to bring in front of the audience productions which approach varied styles and themes, visions and revelatory interpretations. The special events create the frame to challenge to **dialogue**, facilitate the exchange of ideas, opinions and perspectives, break the convention of stage and show the people behind the artists. **FITS makes a transfer of culture.**

Socially, the festival has impact in the community, whether we talk of involved spectators, payers or simple passers-by who interact unscheduled with FITS. The atmosphere in the city changes significantly during the ten days full of events which animate the show halls, but especially the streets. The interaction between people, local inhabitants or tourists increases, and the music, lights, characters and colours from the street inspire joy. Also, by the traffic created by people and the generated flow, the city has economic benefits by the contribution made in transport, horeca, shops or other services. **FITS enlivens the city.**

FITS promoted several times the slogan "Be part of story!" which we will take into account for the following editions. This slogan was connected to various campaigns or in the communication of Volunteering Programme. The festival is formed by stories, brings year by year people and companies with unique stories, who present on stage other stories and together they all contribute to the writing of the festival's story. The International Theatre Festival of Sibiu shows each year that any story has its charm, from any story we can learn and each story makes us thinking, and especially each ending of a story means a new beginning. **FITS is with and about stories.**

The thesis contains in the case study the remaining issues we have to take into account in the realization of marketing, communication, PR strategy and brand, but in the summary we will focus on the global concept because it is the central point depending on which we will think later the other planning issues. Therefore, in the work we will find: SWOT analysis, audience segmentation, communication objectives, messages, channels and instruments, implementation calendar for communication and global concept.

Because FITS:

- **Is a trendsetter** – the capacity and force of the festival to do that, but also the responsibility by which the organisers have to impose quality and inspire the community for evolution and perseverance. It is a characteristic that needs to be behind the strategies, we should take it constantly into account in organization, communication and conception of messages regardless of the channels on which they will be distributed; in this setting, apart from the principles promoted, the way in which the services are "packed" and delivered to the public is essential;
- **Makes every year a radiography of performing arts, at world level (including by the Show Exchange)** – the right messages for Social Media, newsletter, e-mail marketing, specialised publications, subjects for the press (personalized for media partners);
- **Means emotion** – the right messages for Social Media, site, blog, images for news and TV shows, subjects for the press (personalized for media partners). FITS means emotion both by the past editions, for the loyal spectators and by the edition promoted to increase the expectations of those who come back or come for the first time to this event;
- **Makes a transfer of culture by involving multiculturalism and diversity, stirring to dialogue** – different content for magazines and specialized TV shows, general press and Social Media; it will generate customized content for the website and blog;
- **Enlivens the city** – the right messages for Social Media, interviews, TV shows/news, blog;
- **Is with and about the story** – the right messages for Social Media, specialized press and media partnerships, blog.

All these things can be dressed up as they never were and can give an explosion of image to the event and the organising institution by a global concept which will reflect in the whole expression of the event. The proposal I make following my research is the Live Theatre and Park of Celebrities. This project is useful and beneficial for TNRS, FITS and all its associated structures.

The transformation of the current building of the theatre into a green building with electric panels and vegetation which covers the constructions would be a revolutionary project at national level, which assures a great visibility and media coverage, but also international notoriety. Not only that any local inhabitant would know where the theatre is, has ever stepped on its threshold or not, but the building will become a reference point and an element which will appear in the pictures of any tourist. The central positioning of the theatre building is a great advantage for the

good goodwill and the flow of people who pass by the building every day. The help is mutual because the vegetation will help for a better air for the pedestrians who travel in a crowded point of the city.

After in 2007 it was European Cultural Capital, and in 2019 it enjoyed the title of European Gastronomic Region, Sibiu city can prove to be much more visible than on other occasions because it cares about the environment and can have a proactive, educational and inspirational attitude regarding the environmental protection. TNRS can be again the generator of a concept which models the community and gives it a new consistent and healthy direction.

The beneficial effects will be reflected on the audience and the employees of the theatre and in the relationship with the sponsors, the press and invited artists. Also, they will manifest in several layers, from the conspicuous aspects, with direct consequence for aspects related to the feeling of belonging, loyalty. Because the theatre cannot do this alone, because it does not have experts in the field, who design and maintain such a building, it has to look for partners with whom they share and promote the same values.

For this purpose, we identified a foundation, which apart from having and working with specialists who have the necessary knowledge for the implementation of such a project, they can carry out, in a vast volunteering project which is developed with "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, an internship programme for the students from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Food Industry and Environmental Protection. Thus, the theatre building can become a place for research in environmental protection and even for the students in architecture it can be an interesting case study for sustainable buildings.

We must find partners for the financing of such a project but the quality and complexity of the concept, together with the potential impact such an action has, make the possibilities be multiple, from the existing partners to the attraction of new financiers or even the attraction of funds for environment.

TNRS organises many events and therefore, interacts with a lot of people, in different settings: the International Theatre Festival of Sibiu, the Show Exchange, the large number of persons with whom it interacts in the Volunteering Programme (local, national and international), the tours, shows and special events it organises during the whole year, the opening to the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu and the interaction with students, the special projects it develops – European projects, exhibitions such as Micro-Folie (the first digital museum in Romania) etc..

TNRS has the possibility of being the first public institution in Romania, which implements such a project, which passes to another level of communication with the audience by the force and visibility it has, and FITS is the perfect setting for this passage. The experience and ambiance will stir the curiosity of new groups of spectators. This change will determine the adaptation of activities from certain departments by the need of a fleet of electric cars, the implementation of a digital display system to cancel the printing of posters and to reduce as much as possible these consumables, the encouraging of using the online communication channels for information and the use of electronic ticket etc.

The Celebrities Park can come to support the idea by association of persons who receive a star, with the planting of trees and implicitly the care about nature. "The growing" of a park determines the appearance of a new game space which invites to the carrying of activities with children, for the organization of concerts if we provide an open space or other suitable activities.

PART IV – Show art events in Romania, in front of revolution in online communication field. A possible guide of good practices.

We can say that the marketing, communication and PR side would be the narrowest part, the passage from one side to another. It is the clepsydra neck, the voice of the scheduled event and organisers. It is the point where the whole relevant information has to get. The more information can get on time to these teams, the more the strategies, plans and content will contribute to the carrying out of things in a professional way. As there are many cases when the resources we have available are defective, we need more time for ideas, planning and creation. These departments carve the information, dress them up in the adequate shape for the audience to which it addresses, by taking into account the concept of the brand and dose it letting the subjects flow constantly.

The new technologies have, as we have seen, a strong incidence on our daily life, because they change the purchasing practices for instance (online sale), our relationship with information (websites, online newspapers or online televisions) with the knowledge (encyclopaedia, dictionaries, eBooks, studies), all accessible at any time. They equally transform our professional life (a new work organization, mobility, an easier management of timetables) and our way of spending the leisure time (downloading of music, films and videos, recording and watching of

radio and television shows, reading of electronic books, diversity of activities which involve technology, from outside the house).

It reaches even our intimacy and our personal identity (presentation of self on social media, use of pseudonyms, avatars) and changes the perimeter of our social networks (connections, discussions, sharing with the other, regardless of the distance or how well we know the interlocutor). The list is far from being exhaustive and proves the deep disturbances which happen in the field of trade, services, labour market, education, culture and mass media. These transformations influence and even affect spheres such as the state, administration, economy, geopolitics, urban planning – it is useless to make a full review. The scope of the phenomenon is so large that it attracted an over-abundance of analyses, comments and at least divergent positions towards our new "digital condition".

Digital Marketing is not an option. The market is there, people are constantly connected, and the world in which we live works that way. If 30 years ago people looked at TV commercials, they opened you the door to be spoken about sophisticated frying pans or original cleaning products, they looked at the big advertising panels on the streets, practically they gave you attention whenever you asked them, today these things are not valid. Seth Godin mentions that we see or hear 1 million marketing messages during a year, so almost 3000 a day.<sup>5</sup> We cannot even claim that people pay attention to such a high number of commercials. But we can claim that the messages which leave our department are among those that people want to see.

We can say that in communication, marketing, PR or branding strategies, in Romania of the year 2019, it is essential to be creative and use all the subjects we have from inside the event. The responsibility, beyond the work we do, is social, educational and training. The quality of productions or events is essential, but a good communication designed to assure the efficient reflection of events, is equally important. The possibility of being in constant connection with a large part of target audience (or with the whole target audience in some cases) is a big chance, but the measure, tone, method and attitude by which we transmit our messages make this be an opportunity or an obstacle.

The constant awareness by the organisers that at the basis their purpose is to educate, mould the audience to which they address, and apart from the participation in event and the formation of a preference for it, the spectator has first of all to develop or keep the appetite for culture. In

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fastcompany.com/34360/permission-marketing>

performing arts, if we manage to persuade them by the quality of events presented, by an attitude which gets people closer to us, by an impeccable organization, we manage to sell all the tickets and more than this immediate effect, we have a satisfied audience delighted with the decision made on long term. The spiritual things, the things we put aside and which matter for us as states of mind, the thought with which a spectator leaves the show hall or with which a participant leaves the festival are part of what contributes to the formation of a strong and loyal community.

For the performing arts we believe that the following four main phases can form an edition, a promotion and communication cycle: the strategy, the design of communication (creation), implementation of communication plan (communication) and audit. We start from the premise that both for a festival and for an individual show or a theatrical season, this division is valid, because in any of these cases we have an organiser, a brand which initiates action and around which things happen. The creation and communication do not manage to fulfil their purpose if they do not find the answer to the questions: *where, when, how, to whom, with what, why and how much*. The strategy is the one which helps with these answers, gives us the route we have to travel.

In the strategy we find solutions for the problems identified during the audit, which will be implemented in the subsequent stages, by the creation and communication parts. A good approach of things and a good incorporation of information collected in this first step entails a good information and communication with the audience and the sponsors, communication based on the formation of relations. When we make the strategy, we take into account the value we can give to the experience we offer to the audience and it has to be as deep as possible both for the spectators and for the partners. The education and training of the audience are the main lines that must be the basis of campaigns we make, and last but not least, we have to take into account that we have to sell the tickets or subscriptions, finally it is about sales which are an important source of income.

As soon as the strategy is established, we move on to the creation stage where we obtain the image. It is the part preoccupied with numbers and sale, the marketing. The communication and PR take care of training and perception of audience and in general, seeks to generate emotion, connection.

These two phases are the main part, here things happen and materialize, for them we make the planning (strategy) and evaluation (audit) stages. From creation we seek to obtain individuality and specificity, visibility of identity and image, dissemination of information, *lead and engagement* and at the end of this row, the sale. On the other hand, the communication and PR

side fight for notoriety, positive perception, development and transmission of atmosphere of the event, makes the necessary actions for the maintenance and development of community, for the development of audience and in general, handles the things of status, what the brand symbolises and promotes.

The audit can help us identify the trends from online environment, apart from the practice we have if we work on the implementation of strategy. It is important to feel the trends and constantly explore the new channels and communication instruments to be ready and prepared in this constantly changing environment.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

When we speak of promotion of performing arts, the brand is the key element from where we start and to which we return, at the end of cycle. In order to pursue the implementation process and to make sure that we say what we have to say, to whom we need to say, when we need to say, how we need to say, we divided the route in four main steps: the strategy, the design of communication, the implementation of communication plan and the audit.

In the strategy we find solutions for the problems identified during the audit, which will be implemented in the subsequent stages, by the creation and communication parts. The communication and PR take care of training and perception of audience and in general, it seeks to generate emotion, connection. These things will be taken into account in the design and implementation of communication. From the establishment of visual materials to everything that relates to visual identity and content. These two phases are the main issue, here things materialize and happen, for them we make the planning (strategy) and evaluation (audit) stages. From creation we seek to obtain individuality and specificity, visibility of identity and image, dissemination of information, lead and engagement and at the end of this row, the sale. On the other hand, the communication and PR part fight for notoriety, positive perception, development and transmission of atmosphere in event, makes the necessary actions for the maintenance and development of community, for the development of audience and in general, handles the things of status, what the brand symbolises and promotes. The audit helps us gather constant feedback very relevant for the efficiency of future strategies. Following this evaluation stage, the report will be analysed both on the strategy side and on the creation and communication side. The communication in performing arts is a big challenge, but the digital manages to give the organisers the chance and necessary

means for the realization of realistic, but creative campaigns by which they bring more contribution to the development of communities in which they are carried out. Thus, we can reach the target audience by channels which allow us to interact with them by stimulating their senses and contributing to the potentiation of experience offered.

The connection we can create with the public, the influence we can have in their lives, the method in which we can feed their minds and the social responsibility by which we have to do these things are issues which have to constantly preoccupy the promoters of performing arts.

The four stages represent and seek: the route to go, the image that helps consolidate the brand, the emotion which makes the audience loyal and the evaluation which helps to a better understanding of the future directions.

## **6. PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

This work has proposed to answer a few questions: How do we promote and communicate the show art events in digital era? Who is the audience of 21st century? How relevant is a community around the event or brand? Does it need balance between the elements which involve the use of technology in the marketing campaigns and marketing mixes? What method do we have to choose and at which time? How much does the spread of information depend on technology? How much does the information learned by the channels opened by technology influence our decisions? Technology and online environment transform the traditional environment of marketing and in addition, our daily life, because some unconventional appears, but the man gets used to it and assimilates the concept so fast that soon it will become traditional and the need of a new change intervenes. We have become almost immune to so much online advertising because it aggresses us, comes over us.

We have also identified the way in which the use of digital influences and transforms the behaviours of the target audience and how the communication people from these fields can identify the right channels to reach the sought receptors, many times with limited resources. How much can technology help us and in what way can it contribute to the success of communication process? Is it a trifle or a goal, the use of these instruments from now on?

As you can see in conclusions, this work has proposed and managed to identity the skeleton which can be adjusted to the cultural events, depending on their complexity, but for this, one of

the supplementary conditions is to understand what influences, how we feel the trends, to foresee the directions of going in order to have vision in line with mentalities and therefore, results. Following the analysis of concepts, the way in which other events and even certain categories of products use the online environment and think their campaigns, but also the impact and results that their approaches had, we conceived a scheme of the cycle to be travelled in communication in performing arts. Depending on the format and specificity of event, it can be used both for annual festivals and for the theatre seasons or the seasons of independent companies which are promoted with big efforts.

Practically, the results of this work can be summarized in three final sketches. They include the combination of elements we need in the promotion of performing arts, elements we have to take into account since the strategy stage to communicate at a certain level, to contribute to the education of the public and to create a community of loyal spectators for our events. The engine of any event, organizations or cultural institutions is the brand. The brand gives us the image, force, helps us establish the natural future strategy; by the brand we get close to the audience, we increase visibility and impact, by brand we can tend to the fulfilment of statutory principles of organization. The brand is desired to be easily recognized in various settings, online or offline, by as many persons as possible, for an easy and challenging communication.

All the issues relating to communication, put head to head, form a whole. All the elements are interconnected, fed from something and are the connection to something else and do this by finding their own flow, depending on event. No element is less important than the other and none of them excludes the other. The communication and ample and responsible PR actions can significantly contribute to the consolidation of brand position, the loyalty of the audience and organization of more and more desired events.

By following and analysing the work of organisers and the interests, behaviours, mentalities and reactions of the audience, but also the angle of sponsors and financiers, in the context of digital era and a constantly changing society, in this work , we managed to identify and put piece with piece together the obvious issues, but also the less obvious issues, deep, which relate to inner motivation of organisers to do, of financiers to come to support and communities to participate. These issues should be treated and analysed separately to satisfy them but following the event, the consumption of experience and intersection of these interests, which come from

different parts, there is the life of each of us for which we have the duty to make the effects of culture consumption be seen.

## **7. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

What most stirs my curiosity is a vast analysis of the community, citizens of the city and their real needs regarding culture. Thus, on one hand, the directions of cultural Agenda can come directly from the feedback of the community and the quality and need for events which will be funded during the year can increase the stake for participation of local inhabitants and tourists alike. On the other hand, the organization and union of all cultural operators for implementation of common long-term strategies, for a part of communication of events they organize can change significantly the atmosphere and quality of life in the city. The collaboration of cultural operators for the organization of platforms and campaigns in which they unite their forces, implemented in key points, contribute significantly to the development of cultural life of the city and to the possibility of attracting new funds, titles and opportunities for the community.

In the very developed countries of the world they make very complex marketing campaigns, especially for products or promotion of ideas/concepts, and some of them gave impressive results. In România, it takes a lot of work for the theoretical and practical development of online reference campaigns, but also guerrilla marketing or viral marketing campaigns. In principle, the cultural institutions in Romania use an almost identical promotion, which involves strictly the information of the public about the event proposed. Sibiu has all the data to be a promoter in innovation and creativity regarding the promotion of culture, the part which put the city on the modern map of Europe, but also the use of the state-of-the-art technologies for development of the community and the supplementation of the missing resources.

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