

Attitude of Consumers Towards Events Organized by Companies

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ABSTRACT

After the transition to market relations, interest in various directions of marketing increased in Georgia. One of them is public relations, which helps companies to form and maintain a positive image. It, in turn, has various tools. Among them, the events are noteworthy. Planning them properly and implementation is important to ensure effective marketing management and achievement of set goals in the company. The purpose of the article is to study the attitudes of consumers towards the events carried out by Georgian companies. We used the form of an online survey, which is currently quite effective. Events play a major role in forming impressions of a company and its brands. Those companies that intelligently manage and implement events contribute to the formation of their positive image and increase in the promotion of their brands. Events are used by many subjects to impress other people. Business entities can gain goodwill from their target market by making a good impression on the public. With its correct planning and implementation, the company will receive economic benefits. In the article, the authors discuss the problems associated with conducting events, present the main results of the conducted research and recommendations in the direction of increasing the effectiveness of the use of events.

Keywords: Events, Marketing Communications, Marketing Research, Consumer Attitude,
JEL Classification: M10, M30, M31

INTRODUCTION

The development of the country's economy has a positive effect on the growth of incomes of the population and the growth of marketing opportunities. Economic development of Georgia is named as the most important goal by the country's government. The government's economic policy is aimed at promoting economic growth and business development. Which, in turn, should ensure job creation and poverty alleviation (Government of Georgia). Business entities have to operate in a competitive environment. Where success in the market, among many other things, is closely related to their effective use of marketing approaches. Among them, events have a special role and function.

Georgian companies have to operate in competitive conditions with many foreign companies even in the domestic market itself. Regarding how the country can achieve economic growth, studies have been conducted by Georgian scientists and many articles have been written (Silagadze, Mghebrishvili, Keshelashvili, 2021; Silagadze & Atanelishvili, 2020; Gaganidze, 2019; Todua & Mghebrishvili, 2018; etc.).

Georgian companies are facing big challenges. They need not only to produce good quality products, but also to use effective marketing approaches. That will help them to correctly define the strategy and tactics of working in the market. Marketing communications play an important role in success in the market, one of the directions of which is events.

The objectives of the event depend on its type, scale and audience. Events can make a big impression on the public and play an important role in developing relationships with customers. Customer relationship refers to the interaction between a company and its customers, which can have a direct impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and customer retention. Events can be used to build relationships with customers, allowing companies to engage with their target audience in a meaningful way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Events are widespread in modern conditions (Smith et al., 2022). Business sector participates in creating events and impressions, independently conducts a number of events, as well as participates in large-scale events initiated by state government bodies or various organizations. Event is a special celebration planned and organized by various social institutions and private organizations (Velikova, 2016). At present, the widely distributed platforms for creating events and impressions include: entertainment events; festivals; sports events; holding performances; charity Excursions; visiting the company's museums; Street activities (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Among the events are widespread festivals. Conducting them contributes to the formation of specific experiences that are of great importance from a personal, social, economic and cultural point of view (Dychkovskyy & Ivanov, 2020). Some types of events have been around for a long time. Ancient historians spoke of sporting events as an important form of social activity (Quinn, 2009).

Events are more persuasive for consumers than advertisements, in this way, the company can reach even those individuals who avoid sales staff and advertisements (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). In modern conditions consumers are more informed and more demanding. The increase in knowledge and experience has given consumers more opportunities and power in the market (Todua, 2017), (Todua, 2018), (Jashi, 2020), (Todua & VASHAKIDZE, 2020), (Todua & Urotadze, 2022).

In the conditions of competition in the market, it is important for companies to find out why they are losing customers. Identifying these reasons helps them retain customers (Seturi, 2022). However, the purpose of marketing is not only to retain existing customers, but also to attract new customers. in which events can play a positive role. Event marketing can become one of the effective strategies for increasing brand awareness. The first step to brand success is creating awareness (Seturi & Urotadze, 2017). The event can not only attract a large number of visitors but also has the potential to expand the customer base (Five benefits of event

marketing, 2023). During the evaluation of events it is necessary to take into account the costs incurred for the use of equipment and various attributes necessary for its implementation, the income received from the event (Tavakkoli, 2016). Events may have negative consequences. It is necessary to determine their expected risks and dangers in advance (Skoultos & Tsartas, 2009). During the organization of events necessary to take into account the main approaches of the concept of sustainable development. Which is one of the important issues of modernity (Seturi & Urotadze, 2020).

The key to the success of any event is proper planning (Oklobdžija, 2015). The evaluation of each event is measured by behavioral, emotional and cognitive factors. People must describe and explain personal and social experiences of events (Getz, 2008). The definition of event management refers to the entire event planning process, whether it is an in-person event, a virtual event, or a hybrid event. Event management is the planning of meetings within the framework of a specific project (Hunter, 2023). What is especially important for companies today. In addition, building customer loyalty is critical to a company's success. But for this it is necessary to create a customer-oriented organization, which is related to the formation of an attractive image of the company (Seturi, 2019). And event marketing is a great way to learn about the latest ideas and trends, or to make connections to attract new potential buyers (Blue Train Marketing, 2022). Events play an important role in the field of domestic and international tourism. People visit a specific place and country to attend a specific event (Middleton et al., 2009). Event management has become a rapidly growing professional field in which tourists constitute a potential market (Getz, 2008). Events in the tourism industry are repetitive in nature. The popularity of repeat events has increased worldwide and have a positive effect on guest satisfaction (Caldeira, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODS

During the research, we used the works of Georgian and foreign researchers, based on which the theoretical part was prepared. We searched for some information using internet sources. In our study we used marketing research methods. The study included two main stages. At the first stage of the survey, the target group of the research was determined. At this stage it was decided that the survey did not require the survey of respondents according to any social-demographic characteristics. Consequently, we do not restrict the study and study all those willing to take part in this study. At the next stage of study, based on the objectives of the research, it was decided to conduct quantitative research, which implies the collection of information in quantitative form and the statistical analysis of the information already obtained. Quantitative method of research is one of the most common and reliable methods for obtaining primary information. It is noteworthy that a structured questionnaire was used during our research. In particular, the collection of information in the online form of the questionnaire survey method. This approach allowed us to survey people online in many regions of Georgia. Then we conducted a statistical analysis of the already obtained information. The survey of respondents was conducted in June, 2023. In the survey took part 307 respondents. Based on the literature review and secondary data analysis, relevant hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Companies use only a few types of events in the Georgian market;
- H2: In many cases, users do not have the necessary information about the events they are interested in;

- H3: Events significantly contribute to the development of customer relations;
- H4: Customers who have positive experiences and impressions towards the company maintain a long-term relationship with it;
- H5: Ineffective events and impressions have a strong negative impact on customer relationships;
- H6: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the events industry, leading to a decline in the number of in-person events and an increase in virtual events.

RESULTS

Interest in the use of events in Georgia is growing more and more. Festivals are one of the common means of creating events and impressions in Georgia. Excursions to enterprises are also frequent. Tours to wine-producing enterprises and cellars are especially noteworthy, where the guest is introduced to the entire process of wine production. Many Georgian companies organize events in Georgia. Banking organizations (Bank of Georgia, 2019), construction companies (Company Arki, 2023) are especially active in this regard, etc. There are special service firms operating in the Georgian market that help people and large companies in planning and organizing their special events (Eventive; Rembow).

As a result of research 5 hypotheses were confirmed - H1, H3, H4, H5, H6. H2 was not confirmed. In this article, we present some of the results of our research and its diagrams.

Almost a third of the surveyed respondents (30.3%) are male, while the remaining respondents (69.7%) are female. Almost half of the respondents (48.2%) are people aged 25-34, and 37.5% are respondents aged 18-24. Nevertheless, other age groups participated in the study.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the majority of the respondents (94.1%) attended the events, while 5.9% _ did not.

For the respondents, when asked what kind of events they attended, festivals and ceremonial opening of the company's enterprise (branch, store) turned out to be the leader.

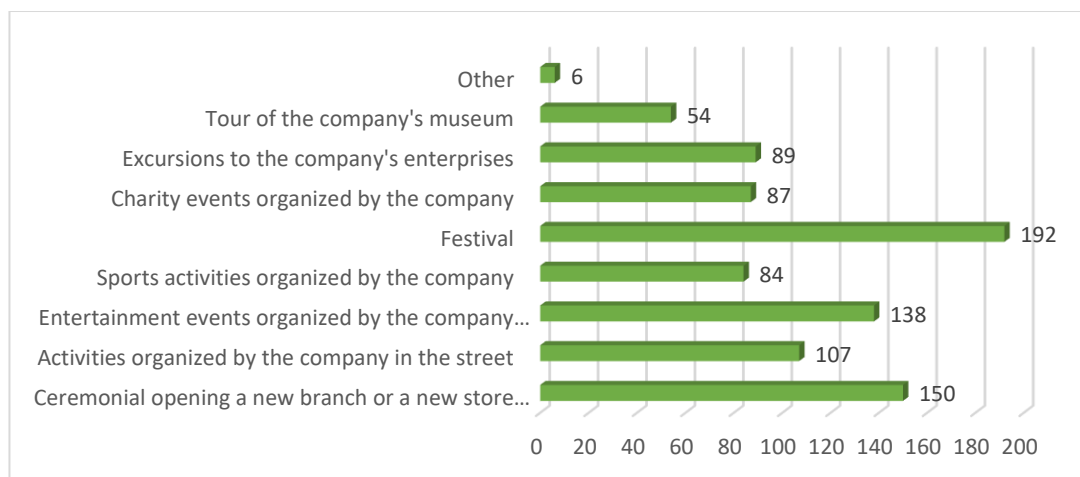


Figure 1: Types of events attended by respondents

Sources: developed by the authors

As for the purpose of attending the events, the majority indicated: to get information about products of interest to them and also, having fun.

We asked the respondents to rate their attitude towards the events in general on a 5-point scale (1- very negative; 2- negative; 3- neutral; 4- positive; 5- very positive). 131 respondents have a positive attitude, 130 have a very positive attitude, 38 have a neutral attitude, 5 have a negative attitude, and the remaining 3 have a very negative attitude.

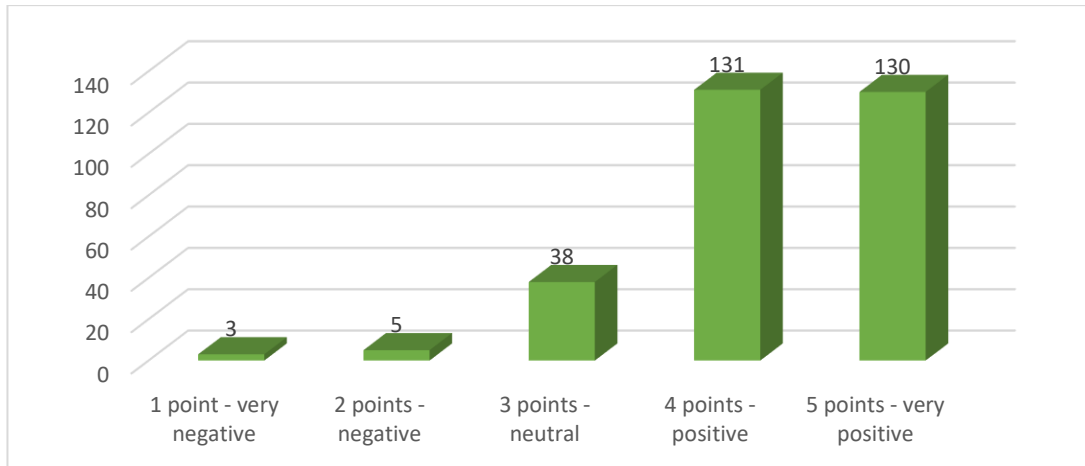


Figure 2: Attitude towards events in general and respondents' evaluations of events on a 5-point scale

Sources: developed by the authors

In order to find out what kind of events most influenced the attitude of the respondents towards the company, we allowed them to choose several answer options. Finally, we got the following results: festivals, entertainment events organized by the company (shows and theatrical performances) and charity events organized by the company are in the lead.

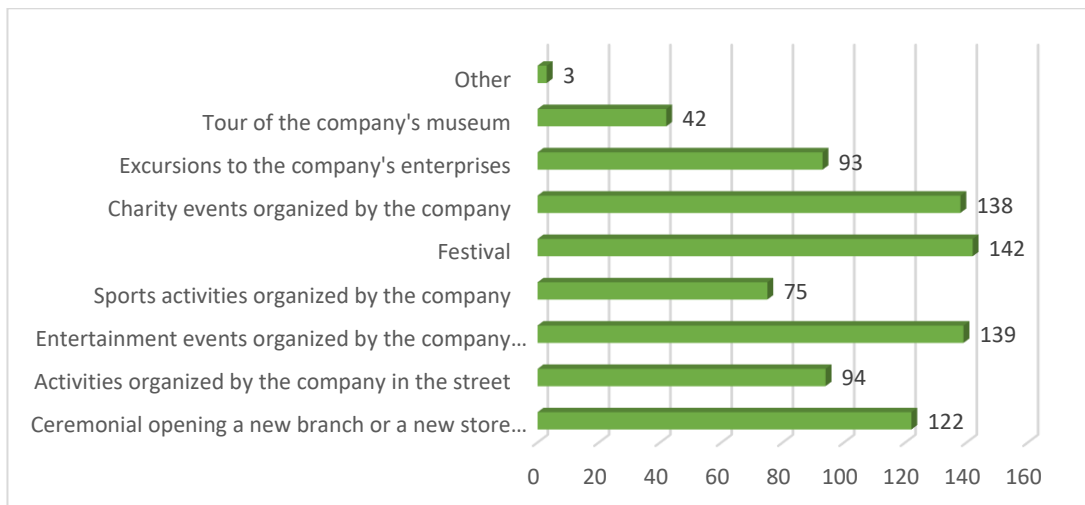


Figure 3: Types of events that have a strong influence on the respondents' attitude towards the company

Sources: developed by the authors

It was interesting for us to identify the main sources of information for the respondents about the events. The answers to the question clearly indicated the source through which the respondents get information about the event. 57.7% of respondents indicated - Facebook, 15.3% - personal sources, 13.7% - Instagram.

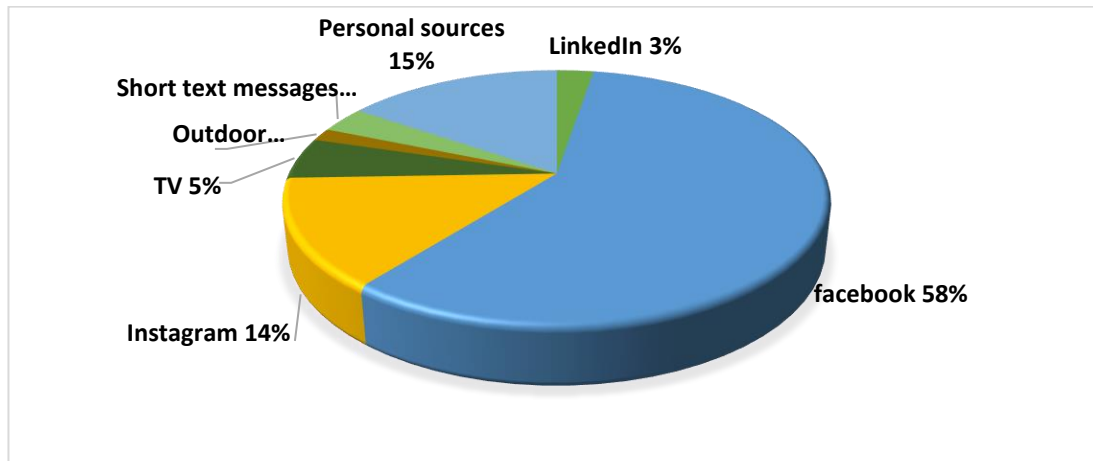


Figure 4: Sources of information about events

Sources: developed by the authors

When the respondents were asked which indicators are their priority when creating an impression on the company, the majority named: conveying interesting information about the company and its products and a pleasant atmosphere. The smallest part reported the use of visual effects.

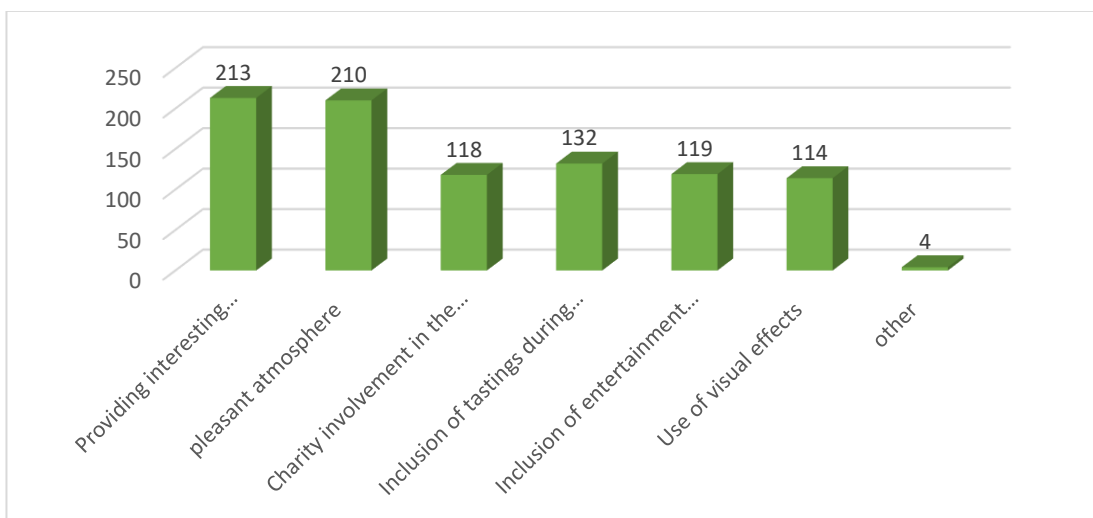


Figure 5: Priority indicators of events in creating a customer's impression of the company

Sources: developed by the authors

The majority of respondents, 61.6%, never attended an event, that had a negative impact on their relationship with the company. This fact indicates that the events are generally well organized and planned. The respondents had the opportunity to evaluate their level of satisfaction after attending the event, which 61.9% indicated that they were satisfied, the most dissatisfied was 1.3% of the respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

For effective use of events and formation of good impressions, which will help companies in the development of relations with customers, we have developed the following recommendations:

- During events, attention should be paid to creating such an atmosphere that will generate interest of consumers and the media in relation to firm. Before planning the measures, it is necessary to define its positive results, expected risks and the possibilities to deal with them;
- It is important to pay more attention to the organization and arrangement of events focused on specific target customers, which will allow companies to present their products or services to a specific target audience;
- If the company cannot make a special and positive impression on the customer with its measures, it will not get the desired result. Therefore, this aspect should be given a lot of attention when organizing events;
- It is necessary to create a well-designed and user-friendly website about the event to be held, which will leave a positive impression about the company. It is desirable to maintain relations with the customer after the end of the event. It is important to show them gratitude, make exclusive offers.

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