

## **The Clients of Special Events and specific Marketing Communication**

F. S. Barbu, O. I. Maxim

**Florentina-Simona Barbu, Olga-Irina Maxim**

Faculty of Economics

"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania

### **Abstract**

In order for a company to perform well, nothing is to be left to chance. Managers fulfill a great variety of tasks very fast, which determines the necessity for marketing managers to not only be well documented, but also inspired in selecting the appropriate communication strategies that correspond to the special events that are being organized.

Countless studies show that receivers (consumers) prefer certain communication channels, and that those transmitting the messages have their own channel preferences (Rice et. al., 1998). Therefore, the efficiency of marketing communication relies on the transmitter (marketing manager) identifying and choosing the specific communication channels that the receiver (consumer) prefers. Under these terms and conditions, the challenge consists in identifying the correct channels preferred by the clients that are aimed at organizing special events.

**Keywords:** receivers, consumers, communication channels, organizing special events.

### **Introduction**

Marketing managers from the new millennia have to handle a vast range of alternative media channels by which they send marketing communications towards the clients. Advertising or marketing

communication used by special events organizers represents the full effort of informing the market and stimulating the use of the company's services.

Philip Kotler says that *“marketing communications are the means by which companies try to inform the costumers, to convince them, and to remind them – either directly or indirectly – about the products and brands that they market. In a certain way, marketing communications represent the ‘voice’ of the brand and are a tool by which a dialogue can be formed and client relations can be built.”*

Marketing communications represent the voice by which the companies develop dialogues with clients and other interested parties regarding their products, services or other problems the company may be facing (Keller, 2001).

The importance of marketing communications has grown in recent years due to several reasons. The arrival and growth of IT and the fragmentation of the audience have fundamentally changed the marketing communications environment. The multiplication of ways in which a client can be reached through various types of traditional and nontraditional media have forced organizations to distance themselves from the model of mass communications and to face a growing number of options regarding their marketing communications.

Recently there has been a growth in marketing communications including internet advertising banners, emails and blogs, as well as communications through mobile phones, such as SMS and mobile TV. Internet and email have become part of the work place and family life for millions of people around the world. Text messages are also growing (Barwise and Strong, 2002, p.14).

Special events are unique market offers (“products/services”), having different characteristics from other market offers. For example, special events can be held in one or more locations; they can vary in terms of when they are initiated and when they are finalized, as well as the duration of the event; they can take place in temporary or permanent infrastructures; they can be organized by either private entities or franchised; the entry can be on the basis of tickets or free entry, and they can have commercial or non-profit purposes.

Marketing communications represent a key factor in the success of special events (Getz, 2005). Therefore, the diversity of this market offer can raise different challenges for event organizers as they develop marketing communication strategies.

## The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

Marketing communications are becoming more dynamic, and *the roles of the transmitters and receivers interchange more and more often as they interact* (Vlasic and Kesic, 2007, p. 109). Therefore, the interest has been oriented towards understanding the way in which the Web 1.0 internet is used by the special events organizers as a marketing communication channel. Certain researchers have focused their attention on the special events marketing area and have found that *the organizations in charge of special events adapt the content of the internet marketing communications in response to the knowledge they have about the consumers' motivation for participating in special events.* (Filo and Funk, 2005, p.113).

After a research done by Filo et.al. (2009, p.22), it has been concluded that *consumers have been more satisfied by a social event's website when they have been involved in gathering data than when the data was exploratory.* These conclusions offer perspectives for the organizations in charge of special events in the process of planning internet marketing communication strategies.

### **Case study regarding the influence of advertising on the clients of the Noblesse Event Hall**

Managers and marketing experts need to be preoccupied with the changes in the business environment, adapting to the market changes, knowing the clients' preferences, as well as many other important aspects, which are unknown until a thorough market research is made.

The case study presented in this article is based on making a research among the clients of S.C.VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L., by which to gather information that is both valid and valuable, in order to reach relevant conclusions regarding the marketing communication within the community.

In regards to the type of information that results from the research, it is a quantitative research, and in regards to the functional goal of the research, it is mainly an exploratory research due to the improbable sampling, but also a descriptive research, one that has followed the description and evaluation of the degree of influence advertising has on the clients of the Noblesse Event Hall.

The results of this research can be used to implement decisions regarding the marketing strategies which will be adopted by the company.

The defining elements of this research are presented below.

**The goal of the research.** The main goal of the research is to identify which communication channels the Noblesse Event Hall clients prefer.

**The objectives of the research.** These have been established starting from the main goal and are the following:

- What clients think of the Noblesse Event Hall services;
- Identifying which factors influence the use of the Noblesse Event Hall services;
- Identifying what are the characteristics of a quality service;
- Identifying which factors to take into account in acquiring the service package offered by the Noblesse Event Hall for the 2014 New Year's Eve;
- Identifying the means by which clients get informed in regards to the events that take place in the Noblesse Event Hall;
- What is the primary means by which the person found out about the existence of the Noblesse Event Hall;
- Identifying the degree of the influence of marketing communication on the clients;
- Measuring the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the Noblesse Event Hall clients;
- Establishing the profile of the Noblesse Event Hall clients.

**The assumptions of the research.** The following assumptions have been established:

- The majority of clients are satisfied by the diversity and quality of the services offered by the Noblesse Event Hall, the rest remaining undecided regarding the necessary improvements;
- The main criteria taken in consideration in choosing to organize a special event (wedding, baptism, New Year's Eve) in most cases is the price level;
- Many of the company's clients discover the Noblesse Event Hall through the Facebook page, demonstrating the power of virtual marketing;
- The majority of clients will recommend the Noblesse Event Hall to others.

**The researched community.** The general collectivity is represented by the majority of the Arad based clients of S.C.VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L. The results of this research can be extrapolated at the level of the specified general collectivity.

## The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

The observation unit is represented by the companies and individuals that benefit from the services of S.C.VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L, and the survey unit is the individual who participated at the New Year's Eve event organized in 2014 by the Noblesse Event Hall.

**The data collection method.** In order to respond better to the objectives of the research, we have opted for collecting data through email and Facebook by means of a survey with predetermined questions.

**The sample size.** The sample is comprised of 1000 clients from Arad, which represents a 95% probability of having guaranteed results, with a margin of error of  $\pm 5\%$ .

An authentic survey needs to fulfill the following conditions:

- to be relevant to the main goal;
- to be exact;
- to be as current as possible;
- to be available in a single center.

All of these are of course rigorous conditions which no survey can fully fulfill. The surveys are comprised of purposes that allow a certain margin of error due to different factors and these can't be avoided in practice.

As a base for our survey we used all the clients of SC VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L from the last 12 months (01.04.2013 – 01.04.2014). By client we mean every legal entity (such as companies) or individual that has benefited at least once from the Noblesse Event Hall services.

### **Determining the sample size and volume**

We have taken into consideration the number of clients in the past 12 months (01.04.2013 – 01.04.2014) which means 2500 individuals and 2 companies of different sizes.

The statistical restrictions are found in equation used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{t^2 p(1-p)}{\Delta_o^2}$$

where:

t = the factor relevant to the probability of guaranteed results (it is found in the statistical tables of the Student repartition). Normally, a probability of 95% is chosen.

$p$  = the ratio of the sample components that have the researched characteristic (because often the value of “ $p$ ” is unknown, it is considered equal to 0.5 in order to considerate the worst case scenario and to maximize the value of the dispersion);

$\Delta\omega$  = the allowed limit of error (the margin of error), equal to  $\pm 5\%$ .

The following has resulted from the calculations:

$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2 \times 0,5(1 - 0,5)}{(0,057)^2} = \frac{0,9604}{0,003249} = 296 \text{ people}$$

(The minimum limit statistically)

In order to guarantee results with an error of  $\pm 5\%$  and a trust probability of 95%, the final survey needs to be applied on a sample of at least 296 respondents, but because we are conducting a research to measure the influence of advertising on the Noblesse Event Hall clients, we have considered a sample of 100 individuals that are clients of SC VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L and have participated at the 2014 New Year’s Eve.

**The data collection instrument.** Corresponding to the data collection method, we have developed the data collection tool, which is a survey comprised of 16 content questions, as well as 4 identification questions, presented in the final cartridge.

After the survey was developed it was uploaded to Google Docs and the link was sent through email and Facebook. 45% of the responses came through email, while 55% came through Facebook. The results were collected in a period of two weeks.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study regarding the influence of advertising on the Noblesse Event Hall clients has been sufficiently conclusive to mention a few relevant conclusions regarding the marketing communication organizing within S.C. VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L.

The sample structure is as follows:

- 52% of the respondents are males, while 48% are females;
- 36% have jobs that require higher education, 19% are high-school and college students, 18% are managers and owners, 16% are employees earning medium wage, 6% are unemployed and

## The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

5% are retired;

- 53% of the respondents live in urban areas, while 47% live in rural areas;
- most respondents are between 26 and 35 years old, 31% are between 36 and 45 years old, 16% are between 18 and 25 years old, 11% are between 46 and 55 years old, 5% are under 18 years old and another 5% are over 55 years old.
- 26% earn between 1001 and 2000 RON, 23% earn between 2001 and 3000 RON, 17% earn between 4000 and 5000 RON, 14% earn between 3001-4000 RON, 11% earn over 5000 lei and 9% earn less than 1000 RON.

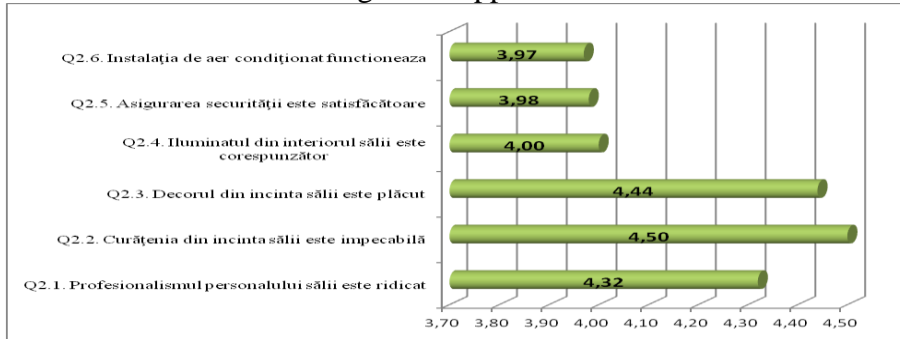
To conclude, we can say that the sample structure according to gender corresponds to a real structure, and the structure according to occupation, wage and where they live is proportionate. The structure according to age shows a higher focus on youth (64% are between 26 and 45 years old), individuals that are both - potential clients for renting the Event Hall and potential participants to certain events (weddings, baptisms, etc.).

- 65% of the respondents appreciate the quality as very good and 35% appreciate it as being good. The weighted average of the answers is 4.64, which shows a very good level of appreciation in regards to the services offered by the Event Hall.

It has been found that there is a significant difference (hi square=11.244, degree of liberty =5,  $p=0.47 < 0.05$ ) between the appreciation of the quality of the services and the occupation. We can observe from the table that all occupation categories have given greater marks except retired individuals.

- The biggest weighted average of the responses is 4.5 (fully agree) for cleanliness, followed by decorations (4.44) and the professionalism (4.32). The other three factors (lighting, security and air conditioning) have all received values close to 4 (agree).
- All the services offered by the Event Hall are appreciated at a very good level because the weighted average of responses is higher than 4.5 and the medians have the value of 5. The most appreciated factor is the decoration (4.67), followed by the table arrangements (4.61), the access to services (4.60), the lighting (4.54), the bar services (4.52) and finally the table decorations (4.51).

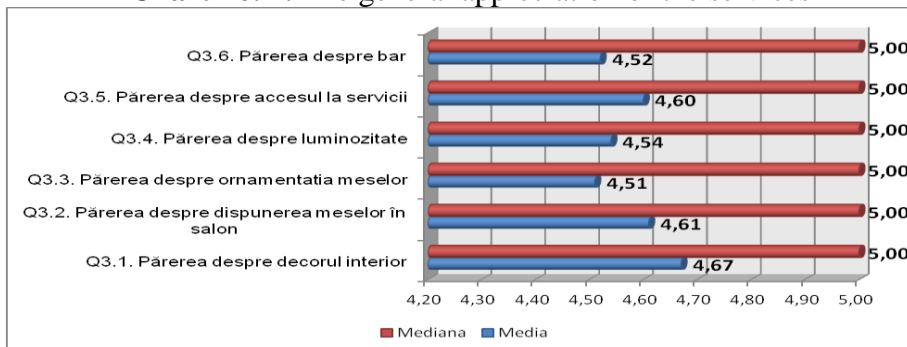
**Chart no. 1.** The general appreciation of the services



**Source:** data analysis in SPSS 2.1.

From the chart above we can observe that the biggest weighted average of responses is 4.5 (fully agree) for cleanliness, followed by the decoration (4.44) and the professionalism (4.32). The other three factors (lighting, security and air conditioning) all have values close to 4 (agree).

**Chart no. 2.** The general appreciation of the services



**Source:** data analysis in SPSS 2.1.

From the result analysis (chart nr.2), we can observe that all the services offered by the Event Hall are appreciated at a very good level because the weighted average of responses is higher than 4.5 and the medians have the value of 5. The most appreciated factor is the decoration (4.67), followed by the table arrangements (4.61), the access to services (4.60), the lighting (4.54), the bar services (4.52) and finally the table decorations (4.51).

- 45% find the menus to be attractive, 47% finds them very

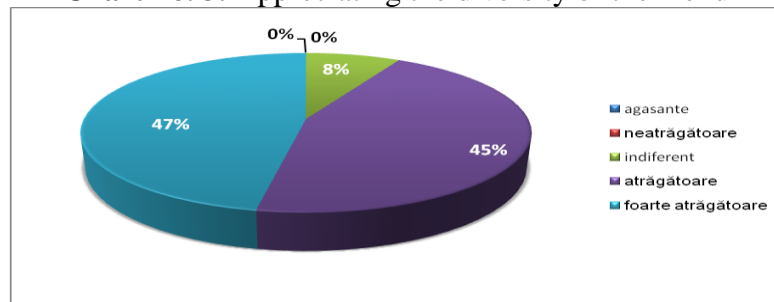


### The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

attractive and 8% have declared to be indifferent. The weighted average of the results is 4.39 and the median is 4, which shows that the diversity of the menu is considered attractive;

- 48% appreciate the 2014 New Year's Eve organized by Noblesse to be very good, 45% appreciate it as good and 8% as satisfactory. The weighted average of responses is 4.41 and the median is 4, which show that the 2014 New Year's Eve organized by Noblesse was good;
- The most often used means of information about organizing events are social networks (weighted average is 4.43 and the median is 4). The second most preferred means is the radio (weighted average is 4.30 and the median is 4), followed by printed materials (weighted average is 3.98 and the median is 4), the Internet (weighted average is 3.88 and the median is 4). The least preferred means is the printed press (weighted average is 1.09 and the median is 1).
- ▶ Males prefer the printed press more than females;
- ▶ People from rural areas use the radio for information more than people from urban areas;
- ▶ People that prefer television as a means of information don't prefer the radio and printed materials.

**Chart no. 3.** Appreciating the diversity of the menu



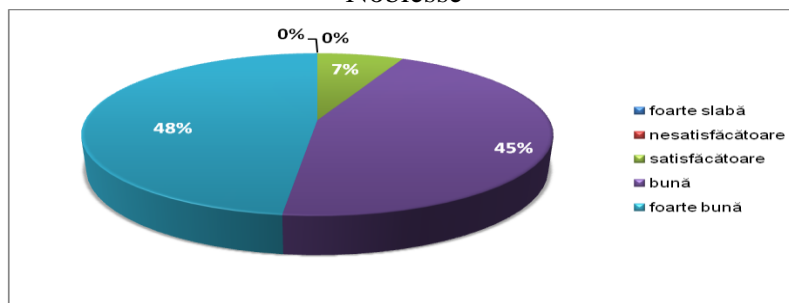
**Source:** data analysis in SPSS 2.1.

From the above chart we can observe that 45% find the menus to be attractive, 47% finds them very attractive and 8% have declared to be indifferent. The weighted average of the results is 4.39 and the median is 4 which show that the diversity of the menu is considered attractive.

Chart nr. 4 shows that 48% appreciate the 2014 New Year's Eve organized by Noblesse to be very good, 45% appreciate it as good and

8% as satisfactory. The weighted average of responses is 4.41 and the median is 4, which shows that the 2014 New Year's Eve organized by Noblesse was good.

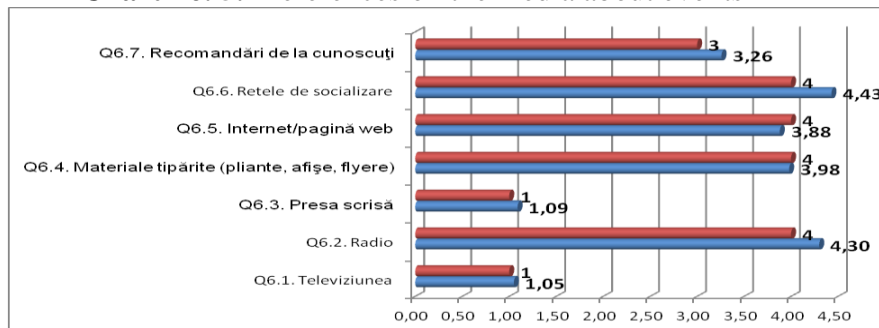
**Chart no. 4.** Appreciating the 2014 New Year's Eve organized by Noblesse



**Source:** data analysis in SPSS 2.1.

From chart nr.5 we can observe that the most often used means of information about organizing events are social networks (weighted average is 4.43 and the median is 4).

**Chart no. 5.** Preferences on the media about events



**Source:** data analysis in SPSS 2.1.

The second most preferred means is the radio (weighted average is 4.30 and the median is 4), followed by printed materials (weighted average is 3.98 and the median is 4), the Internet (weighted average is 3.88 and the median is 4). The least preferred means is the printed press (weighted average is 1.09 and the median is 1).

- 48% of the respondents have declared that they are very pleased with the price per value ratio, 42% are pleased and 10% have

## The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

declared to be indifferent. The weighted average of responses is 3.26 and the median is 3, which shows that the respondents place the price per value ratio of the 2014 New Year's Eve services at an average level;

- Most have decided to participate at the 2014 New Year's Eve event organized by Noblesse because of the package price (27%), 20% for the quality of the services, 17% for the diversity of the menu, 14% for the ambiance, 13% for the music bands and 9% for the convenient site;
- The most important feature of promoting the 2014 New Year's Eve event organized by Noblesse was the capacity to transmit information (4.21 weighted average);
- The credibility has also played an important role (with an average of 3.96), followed by the degree of influence the message had (average of 3.89). The most insignificant features have been: the possibility of memorizing the message (2.46), followed by arousing curiosity (2.67) and the utility (2.7).
- The most attractive means of advertising used by the Noblesse Event Hall to promote the 2014 New Year's Eve event has been online (4.47 average, with a median of 5), which is very attractive, followed by radio, banners, posters and flyers (attractive);
- 96% of respondents consider Facebook advertising as a cheap and beneficial method for promoting the events of the Noblesse Event Hall, while 4% don't consider it to be beneficial. Using the chi square test we have determined that there are significant differences ( $p=0,001<0,05$ , chi square=100, df=1) between those who think Facebook advertising is cheap and efficient and those who have visited the Facebook profile of the Event Hall;
- Most (69%) have participated at weddings, 53% at baptism and the 2013 New Year's Eve event, 40% to different conferences, 38% at expositions and 31% at private parties;
- 78% of respondents would recommend the Noblesse Event Hall to others and a great percent, namely 22%, wouldn't;
- 59% have declared themselves to be occasional clients, 15% have visited the Event Hall by chance, 14% have declared themselves to be faithful clients and 12% aren't clients.

Most occasional clients would not recommend the Noblesse Event Hall to others (12%), followed by those who came by chance (7%). The faithful clients, who make up the majority, would recommend the Event

Hall to others (92%).

### **Conclusion**

The services provided by the Noblesse Event Hall address younger age segment, more exactly those under 40 years old. The Noblesse Event Hall clients prefer online means regarding information, rather than the classical means.

The Noblesse Event Hall Facebook page seems to be the best means, being a more accessible and cheaper form of advertising, which the clients tend to prefer. Therefore, the company can continue to focus on Internet advertising (through the website, newsletter campaigns sent through email to the clients in the database and through photographs taken at events and posted on Facebook) in order to attract new clients.

S.C. VH 11 Gold Wedding S.R.L., following the research, observes that when clients are well treated and served, they become a long term source of profit for the company. Consequently, the company needs to focus on winning the clients' fidelity and satisfying their desires at a superior level.

Also, the goal of a succesful campaign needs to surpass the simple satisfaction of the clients' needs. The company presented in this case study aims to fully satisfy its clients, because a client that is satisfied with the services represents a means of advertising that is much more efficient than any other advertising means.

### **Bibliography**

- Barwise, T.P., Strong, C. (2002), "Permission-based mobile advertising", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 16, Winter, p. 14-24.
- Filo, K., Funk, D. (2005), "Congruence between attractive product features and virtual content delivery for internet marketing communications", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 14, p. 112-22.
- Filo, K., Funk, D., Hornby, G. (2009), "The role of web site content on motive and attitude change for sports events", *The Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 23, p. 21-40.
- Flanagin, A.J., Metzger, M.J. (2001), "Internet use in the contemporary media environment", *Human Communication Research*, Vol. 27, January, p. 153-81.

The clients of special events and specific marketing communication

- Getz D. (2005), "Event Management and Event Tourism" Cognizant Communication Corporation, Cornell University.
- Keller K. L. (2001), "Mastering the marketing communications mix: Micro and macro perspectives on integrated marketing communication programs" *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol.17 (7/8), p.819-847.
- Kotler Ph., Keller K., (2008), "Marketing Management", *5th Edition*, Editura Teora, p. 788.
- Rice, R.E., D'Ambra, J., More, E. (1998), "Cross-cultural comparison of organizational media evaluation and choice", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 48, Summer, p. 3-26.
- Vlastic, G., Kesic, T. (2007), "Analysis of consumers' attitudes toward interactivity and relationship personalization as contemporary developments in interactive marketing communication", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, Vol. 3 No. 2, p. 109-129.