

## ADWEEK Article

The follow piece was ghost-written for Brett Hyman of NVE Experience Agency—an experience marketing firm from Los Angeles, CA. You can access the live article [here](#).

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### 3 Ways to Use Experiential Marketing to Deepen the Impact of Social Media

Opinion: If a user's intensity switch is disengaged, a brand's message will go unheard

In a world where people check their smartphones [85 times per day](#), usually for less than one minute at a time, consumer engagement can seem elusive, but short attention spans and screen addiction don't tell the whole story.

It's true that consumers won't linger too long on something that doesn't intrigue them—a tweet, for example—but when they engage with a brand in real-life, they go all in.

Today's audiences practice what Kantar Futures calls [torrential engagement](#): a fluctuation between high- and low-intensity usage as users navigate their saturated social media channels. You've probably seen torrential engagement in your own behavior. It's why we binge-watch Netflix shows (high-intensity usage) and skip one-dozen songs at a time on Spotify (low-intensity usage).

This pattern of behavior has developed in the wake of the endless content available to browse online. For the most part, users move through “microbursts” of content, as Kantar Futures calls them, so quickly that they scroll past a brand's social media posts without a second thought. If a user's intensity switch is disengaged, a brand's social media message will go unheard.

So, how do you flip the switch back on so that it won't take 30 or more views to make your content stick? You give users an experience they will engage with and remember.

If consumers first experience a brand in real-life, they're more likely to pause and engage with that brand when they see it on social media. By combining experiential marketing with your social media campaign, you increase the potency of marketing efforts in ancillary channels.

A [study by Columbia Business School](#) showed that consumers are more likely to engage with brands that offer clear value, and on social media, few things are more valuable than a shareworthy experience.

Events and experiences give brands an opportunity to funnel consumers to their social media directly—through a geofenced [Snapchat filter](#) or an event-specific hashtag, for example—bypassing the microbursts the users would otherwise have to sift through.

In a [2016 EventTrack report](#), around 70 percent of respondents became regular customers of a brand after an experiential marketing event, and nearly all participants created content about the brand event or experience. By using experiential marketing to drive users to social media, brands can secure some share of the user's 85 daily smartphone uses.

These three tips will help you integrate experiential marketing in your social media campaign to maximize that engagement.

## Build buzz before your event

Psychological research tells us that [anticipation](#) is a powerful emotion, even stronger than recalling a meaningful experience from the past. Getting people excited about a future event is the first step toward deeper engagement.

Use your social media, in conjunction with email and out-of-home advertising, to tap into your customers' anticipation. Influencer partnerships can be especially helpful if they can command your target audience's trust.

Just remember: Bigger isn't always better when it comes to an influencer partnership. It's tempting to partner with someone who has a huge following, but one study found that audiences are [60 percent more engaged](#) when they follow a niche influencer. Making the right partnerships on social media is more important than making the big partnerships.

## Choose your platforms wisely

Don't cast a wide net: Drive people to a few specific social media platforms. Which platforms work best will vary by audience, but brands should be sure to follow a structured sharing plan, making full use of scheduling tools.

If a brand is active on Facebook, it should consider [using Facebook Live](#) at the event. A Twitter campaign should make good use of trending hashtags, tweet walls and video and photo sharing. If niche influencers make sense for a brand, Instagram is a great place to find them and use hashtags to track posts about the event.

Encourage guests to post freely, as well. Make it easy for them by providing a digital experience that features built-in social media sharing.

## Offer something unique

A [recent Time Inc. study](#) found that 90 percent of Generation X, millennial and post-millennial consumers enjoy connecting with brands through unique social media content, and experiential marketing is nothing if not unique. But you have to do it right. It's not enough to set up a booth, hand out some pamphlets and hope consumers will engage.

At this year's South by Southwest, [Gatorade](#) showed attendees what future athletes will experience by inviting people into the Gatorade Combine. Computers analyzed participants' basic movements, and then users donned virtual reality headsets to test factors such as reaction time and movement efficiency. Guests received a full report, telling them how they stacked up against professional athletes and how to prevent injury—info they were eager to share on social media.

Experiential marketing offers brands a vehicle to control the ebb and flow of torrential engagement. Consumers are eager to look up from their smartphones when you offer them an interesting experience. The best part for social media managers? They'll happily dive back into the digital world to share it.

*[Brett Hyman](#) is president of experiential marketing agency and production company [NVE Experience Agency](#).*