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# UNDERSTANDING SERVICE MARKETING IN PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Review  
Article

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## Abstract

*The study of arts marketing is a comparatively new concept beginning in the 1960s. However, non-profit arts organizations only started to consider marketing as an integral part of their operations and use it increasingly from the 1980s. Generally, art is a broad field, which includes categories such as performing arts, visual arts, graphic arts, and literary arts. Each category has a unique character, requiring specific marketing methods and strategies. As the role of marketing, especially service marketing in the arts and performing arts disciplines, have been rarely studied, marketers face the problem of how to apply these marketing activities into the arts. The purpose of this study is to identify and compound literature regarding the characteristics of the arts, especially in performing arts, describe the role of marketing in arts, gain a better understanding of service marketing features and specific marketing activities in the field of arts and performing arts.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of marketing has been applied comparatively late in arts institutions, specifically in the performing arts. Thankfully, in the last few decades researchers have been focusing more on arts marketing, performing arts marketing, and classical music marketing, etc. As the number of leisure activities in the market is increasing, there is more demand for arts institutions to study their customer's wants and needs. For instance, in the classical music field, marketing can improve one's knowledge of why classical music should be listened to, why it is effective for humans, and why it is preferable over other types of music such as rock, pop, folk, and jazz music. Marketing is crucial in this field to provide audiences with this aforementioned knowledge and information, and to provide demand-based art products and services.

Tobelem (1998) claims that the marketing concept has been introduced in cultural institutions due to several reasons, but most importantly to understand their audiences, raise more cultural awareness, improve financial sources, and to enhance competitiveness in the field of leisure activities within internal and external sectors. On the other hand, cultural institutions have been forced by the government to have their own operational business model through their need for funding (O'Reilly, 2005). Through this assumption, some of the academics consider the cultural sector as one of the branches of non-profit marketing, and most of the writers and researchers in the profession expressed their interest for more in-depth study into the field of art marketing and marketing in the cultural sectors (Lee, 2005). As marketing has become a crucial principle of the arts, identification of the proper marketing methods for the art products has been faced by marketers. Marketers identified art products as an intangible aspect offered to audiences as a service. In the performing arts, this assistance provided by non-profit cultural institutions is given with the purpose to educate and civilize audiences and is considered a cultural service rather than an act of culture itself due to its intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. Taking art products as a cultural service, marketers needed to distinguish the marketing mix in goods and services. Therefore, due to the specific features of the arts – particularly in the performing arts - the art products very much belong to the service marketing.

This paper proposes to study a literature review of performing arts and classical music marketing, the juxtaposition of service and extended marketing in these fields, and to provide a contribution to the study of arts marketing with regards to art products and the specific marketing activities utilized in the field of performing arts. The first part of the paper

presents the importance of the role of marketing in the arts, performing arts, and classical music fields, emphasizing specific features of each, followed by characteristics of both service marketing and an extended marketing mix approach in the area of the chosen fields.

## **THE ROLE OF MARKETING IN THE ARTS AND PERFORMING ARTS**

In a broad way, art consumption has a variety of benefits such as increased awareness of culture, interrelation with peers, and the aesthetic and emotional excitement and pleasure for the customers. However, most importantly to educate people as well as allowing the social community to interact with a work of art (Holbrook, 1980). The arts can give family members an unforgettable experience by developing and improving their close relationships whilst spending quality time together (Hill, O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan, 2003).

Since the 1980s, there has been a growing interest in the use of marketing by nonprofit arts organizations. The understanding of marketing as a decision-making process was confirmed by works written in the second half of the 1980s (Rodger, 1987). Since the 1990s, a stunning evolution in arts marketing and a huge development period in the art marketing field erupted when the new approaches were analyzed and the role of marketing was integrated. Marketing was admitted as an instrument of organizations' development and was adopted in all art organizations. The role of marketing has been institutionalized in arts organizations, for example the establishment of marketing departments; an increased number of arts marketing experts and consultants and their publications and surveys, and the regular organization of relevant training courses, conferences, and seminars provided by the Arts Marketing Association (Lee, 2005).

Marketing was a necessity in the arts industry, providing a different perspective between the arts and the public, and being defined by many writers as an exchange of values between consumers and an arts organization. For instance, customers expected to get social, psychological, and aesthetic profits from their visit to the performances at the expense of their money, time, and energy, whilst on the other hand, the organization obtains income, recognition, and emotional support from visitors at the cost of managerial, artistic efforts, and expense (Lee, 2005). From the marketing perspective, value is completely subjective and a key of the market, which also applies in the arts (Kotler, 1972). Moreover, the marketing mindset not only aids arts organizations by improving their resource use, and helping them to working more efficiently and

responsibly, but also in thinking strategically about how to communicate with their audiences (Hill et al., 2003). Even though marketing has a crucial role in the arts, research in arts marketing is still a new field and these questions have not been the subject of a great deal of research.

Arts marketing focuses directly on the possible forms of communication between potential audiences and relevant artists (Diggle, 1984). Melillo and Lavender (1983) states that marketing is corrupt in terms of commerce, and argues that marketing principles and practices when used in the arts need to change before integrating them into the creative process. Recently, Colbert, Nantel, Bilodeau, and Rich (2001) have developed the concept of the independence of the art product market, which is a distinctive feature of arts marketing. Arts marketing is unique and special as it starts with the product and is then delivered to the customers, rather than responding to market demand. Hirschman (1983) expressed that marketing theory needs to recognize the specificity of the artistic industry. In other words, artists first create their product and then distribute it to consumers, but it does not matter whether they will accept it or reject it. In another way, arts organizations produce cultural products and then compete with each other to attract the attention of consumers and for a share of national wealth (Kotler, 1975). Other writers also recognize the difference between commercial and arts marketing, and while the former determines the nature of a product or service by the needs of its customers, art needs to be created regardless of such compatibility due to the unique nature of cultural goods. Therefore, the role of marketing is so unique, which is not to focus on what kind of art to create, but to combine the artist's interpretation and work with a suitable and appropriate audience (Mokwa, William & Prieve, 1980).

Nevertheless, in order to increase customer satisfaction, it is necessary to create art products that meet the needs of customers, and all marketing strategies must be acclimated to the needs of consumers in terms of price, place, and promotion (Lee, 2005). Kotler (1976) categorizes art products as tangible items or services; products that address basic benefits or issues such as beauty, joy, cleanliness, or comfort. Similar to his generic product concept, an art product is understood as a set of total experiences such as learning, social experiences, evening entertainment, annual rituals, or an adventurous event (Kolb, 2000). Finally, art organizations have two different aims: to implement the artistic vision and to meet market needs, and the job of art marketers is to mediate between artists and the audience and to strike a balance between them (Diggle, 1976). For instance, Scheff and Kotler (1996) suggest that art marketers need to find a harmonious balance between the arts

and the market-focused parties, which is a beneficial mix for art organizations and their customers.

Performing arts marketing, on the other hand, differs from arts marketing in that it interprets and represents the artist's content (Spranzi, 1996), such as music, dance, theater, and opera, in which the content of the artist is not directly accepted by the public but mediated by the performers (Scheff & Kotler, 1996). In terms of goods and services, the nature of artistic products can be tangible - such as books, paintings - or intangible - such as live performance (Evrard, 1991). So, what is a product in the performing arts? It is a creative work or a selection of works presented by one or more performers live or broadcast to an audience. Gans (1974) described it as an element of aesthetic education and a prerequisite for the appreciation of high culture. Moreover, performing arts creations tend to focus on selling performances rather than designing products based on consumer needs (Pallin, 2003). Thus, the marketing of performing arts differs in function from that of the traditional commercial (Kerrigan, Fraser & Özbilgin, 2004).

#### **SERVICE AND SERVICE MARKETING FEAUTES IN PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

For the past decade, consumer behavior has undergone three major changes in developed countries, one of which is intangible products used and experienced by the customer. Traditionally, durable material products are still playing an important role in consumer behavior, however there is a growing interest in the use and experience of intangible products rather than a selection of tangible products (Van & Gilovich, 2003). According to the theory of experience recommendation, consumers will be happier if they spend their revenue on life experiences such as travel, entertainment, leisure activities, and food rather than material things such as clothing or accessories (Yang & Mattila, 2017). Therefore, the decision-making procedure for purchasing a service is different from that of the product; the former is more intensive in experience (Dirsehan & Yalçın, 2011). Customer experience is the key to service marketing, therefore creating and managing the experience is a fundamental management task of the service organizations (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2009). When offering intangible products, it is difficult to measure the customer experience.

Viewing intangible offerings as services can help promote and showcase them. From the 1970s, an important development in the service sector was the application of marketing. While manufacturing industries offer measurable products to their customers, service organizations offer intangible

services to their customers (Hill et al., 2003). Service marketing tools are an important factor in many strategies adopted by non-profit organizations, such as schools, churches, hospitals, and museums (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Several authors encouraged the role of non-profit organizations in society as their services are crucial to the education and social well-being (Duque-Zuluaga & Schneider, 2008). Bateson and Hoffman (1999) endeavored to investigate the connection between services and their production in a Servuction model, in which a service is a mixture of visible and invisible sources that the customer can identify as being an organizational process and recognize its internal system.

Benito (2011) stated that cultural institutions do not create material products but intangibles, such as education, emotions, and experience. Some authors acknowledge that intangible benefits, specifically psychological benefits, are an important means of strong interactions with cultural institutions (Glynn, Bhattacharya & Rao, 1996). Arts organizations provide services rather than physical products in the same way as other organizations, such as hairdressers, doctors, and banks (Bateson & Hoffman, 1999). In arts, finding a suitable marketing approach is an intricate complexity, having a significant impact on an organization's mission, the nature of the organization's audience, and their ability to make a profit. In the performing arts, however, services face different risks due to the nature of the product not being established for consumers before consumption (Colbert, 2003). In terms of arts marketing, not all products are considered intangible, but offer ancillary products such as video and audio recorders, books, and posters with theatre schedules. These are called semi-intangible because of their mutual relationship to the intangible value of services and the nature of tangible goods (Hill, O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan, 1995).

Services are these performances that cannot be seen, tasted, felt or touched. Due to these specific service characteristics, Bateson and Hoffman (1999) have identified four main components of the difference between goods and services: intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability.

Intangibility- Intangibility is an essential distinction between goods and services (Bateson, 1979). Intangible benefits, specifically psychological benefits, are an important tool through which to communicate strongly with cultural institutions (Glynn et al., 1996). Performing arts organizations are characterized by intangible services, such as performances and shows, that produce an experience, emotion, and inspiration for their customers, as well as give them an advantage of preference in the future.

Inseparability- The inseparability component refers to the services as the production and consumption processes take place at exactly the same time. Industrial products are produced and sold before they are consumed, while services are sold, produced, and consumed concurrently; (Regan, 1963) in the performing arts, the moments of performance and consumption are the same, and the consumer of the culture is directly exposed to the experience. In many services, such as haircuts, airplane trips, entertainment, and leisure activities, the basic concept of inseparability that leads to a deeper connection with the production process is that the customer must be present during the production process (Carman & Langeard, 1980). As mentioned above, in the performing arts the consumer is more or less involved in the process of events. In a highly connected service where customers are involved in the production process, marketers regard customers as part-time employees and can utilize this to make them more productive.

Heterogeneity- Heterogeneity in performing arts reflects the potential and possible performance variables of service. Generally, more people are involved in providing this experience. Each performance provides different influences and experiences to the same individual, and theater members or artists make a significant contribution to the customer's experience (Hill et al., 1995). For example, suppose a theater offers the same performance for the same group of members during the week. However, every performance is different because the artist's performance fluctuates every day. The level of consistency with which you can simply calculate and try to communicate with the customer is not high (Knisely, 1979).

Perishability- Perishability refers to the concept of a service that is unable to be preserved (Thomas, 1978). Service businesses often have difficulty synchronizing supply and demand because services are performances that cannot be duplicated later. For example, unsold tickets for any event, performance, or show mean the eventual loss of ability to generate revenue over a period of time, even if the cultural institution pays for all the services it provides (Hill et al., 1995).

Based on these characteristics, it can be concluded that the service is intangible and cannot be tested before purchase, unable to store, keep, save and that consumers seek to get physical evidence for their future experiences when interacting with service providers (Langeard, Bateson, Lovelock & Eigler, 1981).

Kotler and Andreasen's expressions taken by Benito (2011) is that there is a striking difference between selling tangible and intangible products. Due to their unique nature, the performing arts require the use of specific and appropriate marketing techniques. As mentioned earlier, the main service offered by an arts organization is

intangible or visual, which is a performance. On the other hand, the tangibility of the service might probably be for instance the coffee shop, where goods can be sold (Kerrigan et al., 2004). Each performance is unique because the audience's response affects its quality and represents a unique combination of artistic and technical teamwork (Urrutiaguer, 2002).

Performing arts services are offered with a high quality of experience (Harvey, 1998) and a great reliance on certain customer segments. Accordingly, experiential and experience-centered marketing is represented with greater proportion in this industry. Arts organizations have evolved into experience-centered institutions that inspire audiences, increase personal importance, and integrate human needs into mission statements (Kotler, 1999). Increasingly, arts organizations advertise themselves as a multi-faceted space (Silverman, 1995) and explore strategies to maintain relationships with their audiences and increase their participation (Diggle, 1995). According to Schmitt (1999), it is possible to build up a fourth-tier product into a core product and an augmented product as an experienced product, which includes customer experiences such as physical, sensory, emotional, innovative, and cognitive experiences. On average, if a customer is satisfied with a product they tell three people about their experience, reversely the dissatisfied customer complains about the product to eleven people, which is an enormous concern to the performing arts (Kotler & Armstrong, 1991). Therefore, the audience experience is tremendously important in the performing arts, like any other industry, and dictates as to whether audiences will visit again or not. A marketing approach has been introduced in the performing arts industry that seeks to establish a greater connection between the audience and the main service/performance (Bouder-Pailler, 1999). Therefore, marketing is important in building a good relationship with the audience and customers and in gaining experience in the performing arts as a service organization.

#### **HOW DOES THE EXTENDED MARKETING MIX AFFECT PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATION?**

In marketing research, the traditional marketing mix is called 4P, which consists of product, price, place, and promotion, and is widely accepted and used (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995). However, as marketing has become more sophisticated and diverse, the 4P model has received some criticism (Zeithaml et al., 2009). Traditional industrial businesses manufacture products and then deliver them to consumers, while simultaneously in service organizations products are also created (Bitner,

1992). Regarding certain components of the service, some researchers have suggested that the traditional marketing mix needs to be expanded to include service organizations by adding 3P; people, physical evidence, and process. According to Cîntec (2010), the marketing mix in the cultural sector is an empirical and tactical component designed to promote products for sale. In this regard, several authors refer to 6P in the arts marketing mix as product, price, place, promotion, personnel, and process (Dickman, 1997). However, the most appropriate marketing mix for the performing arts is 7P, depending on the specifics of the service, such as product, price, place, promotion, personnel, process, and physical evidence.

**Product:** In the performing arts, products refer to the performances they offer, in this case intangible so-called core products. Theaters also offer augmented tangible products such as coffee and buffets, while some theaters offer their customers seasonal schedules, show calendars, special guests or actors, printed programs, and more (Dickman, 1997). Customer satisfaction is enhanced by modifying or changing augmented products that add value to core activities. Culture and arts marketing needs to protect core products which is a performance (Bhrádaigh, 1997). On the contrary, augmented products need to be modified, and expanded. It is assumed that customer satisfaction of theatrical shows is dependent on both core service and augmented service (Boerner, Moser & Jobst, 2011).

**Price:** Recent research suggests that the reasons for not participating in arts activities are related to the cost of ticket prices and lack of time. Price is an essential factor in the marketing mix and should be considered and analyzed separately by the public (Cacovean, 2015). Some events require the creation of free admission tickets for certain people, as this helps to attract new audiences, boost customer loyalty, gain a steady flow of visitors, reduce the cultural disparity in audience proportions (Courvoisier & Courvoisier, 2007). People have a lot of options in their spare time; therefore, the organizations should carry out their prices carefully. To increase the number of audiences, theatrical organizations offer several discounts on a series of subscriptions (D'Astous, Legoux & Colbert, 2009), and some cultural institutions encompass the general ticket price to include services or various facilities, or prices for augmented products such as printed schedules, food, beverages, parking, or souvenirs (Dickman, 1997).

**Place:** There are many factors to consider concerning the sense of place in theatres and performing arts: the location, building, number of seats, parking, facilities, technical equipment, arena, etc. (Dickman, 1997). The place does not

just mean locations or buildings, a variety of tools are used to unlock the experience offered to as many consumers as possible. In most cases, performing arts organizations organize tour concerts nationally and internationally. Distribution decides how to establish and maintain a convenient relationship with the most potential customers in the organization at the lowest cost. Châtelain (1997) states that there are two strategies for pulling and pushing the shuttle, which is to make the services offered to a wider audience more accessible. The pull strategy indicates image and prestige to attract more audiences to the theatre, and the push strategy along with the many promotion techniques, advertises the product, allowing it to be unrecognizable in the market.

**Promotion:** This is part of the e-marketing mix that interacts with the sales of benefits offered to the target market/audience. This plays a vital role in arts marketing strategies, and the goal is not just to reach existing audiences, but also to cover the interest of new customers. Promotion includes advertising, publicity, direct sales, and public relations, and is a way to provide information to the audiences (Dickman, 1997). In relation to a company or organization's primary goals and promotion budget, marketers choose a variety of marketing strategies to advertise and promote their services to the public and to integrate with the organization's image. Cultural organizations often engage in public relations as a variable that is extraneous to the marketing mix (Cacovean, 2015). Such promotional activities often feel to artists, art managers, and art organizations as beneath their dignity (Laczniak & Murphy, 1977).

**Personnel-** Identified in the extended marketing mix are the most important and valuable resources and technologies; the personnel who play an important role in the service company and organization. For instance, if a customer faces a problem of losing a child, the people who are responsible with the task of helping are employees and securities. Therefore, a partnership between customers and personnel is paramount (Dickman, 1997). Several writers consider that the decision-making process of a customer in a service organization is influenced by the personnel in the dimension of interacting with audiences, promoting offers, and designing communications (Kotler, Kotler & Kotler, 1998). Providing priority service and customer interaction are activities reflected in the core and additional aspects of service (Lovelock, 1992).

**Processes:** During the processing period, the customer's attitude of the full event can be influenced by their experiences (Dickman, 1997). The characteristics of each customer is compared to one another; thus, the audience's choices are being predicted and customer loyalty can be increased. Due to the development of technology, many arts

organizations have simplified this process to reach the market segment of the younger generation and audiences with a higher education level more easily in order to expand potential outreach (Colbert, 2009). The process should be simple, understandable, clear, and concise, which leads to a more precise practice and higher customer satisfaction.

**Physical evidence:** Physical evidence encompasses all environmental conditions, as well as the pattern, symbols, signs, and function of the space, and the artifacts, in which the service consumption exists (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985). This element is very important in the performing arts, because performances must occur in a well thought out environment to properly meet the needs of the audience. Therefore, it is important how this environment is managed, services are organized, and delivered to the audiences (Courvoisier & Courvoisier, 2007). Customer-led quality of service is everything that is positive received from employees by phone or in person at the theater (Rentschler & Gilmore, 2002), as well as access to public transportation, parking resources, and to the addressing of customer issues or complaints (Colbert, 2009).

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to integrate literature regarding the main characteristics of marketing, the role of service marketing, a broad mix of marketing, and an extended marketing mix in the field of arts, especially in the performing arts, and to provide a better insight and understanding about its benefits. With the increasing number of leisure activities, people have a plethora of options to choose from. Taking that into consideration, arts institutions are implementing marketing strategies such as disseminating the uniqueness and distinctive characteristics of the arts to the public, listening to the needs and desires of their customers, and taking care of those customers, providing them with information about why they need to choose arts rather than other activities. Therefore, the marketing of performing arts is one of the key areas to apply these strategies in the operations of the art organizations.

Even though marketing has been applied in the arts industry latterly, it is making a greater contribution to the arts and performing arts. Marketers and researchers are also paying attention to this field to suggest inputs and adjustments. They have determined performing arts as a service, which offers performance to the audiences. Therefore, the first thing to do as a new researcher was to identify marketing roles, proper services, service marketing and extended marketing mix approaches, methods and features in the field of performing arts.

While customers obtain many social, aesthetic, and psychological benefits by attending the performing arts events in return for their expenses, the organizations gain revenue, gratitude, and emotional support instead of cost of expense and management efforts. Arts marketing is unique and special as it starts with the product and then delivers to the customers, rather than responding to market demand. However, in order to increase customer satisfaction, arts organizations need to focus on customer demand, and adapt all marketing strategies to meet customer needs (Lee, 2005). Therefore, this study aims to answer the questions of why marketing is a necessity and what the role of marketing in the arts and performing arts is.

For customers, performance is subject to various risks as the product is uncertain before its consumption (Colbert, 2003). There is a vast difference between selling intangibles and tangibles because of the special characteristics of the service such as intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. Visiting a performance is an experience, an unsatisfied customer will share this with many more people than a satisfied one, resulting in extreme concerns and care within the performing arts organizations (Kotler & Armstrong, 1991). Therefore, this is congruent to any other service organizations where the audience experience is tremendously important and influences to the audience retention rate. Thus, the performing arts organizations need appropriate and specific marketing techniques and approaches to help create a greater link between the audiences and the core services/performances.

The marketing mix in the performing arts needs to be expanded regarding the specific characteristics, adding 3Ps as people, physical evidence, and process. These additional 3Ps play an important role as the output is produced and experienced by the consumer at the same time. All 7Ps are essential to meet customers' expectations, and to support and build up their experiences in a positive way. In the performing arts, the 7Ps work in a different way than in other service organizations, hence this study presents the role of 7Ps in this specific field.

Synthesizing, identifying, and determining the role of marketing, service marketing, and an extended marketing mix in the fields of arts and performing arts will produce a great contribution to the development and future work of these industries.

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