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**Experience Marketing:  
Concepts, Frameworks  
and Consumer Insights**

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# Experience Marketing: Concepts, Frameworks and Consumer Insights

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## Experience Marketing: Concepts, Frameworks and Consumer Insights

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### Abstract

Experience is a new and exciting concept marketing academia and practice. This monograph reviews the various meanings of experience as the term is used in philosophy, psychology, and in consumer behavior and marketing. I will discuss the key concepts of experience marketing such as experiential value, different types of experiences, the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary experiences and experience touch-points. I will also review the empirical findings that provide consumer insights on experiences — such as how experiences are remembered, whether positive and negative experiences can co-exist, how experiential attributes are processed and whether experiences are rational. Practical frameworks for managing and marketing experiences will be discussed. I will conclude with an exploration of how experience marketing can contribute to customer happiness.

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# 1

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## Introduction

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Consider some of the intriguing new products and brands that have appeared on the market during the first decade of the 21st century: Apple with its iPod, iPhone and iPad products, Nintendo's Wii and Vitamin Water, just to name a few. All these products boast innovative designs and promise superior function. But focusing on their product features tells only a part of the story. Just as creative and innovative is the way these brands are marketed to consumers — through appeals to our senses, feelings, intellect, curiosity, and self-image rather than to more rational, utilitarian notions of value. Such marketing techniques have turned up in all sorts of industries, from consumer electronics and automotives, to airlines and retailing. Think of the Mini Cooper, Jet Blue or the stores of Abercrombie & Fitch. What they have in common is a focus on experience.

Experience marketing is a new and exciting concept. And it is not only of interest to academics. Marketing practitioners have come to realize that understanding how consumers experience brands and, in turn, how to provide appealing brand experiences for them, is critical for differentiating their offerings in a competitive marketplace.

## 2 Introduction

Understanding consumer experiences is therefore a core task for consumer research. But, consumer and marketing research on experience is still emerging. Experience, as a concept and as an empirical phenomenon, is not as established as other consumer and marketing concepts such as choice, attitudes, consumer satisfaction, or brand equity.

This needs to change. In his Presidential address at the 2009 Association for Consumer Research Conference, Chris Janiszewski presented a passionate plea for an increased study of consumer experiences (Janiszewski, 2009). “So what is our opportunity? In what substantive areas do we, as a discipline, have a special interest and a competitive advantage?” he asked. “The answer is ‘consumer experience.’ . . . Where do we have a differential advantage with respect to our interest, our expertise, and our areas of application? I contend that it is not in the ‘utility of choice’ (expected utility), but the ‘utility of consumption’ (experienced utility or *subjective value*).” Most importantly, he argued that, “Benefits are not in the products. Benefits are in the consumer experience.”

The study of experience is benefitted by the fact that multiple disciplines conduct research on the effect of experience. For example, consumer behavior has three core specialization areas: information processing, behavioral decision theory, and consumer culture theory; as we will see, they have all provided consumer insight on experiences. Researchers in the two other main disciplines of marketing — marketing models and marketing strategy — have also contributed to consumer experience research and to experience marketing. Moreover, the study of consumer behavior and marketing, and thus work on experience, is open to contributions from adjoining disciplines — for example, psychology, linguistics, economics, management, and sociology (MacInnis and Folkes, 2010). Finally, many experience concepts and ideas have come from management and practical writings. In this monograph, I will therefore cast a wide web, reviewing and discussing experience research conducted in various disciplines and in sub-disciplines of marketing.

I will begin with an exploration of the experience concept itself. What do we mean by “experience”? What are consumer experiences, and how are they different from other, established constructs in our

field? Next, I will review some key concepts of experience marketing and empirical research findings that provide consumer insights on experiences. I will then turn to the strategic management and marketing literature on customer experience and the practical frameworks for managing experiences. Finally, I will explore an exciting emerging area of research — the interface of consumer experience and happiness.

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