

The top tips for live experiences in 2018

 By [Glenn van Eck](#)

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Working across a broad mix of audiences, it's the younger segment I often look to for insight, inspiration and trends.



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In 2017 we worked on a lot of events and festivals that attracted a young adult audience, and there are a few takeaways myself and the team had, as well as some supplementary reading to understand what they will mean for brand experiences.

Fluidity

The digital revolution has opened us up to endless possibilities in every aspect of life, it has given us all the ability to be whoever we want to be; and it's resulting in open and fluid identities that go beyond gender, genre and style.

On the plus side, this has made this generation one of the most informed and tolerant. But for event and marketing professionals, it means young people have fast-changing preferences which appear fickle, because they have ample access to information to allow them to nurture eclectic and sometimes inconsistent tastes. Because of this, brand experience creators have to think in attitudes and tribes, not demographics and LSM's.

A higher purpose

Social purpose is key. Consumers increasingly expect brands to have not just functional benefits but a social purpose – a link to something bigger than themselves. As a result, companies are taking social stands in obvious ways.

Be real

Brand authenticity provides reassurance and validates choice, but the term "authentic" is overused. The younger generation is ruthless in their assessment of how 'real' brands are. Pepsi endured colossal backlash for an errant brand decision in 2017, showing that if a campaign or experience is in any way forced and inauthentic, they will be called out for it on public platforms.



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So, how do you prove authenticity? Be consistent and practise what you preach in every element of your brand experience; show people what you stand for rather than telling them. Own your learnings and mistakes – don't believe for one minute that you can be a spin-doctor on facts that could come back to you. And don't jump on the latest trend or movement if you don't believe in it.

The 'maker' generation

Joseph Beuys was right when he said 'everyone is an artist', with today's audiences wanting to curate, craft, edit and 'make' their content as part of their brand experience. By including elements of self-expression, experimentation and personalisation in events and experiences, you, in turn, enhance an individual's social and professional currency.

Seamless journeys

Brand experiences transcend physical activation, meaning all live experiences should be designed to complement and amplify the consumers' digital experience. A key consideration in events is creating spaces that capture the spirit of the moment and culture, and seamlessly translate it into the social realm. Make areas for generation Snapchat and Instagram, create them as part exhibit, part installation to encourage engagement.

The next level

If done well, AR and VR can amplify events to the highest level. Facebook is taking VR to another level with Oculus Venues, allowing people to view live events such as sports and concerts in virtual reality. Meanwhile, Melody VR enables fans to experience 360-degree gigs as if they were there, from the crowd to the stage.



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The brand experience world continues to evolve, and lines are blurring. Brands want true, content-rich, shareable events with talkability. For all of us working in the fast-paced, rich and audience-driven world of events this represents a massive opportunity.

ABOUT GLENN VAN ECK

Glenn is a true entrepreneur. From the age of 16, he has been involved with Magnetic Storm, initially by assisting his brother with the setting up and de-rigging of AV equipment and thereafter maintenance of equipment; and at 25 years of age Glenn purchased Magnetic Storm. Fast forward to 2016 and Glenn is still at the helm of the business, and has grown a two-man disco to a full-service events and tech company with offices in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, servicing the entire country.

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