



NEUROSCIENTIFIC
BREAKTHROUGH:
**'EVENTS MAKE
THE BRAIN INVEST
IN YOUR MESSAGE'**

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Brain research shows added value live events

At live events, the brain invests in the communication message according to research during the Huishoudbeurs event and at the University of Amsterdam

What's going on in people's minds when they visit a live event, such as an exhibition? In a unique study, five event organisers commissioned brain research into the effect of an exhibition visit on the subconscious. Dutch neuroscience agency Neurensics compared the value of live events with other forms of commercial information exchange such as video and commercials. With the medical device NIRS and MRI scanning they showed that the value of a live contact is of a different order, more unconscious awareness of the message, than that of a delayed or digital contact. It also became clear that video cannot replace an event, but it does extend the lifespan of an event. Initiators EventBranche.nl and partners RAI Amsterdam, DPG Media, D&B Eventmarketing and Party Rent Group want to scientifically substantiate the added value of live events.

Two studies: during the Huishoudbeurs and at the University of Amsterdam

Scientists have equipped a representative group of 24 visitors of the Huishoudbeurs 2020 a consumerfair at RAI Amsterdam with the medical device NIRS (Near Infra Red Spectography) that records the unconscious assessment of observations. Contact moments with exhibitors Weleda, Fruittella and The Famous Grouse were recorded with video. The compilation of these images that represented the exhibition visit, with the welcome, a product introduction and a closing with offerings were shown to a second group of 24 respondents. This gave them an 'extended' event experience. This time via MRI-scanner at the University of Amsterdam. Activated emotions in the brain were measured, also whether this activation leads to a positive or negative assessment.

Personal and direct contact is more effective

It seems that when someone is approached personally, the brain 'consciously' searches at an exhibition for the processing of information. This information is then evaluated in order to reach a conclusion. For example, storing the new information or buying something. To see whether this effect applies specifically to a live event, or whether it also applies to forms of advertising such as TV commercials, for example, the experiment was extended with the second study. "A special area of the brain participates actively in a live event, which is not or much less activated when watching a video", says Martin de Munnik co-founder of

Neurensics. "This part of the brain is mainly involved in assessing the factual information provided. The energy used by the brain for this purpose is much greater than that of the control group. We see this as an investment that the brain makes in acquiring knowledge. It's also the explanation for the fact that a personal and direct contact is much more effective than a delayed contact".

More activity in the brain during live event

To put it simply, our brain works with facts and emotions, the sum of which leads to a behaviour, in this case wanting to buy something or not wanting to buy something. The decision itself is always emotional. What distinguishes us from other animal species is that we humans have reason. Looking for what makes a live event so special, the scientists saw that it is mainly the activity in the area at the front of the brain, the Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC). This part of the brain is considered responsible for planning and higher aspects of control, such as 'monitoring' behaviour and suppressing undesirable behaviour. In particular, processing the logic and structure of cognitive, factual information causes a lot of activity in this part of the brain. For example, the deeper emotional brain would like to decide to buy a certain product. It is then the DLPFC that can do some kind of last rational intervention: yes, because it is reliable and competent, or no, because it is not sensible, unhealthy.

Lean-in: the brain invests

A comparison of the brain activation of the exhibition visit with that of seeing video images such as commercials shows that the brain - thanks to its personal approach - is 'consciously' searching for information at the exhibition. Where the information of a commercial is passively processed. Sjoerd Weikamp, owner of EventBranche.nl: "The scientists at Neurensics have called this difference lean-in and lean-back: with lean-in, information is processed proactively. This requires a lot of energy. It is literally an investment that the brain makes in gathering, processing and assessing that knowledge. Perhaps this explains why the effect of advertising on sales costs so much contact and therefore so much time and money, where a visit to an exhibition, event or showroom quickly leads to a positive attitude or a direct sale".

The value of live events

De Munnik: "What can advertisers learn from this study? This study shows that the value of a live contact is of a different order than that of a delayed or digital contact. With live contact, the scientists saw that the message is processed much more actively in the brain. The brain is not only unconsciously, but also consciously processing the information with live contact. Whether this is during the event visit or at the moment of the interaction between customer and seller. A good product proposition consists of a promise and the proof. We then see that the brain wants to take the trouble to process and store the factual information. The personal approach that can give live through eye contact, a smile and non-verbal signals and a conversation seems to be the key to making this investment".

An event is therefore ideally suited to lay the foundation for a communication strategy that requires demonstration or factual explanation. For example, at major changes within a

company, at introductions or important moments. Products and services that need explanation or whose value needs to be substantiated with facts are also better suited to a form of eventing. Because of the proactive attitude of the brain, an investment is made in a valuable relationship.

About **EventBranche.nl** and research partners:

EventBranche.nl is the Dutch platform for the business to business event professional. www.eventbranche.nl

D&B Eventmarketing organises for over 35 years Distinctive Events with stories that will stay with you. www.db-eventmarketing.nl

DPG Media is the largest media house in the Netherlands. Their media is entering millions of Dutch households every day for decades. www.dpgmedia.nl

Party Rent Group is an international event supplier with 24 offices in nine countries. For more than 25 years they have been responsible for the design and decoration of events and event logistics. www.partyrent.com

RAI Amsterdam is an international exhibition and convention company. Since 1893, bringing different worlds, people and markets together, at home and abroad. www.rai.nl

Neurensics is a neuroscience agency that helps improve branding, marketing and advertising efforts. Methods that record brain activity bring us closer to the truth. www.neurensics.com

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