

# Beyond attention. Into immersion.

The growth imperative of  
experiential marketing in India

January 2026



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# FOREWORD

The past few years have marked a defining shift in how consumers engage with culture, community and brands. Digitally fluent, experience-hungry audiences are rewriting the rules of engagement. What was once an occasional leisure activity is now an essential part of identity, discovery and belonging.

For the media and entertainment sector, this shift represents far more than a behavioral trend and signals the emergence of a new economic engine. Experiences today sit at the intersection of creativity, technology and commerce. They influence what audiences talk about, what they share and, increasingly, what they choose to buy. This convergence has created significant opportunities for brands to build deeper, more authentic connections with consumers.

As experiential marketing gains strategic importance, brand leaders are asking sharper questions:

- How do we design moments that truly matter?
- How do we measure impact beyond impressions?
- How do we build cultural equity, not just visibility?

These questions reflect a maturing landscape where experiential is not a novelty, but a disciplined, high-impact lever requiring the same rigor, creativity and long-term thinking as any core marketing investment.

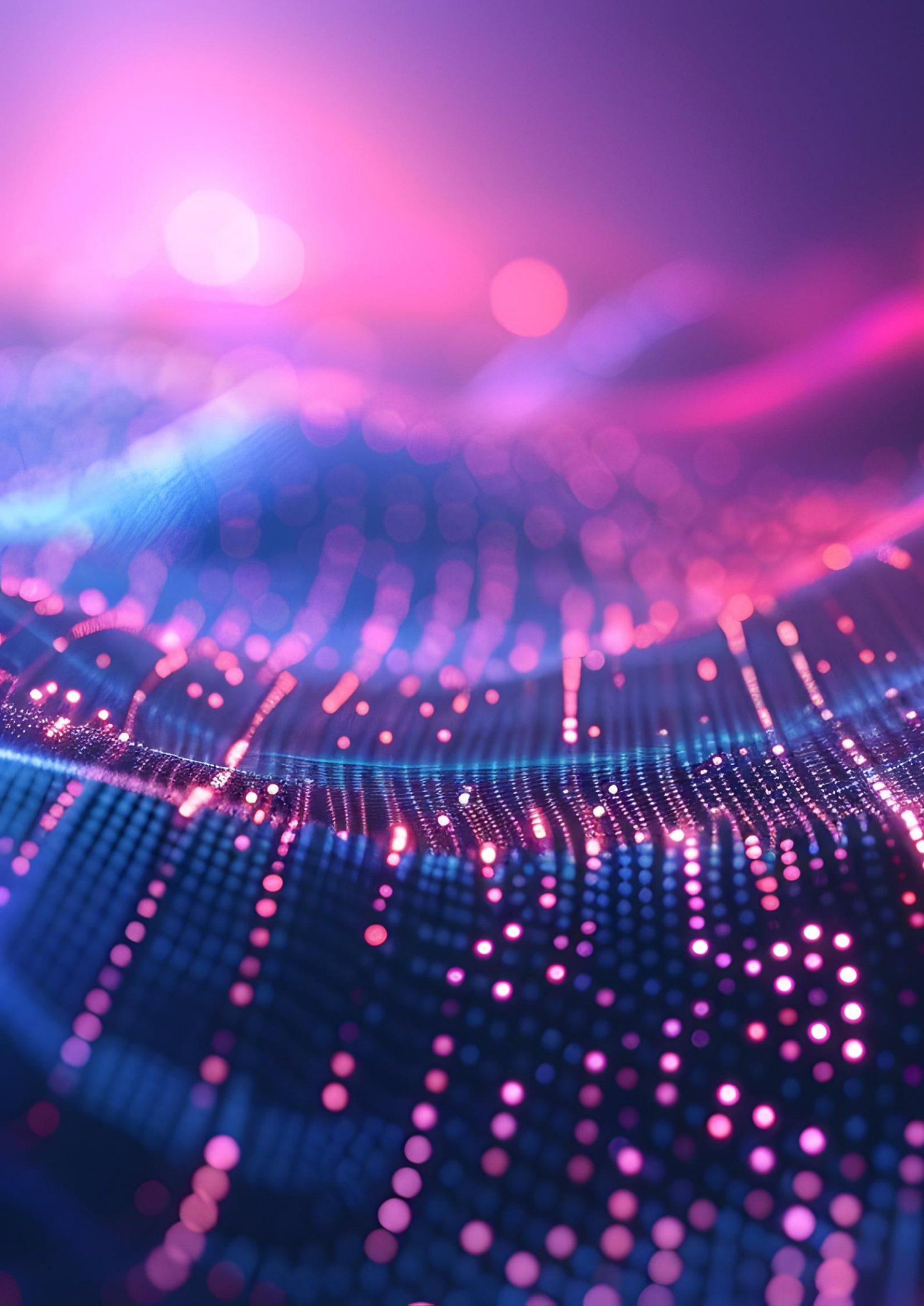
This report aims to equip brand leaders, CMOs and marketers with a pragmatic, forward-looking view of experiential marketing in India. It distils consumer shifts, market momentum, brand strategies and activation patterns into a clear and actionable playbook. Whether through anticipation-building, immersive participation or post-experience amplification, experiential marketing offers a powerful, full-funnel pathway for brands seeking deeper affinity and stronger commercial outcomes.

As the industry evolves, one thing is clear: **experiences will play a huge role in defining the next chapter of brand value creation.** I am confident that the perspective in this report serves as a useful compass for the M&E leaders. The opportunity ahead is significant, and those who invest with intent, creativity and consistency will define the future of brand experience in India.



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# Executive summary

India's experience economy is entering a decisive growth phase, reshaping how consumers discover, evaluate and connect with brands. As consumers, especially the young, prioritize identity, belonging and culturally meaningful moments, experiential marketing has shifted from a tactical add-on to a strategic growth driver. Discerning customers expect brands not just to communicate but to invite participation and earn attention through immersion and cultural relevance.

This consumer shift is mirrored by a corresponding marketer shift. Insights from the EY-Parthenon-BookMyShow CMO Survey indicate that a large number of brands now treat experiential as a formal part of their annual planning, with budgets expanding and investment rationales shifting from visibility to full-funnel impact. Marketers are seeking deeper engagement and stronger storytelling but also emphasize the need for better frameworks and measurement metrics.

Experiential marketing has also expanded significantly. It now spans a wide portfolio of digital immersions, retail environments, creator-led IP, community platforms, and live events. Within this, live events have emerged as a high-impact canvas, with India's live events market valued at approximately INR17,000 crore in 2025. Concerts, festivals, comedy, cultural occasions and immersive showcases attract diverse, expressive audiences, each with distinct motivations and mindsets. For brands, these formats offer high-density environments for emotional engagement where interventions can feel native rather than adjacent.



To help marketers navigate this landscape, the report introduces two strategic tools:

- **The experiential impact pyramid** provides a structured framework to design meaningful experiences, guiding brands from audience insight and narrative clarity to participation, phygital integration and long-term cultural ownership. It helps CMOs move from isolated activations to repeatable, scalable experiential strategies.
- **A new measurement architecture** reframes how experiential impact is evaluated, shifting the focus from impressions and footfalls to emotion, memorability, advocacy and behavior change. By capturing how experiences are felt, remembered and acted upon, it enables a clearer link between experiential investments and brand equity creation.

India's experiential market is still early in its growth curve, but the direction is undeniable. Brands that invest with intention and participate consistently will shape the next phase of consumer engagement. Experiential is no longer an optional extension but a strategic engine for building modern brand relevance.

**This report, commissioned by BookMyShow, serves as a guide for CMOs and brand leaders seeking to harness experiential marketing as a transformative growth lever in their brand's journey.**



# 1 | Marketing in a post-digital boom



## Marketing in a post-digital boom

India's consumers are rewriting the rules of value creation—how it is perceived and remembered. Across demographics, but especially among younger, urban and affluent cohorts, experiences have emerged as the new currency of aspiration, identity, and belonging. From travelling to cultural milestones like Maha Kumbh, to paying premiums for live events such as the Coldplay's Music Of The Spheres World Tour, and sharing these moments on social platforms as markers of self-expression—consumers are signaling a profound shift.

This is more than a change in media consumption. It represents a fundamental evolution in brand building. Where traditional marketing optimized for reach and repetition, today's environment rewards participation, and cultural relevance. Experiences now shape not just awareness, but preference, loyalty and advocacy.

45%

of respondents prefer meaningful real-world activities over online scrolling<sup>1</sup>

70%

of respondents report becoming more regular customers after an experiential interaction<sup>2</sup>

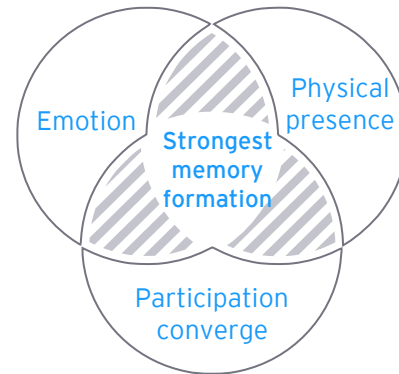
66%

of respondents say their perception of a brand improves after a live experience<sup>3</sup>



Three structural forces are driving this transition:

1. **The memory dividend:** Emotionally rich, multi-sensory experiences create deeper recall and longer-lasting brand associations than passive exposure. Neuroscience and behavioral research consistently show that memory formation is strongest when emotion, physical presence and participation converge—precisely the conditions experiential formats deliver.



2. **Experience-driven identity:** Experiences increasingly fuel social signaling and digital identity. Concerts attended, festivals explored, pop-ups visited—these moments are now social currency. Brands that enable or enhance these moments become part of the consumer's self-expression, not just external advertisers.
3. **The declining power of interruption:** As algorithmic feeds saturate attention and create blind spots, consumers seek intentional, immersive interactions. This accelerates the demand for formats that feel participatory rather than intrusive.

Together, these forces are pushing marketers to rebalance investments away from pure exposure and towards experiences.



<sup>1</sup>Human Clarity Report 2025 (<https://humanclarityinstitute.com/reports/digital-fatigue-and-energy-full-report/>)

<sup>2</sup>EventTrack (<https://sequel.io/event-roi/>)

<sup>3</sup>EventTrack (<https://www.webdisclosure.com/press-release/event-marketer-nasdaq-74-of-fortune-1000-marketers-to-increase-experiential-spending-in-2025-RmsMbU4Zdo0>)

## A The experiential marketing horizon

Experiential is no longer a tactic—it is a **portfolio of engagement modes**:

- 1 **Digital and immersive experiences**, such as AR/VR environments, gamified journeys
- 2 **Retail and commerce experiences**, where physical and phygital spaces are redesigned for discovery, trial and assisted decision-making
- 3 **Brand-owned IPs and communities**, which build long-term engagement through culture, creators and shared identity
- 4 **Live and cultural events**, including concerts, festivals, sports and exhibitions
- 5 **Sampling, trial and utility-led experiences** that remove friction and deliver tangible value
- 6 **Community and purpose-led experiences**, anchored in shared values and local relevance

## B Global momentum: Experiential marketing as the new brand-building engine

Globally, experiential marketing has moved from experimentation to structural reallocation of budgets. What began as a post-pandemic resurgence through travel and hospitality has matured into a sustained shift.

- Global experiential spending is projected to reach **US\$130 billion by 2025**, growing at a **CAGR of 10.5%**<sup>4</sup>
- **74% of Fortune 1000 marketers** plan to increase experiential budgets<sup>5</sup>
- **80% of companies** allocate **10% to 30% of total marketing spends** to experiential formats<sup>6</sup>
- **B2C experiential spending** alone is expected to reach **US\$90 billion**<sup>1</sup>

With phygital tracking, CRM integration and attribution models, brands report strong returns:

- 48% of brands realize an ROI between 300% and 500% from experiential, while 44% generate an average return of 300%<sup>7</sup>

Cultural scale reinforces this shift:

- **Van Gogh Alive** drew **9.5 million visitors across 95 cities**<sup>8</sup>
- **Taylor Swift's Eras Tour** surpassed **US\$2 billion**<sup>9</sup> in revenue, indicates accelerating demand for shared, high-emotion experiences

Globally, brands are embedding experiential formats at the core of brand storytelling and consumer engagement:

- Netflix reimagined a Season 5 press tour as a 24-hour Venice-Paris luxury train journey on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, turning promotion into a high-impact cultural experience and generating 266 million impressions across press and creators<sup>10</sup>
- Nike uses its Rise stores to blend physical and digital engagement through community sports, local programming and data-led storytelling, transforming retail locations into immersive lifestyle participation hubs<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup>PQ Media Experiential Marketing Report (<https://www.prweb.com/releases/global-experiential-marketing-to-finally-outpace-pre-pandemic-spending-in-2024--rising-10-5-to-reach-128-35-billion-compared-with-121-87-billion-in-2019--302273698.html>)

<sup>5</sup>EventTrack Experiential Marketing Report (<https://www.webdisclosure.com/press-release/event-marketer-nasdaq-74-of-fortune-1000-marketers-to-increase-experiential-spending-in-2025-RmsMbU4Zdo0>)

<sup>6</sup>Gradient Experiential Marketing Study (<https://www.marketingdive.com/press-release/20240927-experiential-marketing-gains-priority-as-80-of-companies-increase-budgets/>)

<sup>7</sup>Sequel (<https://sequel.io/event-roi/>)

<sup>8</sup>Fugu (<https://www.fugupr.com/work/van-gogh-alive>)

<sup>9</sup>The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2024/dec/09/taylor-swifts-eras-tour-smashes-touring-revenue-record-with-more-than-2bn-in-ticket-sales>)

<sup>10</sup>Yahoo News (<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/emily-paris-renewed-season-6-210000299.html>)

<sup>11</sup>Marketing Dive (<https://www.marketingdive.com/news/nike-doubles-down-on-localization-with-nike-rise-concept/604902/>)

## C India: A breakout experiential market

The rise of immersive exhibitions, creator-driven communities, phygital retail activations and large-scale cultural events reflects a structural shift in how Indian consumers discover, evaluate, and emotionally connect with brands. This is being amplified by India’s rapidly expanding creator economy, which already influences hundreds of billions of dollars in consumer spending and is projected to exceed US\$1 trillion by 2030<sup>12</sup>, highlighting the growing power of creator-led discovery and cultural influence.

### 1. India’s structural consumer indicators

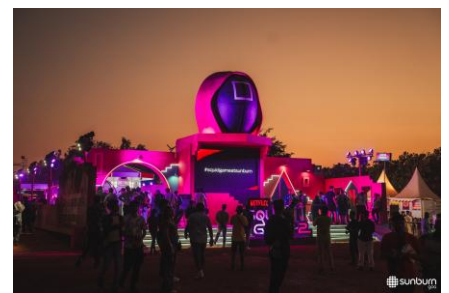
Consumer decision-making in India is increasingly shaped by participation and emotional payoff, not just functional benefits. As a result, experiential touchpoints are becoming more influential in shaping brand preference. This includes:

- Experiential media already represents roughly 23% of media and entertainment revenues in India<sup>13</sup>
- 78% of Indian consumers say they would rather spend on experiences than products, as per the Experiential Retail Index survey <sup>14</sup>

### 2. India is not merely mirroring global momentum—it is accelerating ahead

The momentum is visible across categories, where both cultural moments and commerce-led experiences scale rapidly across the market:

- Asian Paints expanded with 28 new Experience Centers across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in November 2025<sup>15</sup>, enabling immersive décor visualization in lifelike settings
- Netflix India extended content IP such as Stranger Things, Squid Game and Sacred Games into physical immersive pop-ups and cultural installations
- Live entertainment demand illustrates the scale of intent. **At Travis Scott’s Delhi concert, approximately 100,000 tickets sold within minutes;** that roughly translates to India spending almost 100 Crores within minutes on a cultural phenomenon, a pattern echoed across global artists like Ed Sheeran and Coldplay, as well as Indian performers such as Vir Das and Arijit Singh
- Lenskart’s AR/AI virtual try-on, powered by 3D face mapping, has driven 20+ million app downloads and created a seamless digital-to-purchase experience<sup>16</sup>



Squid Game experience at Sunburn Festival

<sup>12</sup>Kotak ([https://www.kotakmf.com/Information/blogs/inside-india-creator-economy\\_](https://www.kotakmf.com/Information/blogs/inside-india-creator-economy_))

<sup>13</sup>EY FICCI Frames Report 2025 (<https://www.ey.com/content/dam/ey-unified-site/ey-com/en-in/insights/media-entertainment/images/ey-shape-the-future-indian-media-and-entertainment-is-scripting-a-new-story.pdf>)

<sup>14</sup>Experiential Retail Index (<https://www.afaqs.com/news/guest-article/why-experiential-retail-is-more-than-just-a-trend-in-india-9622839>)

<sup>15</sup>Campaign India (<https://www.campaignindia.in/article/asian-paints-expands-with-28-new-experiential-stores-in-ap-and-telangana/506000>)

<sup>16</sup>Media article (<https://indiaai.gov.in/article/lenskart-reimagined-the-way-we-look-at-eyeware-thanks-to-its-ai-chops>)



### 3. Live events: A high-impact format within the experiential portfolio

The quantitative post-event surveys<sup>17</sup> conducted by BookMyShow across 7,450 attendees reinforce the effectiveness of live events as a high-impact experiential touchpoint:

59%

brand recall among live event attendees

81%

brand-event fit, among respondents who interacted with a brand on-ground

63%

felt the brand enhanced their overall event experience

55%

uplift in purchase intent following brand interaction at the event

29%


uplift in brand imagery, with the brand increasingly perceived as “a brand for me”

These signals point to a deeper shift in Indian consumer behavior – they are no longer passive audiences but are active seekers of meaning, emotion and participation.

# The World Has Infinite Experiences



<sup>17</sup>Based on post-event surveys conducted by BookMyShow across Lollapalooza India, Ed Sheeran, Guns N' Roses, Travis Scott, Aditya Gadhvi, Vishal-Sheykhar and Yaari Jam events in 2025)



## D Impressions to immersion: Brands are rewiring engagement

As digital channels saturate and attention fragments, brands are re-engineering engagement models. Experiential formats deliver what traditional media increasingly struggles to offer: concentrated attention, sensory richness and emotional proximity.

Leading brands are already leveraging experiential to:

- **Participate authentically in cultural moments:** Brands are moving beyond adjacent-based advertising to meaningful, in-context involvement
- **Enable large-scale trial and discovery:** Experiential formats offer tactile, hands-on product engagement and variant launches, which bridges gaps that digital-only channels cannot address
- **Convert high-touch interactions into loyalty:** Link on-ground engagement to CRM and first-party data to enable personalized follow-ups and repeat engagement
- **Generate organic content and social amplification:** Experiences function as real-time content studios, creating a steady flow of high-quality, user-generated visual narratives that netizens willingly engage without wanting to skip
- **Reach high-intent cohorts such as Gen Z and affluent millennials:** Access culturally influential audiences who favor participation over traditional advertising

Experiential marketing is no longer an extension of the media mix; it is becoming a foundational strategic lever, integrated with digital, retail, influencer and loyalty architectures, to build durable brand relationships.

### [The next chapter in India's experience economy growth story](#)

Rising aspirations, expanding infrastructure and growing disposable income are accelerating the scale and sophistication of experiences in India. For marketers, this marks a shift from interruption-led communication to participation-led brand-building rooted in emotion, memory and cultural belonging.



2

Experiential on the CMO agenda:  
Investment, intent and impact



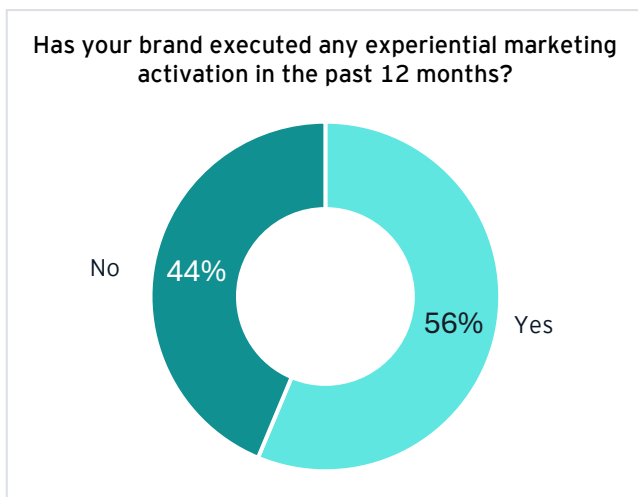
## Experiential on the CMO agenda: Investment, intent and impact

As experiential marketing becomes a more intentional part of brand strategy, CMOs and brand leaders are increasingly evaluating its role not just as a cultural asset, but as a full-funnel business driver. What was once considered a top-of-funnel, awareness-led tactic is now influencing discovery, trial, conversion and loyalty.

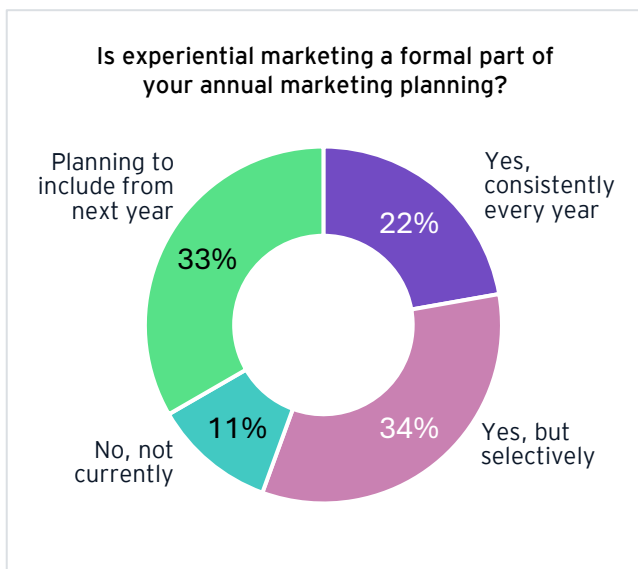
EY-Parthenon and BookMyShow surveyed brand leaders across sectors to understand how they institutionalize experiential marketing. This section focuses on key insights from their responses, covering budget allocation priorities, expectations, and the strategic objectives shaping their investments in this space.

### A Marketing budget allocation trends

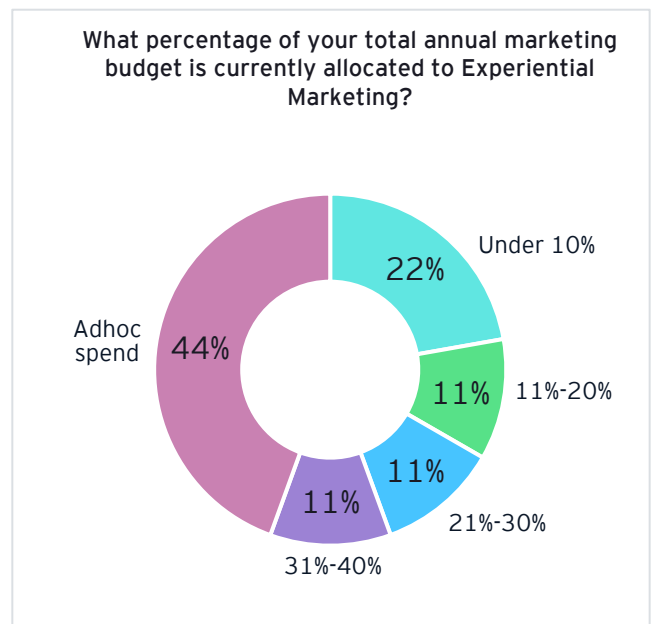
1. 56% of the surveyed brands executed experiential marketing activations in the last 12 months



2. 88% of spending brands<sup>18</sup>, who have executed experiential marketing in the past 12 months, plan to continue investing in experiential marketing in a structured format going forward

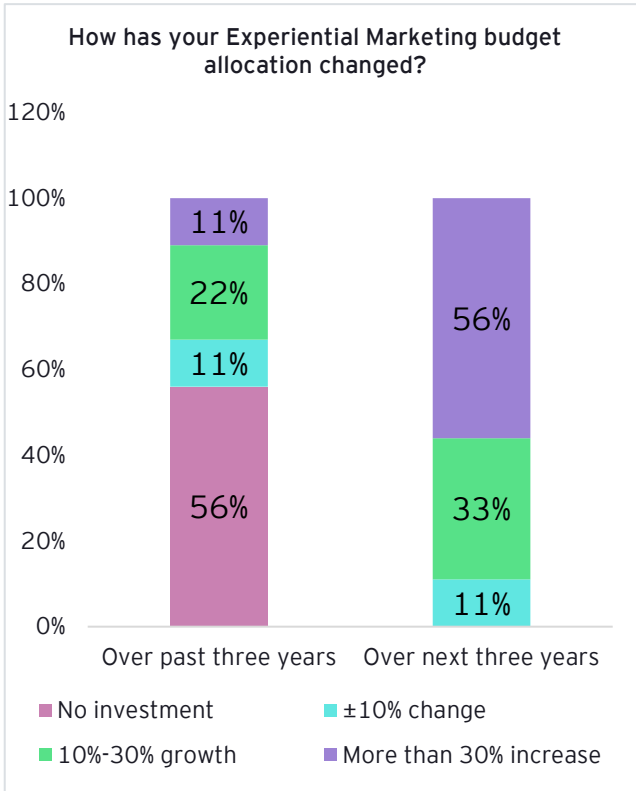


3. While 44% of spenders invested in experiential in an unplanned manner, indicating significant headroom for structured annual planning, 22% of spending brands allocated as much as 21% to 40% of their total marketing budgets to it

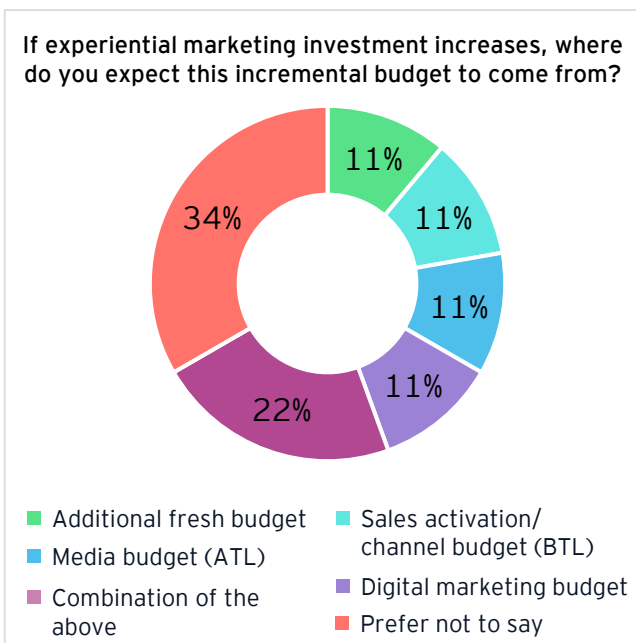


<sup>18</sup>Spending brand refers to brands that have executed experiential activation in the last 12 months)

- 4. Over the past three years, 44% of active brands have increased experiential spending, with most reporting up to 30% growth
- 5. Looking ahead, 56% of active brands expect experiential budgets to increase by more than 30% in the coming cycle

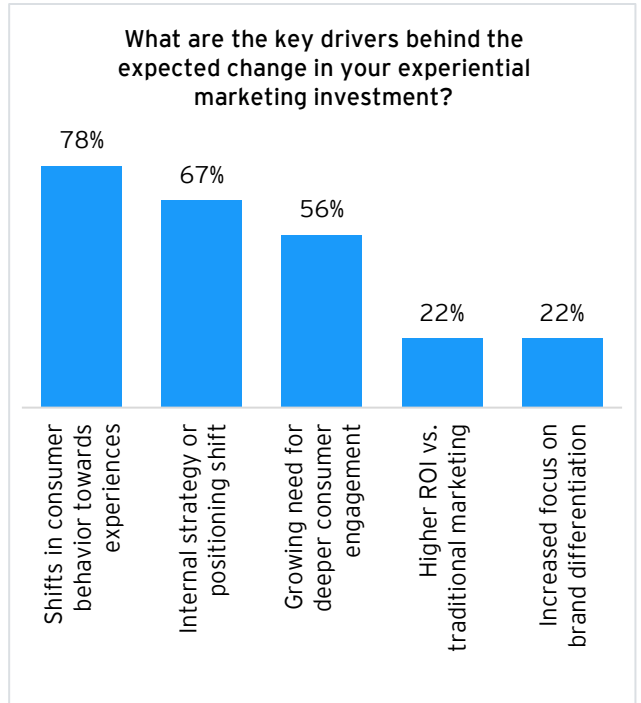


- 6. Incremental budgets come from a mix of sources: fresh allocations, reallocation from BTL and digital, and in some cases, shifts from ATL media, indicating that experiential is not merely additive but structurally reshaping the marketing mix

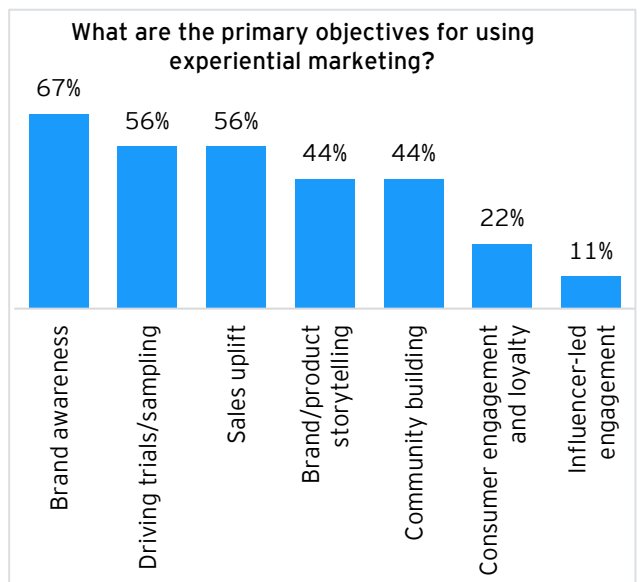


## B Strategic drivers and objectives

- 1. The major drivers for brands to invest in experiential marketing include 'Shifting consumer behavior towards experiences' (78%) and 'brand repositioning' (67%). These findings confirm that experiential is being used to solve both cultural and strategic challenges and appeal to experience-led consumers while refreshing brand meaning



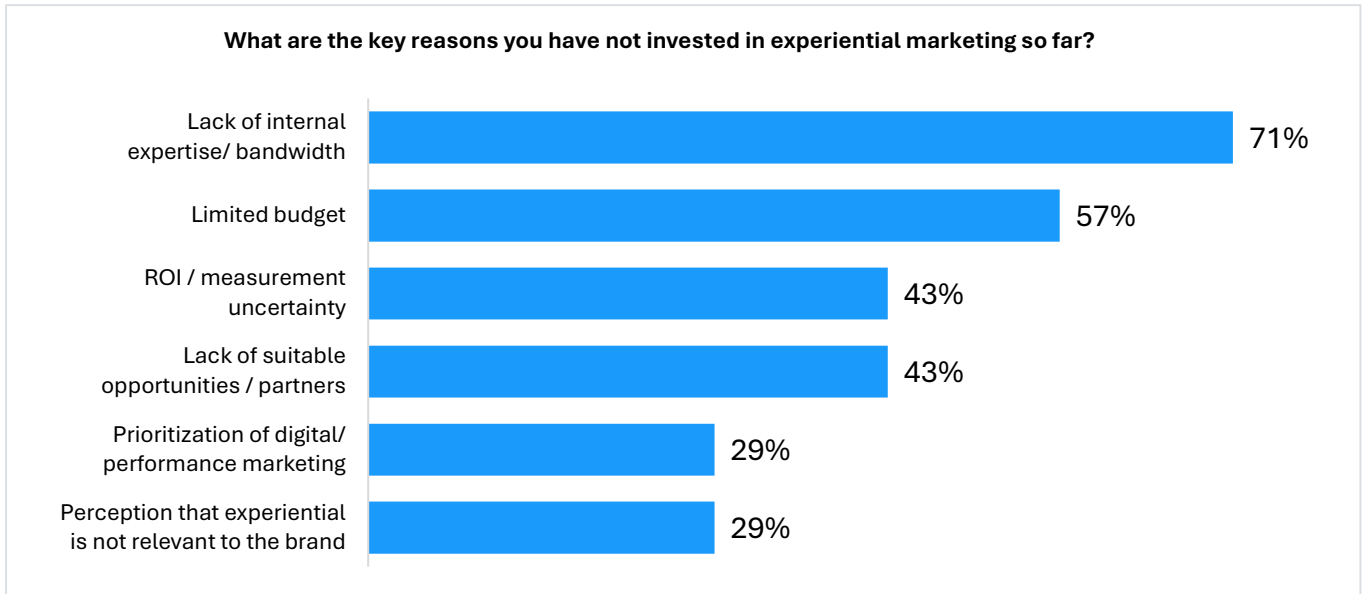
- 2. Active brands are looking to fulfil diverse objectives from experiential activations such as brand awareness (67%), sampling and trial (56%), sales growth (56%) and brand storytelling (44%). This confirms that experiential is increasingly viewed as a multi-objective, performance-linked lever



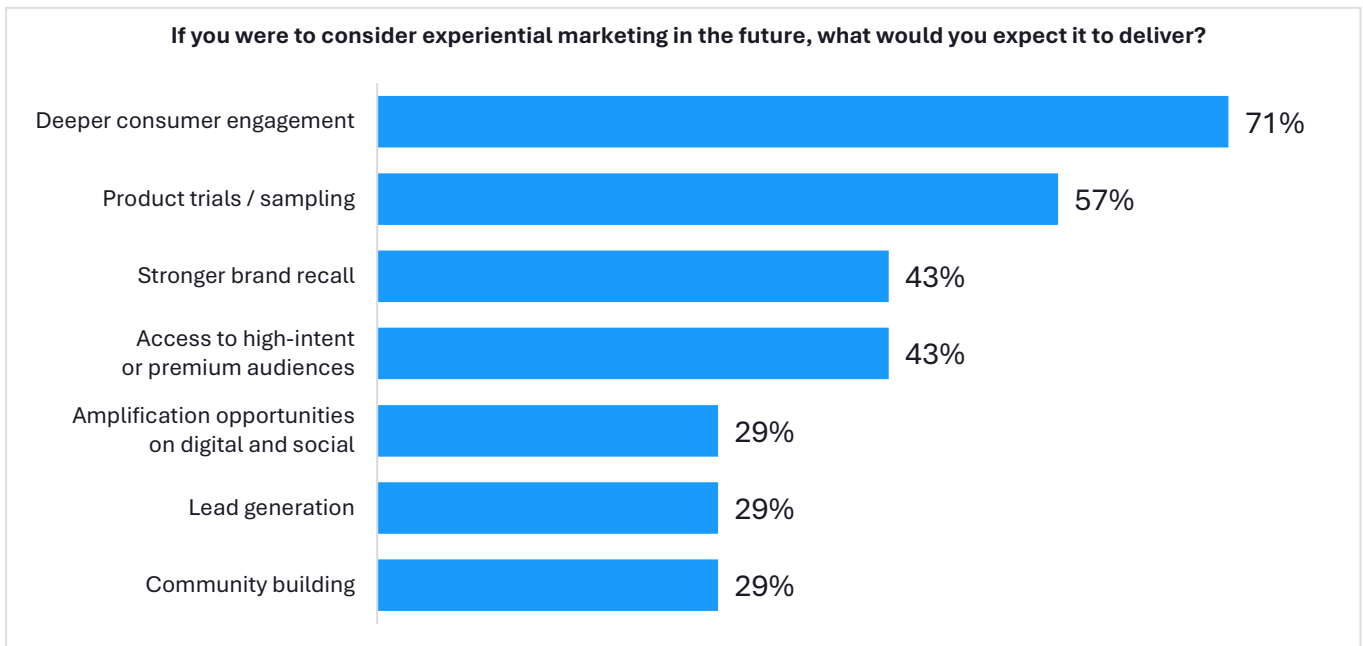


## Barriers to participation

1. Among brands yet to activate meaningfully, the key barriers for experiential remain a lack of expertise (71%), budget pressures (57%) and unresolved questions on ROI and measurement (43%)



2. However, nearly 29% of non-active brands<sup>19</sup> plan to launch experiential campaigns within the next 12 months, with clearly defined expectations around brand building, cultural relevance and deeper engagement.



The survey reveals a market at an inflection point. It is evident that barriers to participating are executional, not intentional. Experiential marketing, supported by formal budgets, multilevel objectives and growing leadership conviction, is moving from experimentation to institutionalization. As brands allocate more capital, seek full-funnel impact and explore new cultural touchpoints, experiential has transitioned from a discretionary activity to a mainstream growth engine. For CMOs, the implication is clear: experiential is no longer optional; it is becoming central to relevance, differentiation and long-term equity.

<sup>19</sup>Non-active brand refers to brands that have not executed experiential activation in the last 12 months



3

Crafting connections:  
A strategic blueprint for  
brand success

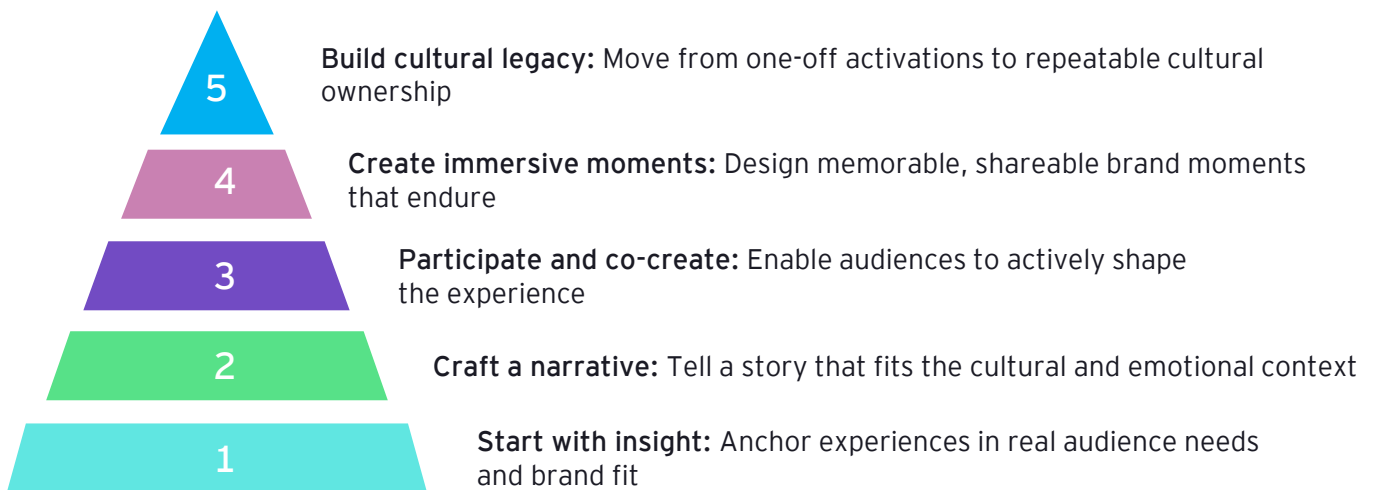
# Crafting connections: A strategic blueprint for brand success

As consumer expectations evolve faster than traditional marketing cycles, isolated activations no longer deliver sustained impact. Leading brands treat experiences as repeatable growth engines, moving systematically from insight to immersion and from immersion to influence.

This section outlines a practical blueprint for converting experiential investments into measurable brand and business outcomes, showing how disciplined design, execution and measurement turn moments into momentum.

## A The experiential impact pyramid

High-performing experiential marketing programs share consistent design architecture, captured in the five-layer experiential impact pyramid.



### 1. Start with insight: Decode aspirations and friction points

Every plan begins with a rigorous understanding of the audience and the context in which the experience will be consumed. Insight is not just demographic—it is cultural, emotional and situational.

- **Strategic fitment:** Alignment between the brand, the audience segment and the cultural or consumption context in which the experience lives
- **Audience motivations:** Aspirations around belonging, self-expression and status – shaped by language, rituals, social norms and participation cues

- **Friction points:** Practical barriers such as access, price sensitivity, distance and travel fatigue, hygiene concerns, on-ground navigation and connectivity challenges
- **Emotional triggers:** Deep drivers including nostalgia, pride, exclusivity, joy and creativity that elevate engagement beyond utility

Experiences designed without insight feel decorative and forgettable. Experiences rooted in insight create meaning, emotional resonance and lasting recall.



## 2. Craft narrative: Align with the insight

Once insight is established, the role of narrative is not to explain the audience—but to operate insight into a clear brand role within the experience. The most effective experiential narratives do not interrupt the moment; they enhance it by giving the brand a purposeful reason to exist in the audience journey.

In practice, experiential narratives tend to succeed when brands take on one of three clear roles:

- **Enable the experience:** Brands remove friction around access, movement, pricing and comfort, allowing audiences to focus on enjoying the moment
- **Amplify motivation:** Brands heighten what audiences already care about, from energy and celebration to proximity and indulgence, intensifying engagement at peak moments
- **Strengthen memory and self-expression:** Brands help people look, feel and share better, making the experience more personal, photogenic and emotionally lasting

When narrative is treated as a design choice rather than a messaging layer, the brand becomes embedded in the experience itself.

## 3. Participate and co-create: Move from monologue to dialogue

Experiential is the living, breathing extension of the brand. The strongest brands behave as active participants in the cultural moment. This shift from broadcast to dialogue is achieved through:

- **Digital immersions:** Stories rooted in personal relevance and discovery allow brand experiences to adapt to individual needs and preferences, enabling audiences to co-create content
- **Retail experience zones:** Narratives focused on transformation and confidence, helping consumers visualize outcomes, explore solutions and make informed choices
- **Brand IP platforms:** Community-driven storytelling that reinforces shared identity and belonging, encouraging community-led behaviors, rituals and shared moments that drive repeat participation over time
- **Large cultural moments:** Emotion-led narratives that tap into pride, nostalgia and collective memory, aligning the brand with shared cultural meaning

Co-creation deepens emotional ownership and transforms audiences from passive observers into active advocates.

## 4. Create immersive brand moments that fuse the physical and digital

High-impact experiential campaigns aim to create moments that feel useful, engaging, memorable, and/ or shareable. The most effective activations selectively combine four experiential layers:

- **Utility:** Solving real on-ground problems to earn genuine goodwill—navigation support, priority access, charging pods, seating zones, hygiene and safety infrastructure, or on-demand assistance
- **Delight:** Creating moments that feel magical and emotionally rewarding. Examples include curated hospitality, design-led spaces, thematic installations, personalized gifts, enhanced looks, etc.
- **Digital depth:** Extending pre-event reach, interaction and increasing the longevity of association. Examples include gamification, AR lenses, digital collectibles, fan contests, personalized content, livestreams, etc.
- **Social storytelling:** Turning audiences into amplifiers. Examples include creator integrations, photogenic formats, interactive challenges, behind-the-scenes narratives, etc.

Not every experience needs all four layers; the strongest programs deliberately deploy the layers that are most aligned to brand objectives and audience expectations.

## 5. Build a cultural legacy: From one-off activations to long-term ownership

The most effective experiential brands move beyond isolated moments to build repeatable, ownable platforms that audiences recognize and return to over time. In India, this is evident in long-term investments such as Bacardi's association with NH7 Weekender, Nykaaland as a recurring beauty IP, and Asian Paints' Experience Centers.

A clear example of consistency-led ownership is Bisleri's sustained hydration-first presence at live events, spanning free water stations, recyclable picnic benches and crew-area hydration support, anchored in a clear utility-driven brand role.

While virality can deliver short-term visibility, cultural ownership is built through consistency.

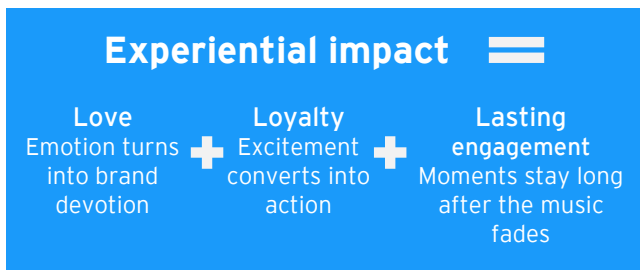
The experiential impact pyramid defines how to design experiences that matter; measurement determines whether they get meaningful results. For CMOs, this means evaluating experiences not by volume metrics alone, but by memorability, emotional lift, participation depth and cultural stickiness across digital, physical and hybrid environments.



## B Measuring what matters: The new metrics of experiential impact

Experiential impact extends beyond reach into emotion, behavior and memory. Traditional metrics like impressions and footfall measure exposure, not influence. To capture real value, brands must track mind measures that reveal how experiences shift perception, affinity and future action.

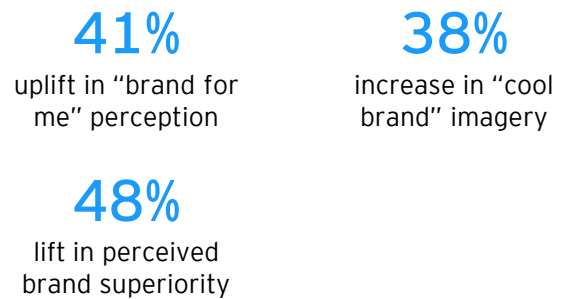
CMOs and brand leaders track across three buckets:



- **Love (emotional resonance):** Emotion is one of the strongest predictors of long-term brand preference. Experiential formats enable brands to measure emotional depth and meaning creation. Key Indicators include:
  - Sentiment uplift (pre- vs. post-experience)
  - Shifts in imagery and brand associations
  - Share of positive voice across social conversations and community signals
- **Loyalty (advocacy and conversion):** Experiential accelerates advocacy and drives intent, trial and participation. These effects manifest across channels and touchpoints. Relevant measures include:
  - UGC volume, advocacy ratio and virality patterns
  - Intention-to-recommend and satisfaction scores
  - Conversion through trial or sampling uplifts in retail/digital environments
  - Loyalty-program participation
- **Lasting engagement (duration and memory effect):** The most powerful experiential programs create memory deposits that influence choices long after the moment of interaction. Key indicators include:
  - CRM enrolment or first-party data capture
  - Dwell time, interaction depth and completion of guided journeys
  - Multi-touchpoint engagement with digital content
  - Recall of signature assets, cues, narratives or brand moments over time

**A leading fashion and lifestyle brand activated across live experiential platforms to deepen emotional and identity-led connection with consumers, using immersive on-ground touchpoints to engage high-intent audiences.**

**Impact among activated consumers<sup>20</sup>:**



When brands measure what consumers felt, remembered and acted upon, experiential ROI becomes both visible and defensible.

### Bringing it together: The CMO playbook for experiential success

Taken together, the experiential impact pyramid and the measurement architecture form a unified operating system. One defines how to design experiences that matter, and the other validates their impact.

#### Four priority actions for CMOs

India's experience-led consumption shift requires CMOs to recalibrate how they plan, invest and measure. For brand leaders, this implies four immediate priorities:

- **Reallocate with intent:** Direct a meaningful share of marketing and activation budgets toward experience-led programs that build equity, memory, intent and advocacy
- **Build a portfolio:** Combine marquee moments with recurring mid-sized experiences across formats to reinforce cultural relevance
- **Measure the right things:** Move beyond volume metrics and track the 3L experiential KPIs
- **Design for shareability and utility:** Create experiences that solve real consumer friction, enable co-creation and generate organic social storytelling; this compounds the value of every experiential touchpoint



## 4 | The live events lens: A deep dive into a high-value experiential format



# The live events lens:

## A deep dive into a high-value experiential format

As Indian consumers increasingly seek meaning, identity expression and community through experiences, live events represent experiential marketing in its most concentrated form. They create rare environments where attention is undivided, emotion is heightened, participation becomes collective, and brand storytelling can naturally converge with cultural energy.

### 1

#### Strong market fundamentals:

This cultural momentum is mirrored in market fundamentals, with India's live events market valued at ~INR17,000 crore in 2025

### 2

#### Experience hubs:

Concerts, festivals, comedy tours, immersive exhibitions, and cultural gatherings attract high-intent audiences from metros as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with high intent, long dwell time, and deep emotional involvement

### 3

#### Travel-led participation:

Over 10 lakh people traveled for live events in the last two years<sup>21</sup>. Fans from nearly 1,200 cities traveled for live entertainment<sup>21</sup>

This section examines India's live event ecosystems, as one strategic format within the broader experiential marketing mix. Each category offers different audience mindsets, engagement depths and storytelling surfaces, enabling brands to select where and how they build meaningful connections.



### International music concerts: The summit of aspiration

Global headlining music artists in India have evolved from sporadic pop-culture moments like Michael Jackson in the 1990s to a sustained, large-scale concert economy that functions as a macroeconomic stimulus. These events now operate as aspiration engines—high-impact cultural moments that dominate national conversation and shape contemporary taste.

#### 1. Audience persona: The global aspirant

International concerts sit at the apex of the experiential hierarchy. They are high-status, high-visibility moments that attract culturally fluent audiences seeking participation in global cultural movements. The global aspirant typically:

- Views participation in global tours as an assertion of global identity rather than mere entertainment
- Well-travelled and deeply shaped by Western pop culture, with expectations aligned to international production and hospitality standards
- Treats the "I was there" moment as social currency and fuels digital identity and peer signaling

#### 2. Strategic implications for brands

For brands, international concerts are premiumization platforms. They offer rare adjacency to global creative talent, enabling brands to borrow aspiration, creativity and credibility and cultural capital at scale. These events unlock several strategic advantages:

- **Access to cultural trendsetters:** These audiences influence categories far beyond entertainment - fashion, mobility, tech, beverages, travel and lifestyle. Winning them early shapes broader market perception
- **High-value customer acquisition:** Concerts naturally attract affluent, high-LTV customers across metros and tier 2/3 cities. Exclusive presales, VIP access, and experiential zones convert attendance into loyalty, advocacy and differentiated brand preference
- **Progressive and open-minded positioning:** International concerts offer brands a powerful platform to signal premium stature and progressive values, positioning themselves alongside global creativity and modern lifestyles

In categories where loyalty is fluid, enabling access to these cultural peaks becomes a competitive advantage.

<sup>21</sup>BookMyShow

**RuPay:** RuPay identified key consumer frictions across the live-event journey, from anxiety around ticket availability and pricing to long queues and fatigue on-ground. By offering early access and card-linked privileges like pre-sale offers for high-demand shows such as John Mayer and G-Eazy, the brand removed uncertainty at the moment of intent, strengthening perceived value, trust and brand affinity.

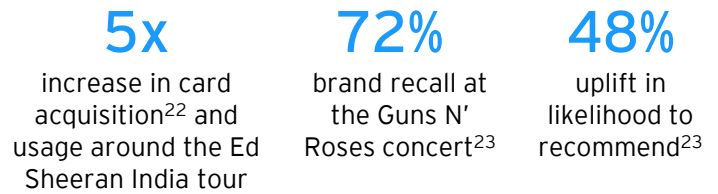


- RuPay**  
AMPLIFIED ACCESS  
TICKET INCLUSIONS:
- Access to Silver & Gold Zone
  - One curated food voucher redeemable at specific counters
  - One curated alcoholic/non-alcoholic drink voucher redeemable at specific bar.
  - Entry via dedicated RuPay lane
- \*This is exclusively for RuPay Select and RuPay EKAA Credit Cardholders only



**Kotak:** Kotak identified that high-value concertgoers seek priority access, recognition and premium treatment. By delivering card-linked pre-sales, express entry lanes and curated fan zones across tours including Ed Sheeran, Maroon 5, Backstreet Boys and Guns N' Roses, the brand embedded itself into the audience's peak moments through recurring presence.

Brand outcomes:



**Diageo:** Diageo identified that standing concertgoers value energy, comfort and responsible enjoyment. By aligning their Magic of Sharing concept with Black & White Gingerale, they shared the joy of thousands of fans on a Tuesday night with the physical rhythm of the Maroon 5 concert, and by activating through interactive zones, the brand embedded itself naturally into the audience experience, driving trial and recall



Based on conversation with BookMyShow

“ Experiential activations let us engage customers where emotion and action converge. Live moments help us cut through clutter, build meaningful connections and deliver the delight users seek. When consumers feel access and joy in the moment, RuPay naturally becomes a part of how they live, celebrate and create memories.

**Lalita Nayak**  
Incharge - Marketing - RuPay, NETC FASTAG, AePS

“ Large-scale live platforms allow us to connect directly with the youth, in environments where enthusiasm, energy, and self-expression drive engagement. These live environments help us reinforce Hyundai's modern, youthful identity and build brand relevance through authentic, high-impact experiences.

**Virat Khullar**  
Vertical Head Marketing,  
Hyundai Motor India Limited (HML)

<sup>21</sup>Economic Times (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/all-credit-to-ed-sheeran-as-kotak-banks-cards-business-receives-a-big-boost/articleshow/104805980.cms>)  
<sup>23</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey

## B Music festivals: The community ecosystem

Music festivals such as Lollapalooza India, Sunburn, Bandland, Ziro and Cherry Blossom operate as immersive, multi-day cultural spaces where music, fashion, food and social identity come together. Audiences spend hours inside these environments, creating sustained, high-engagement opportunities for brands.

### 1. Audience persona: The tribe

Festival audiences form a community-first cohort that views the festival not just as an event, but as a shared cultural ritual that reinforces identity and belonging. The tribe is characterized by:

- **Highly open to new experiences;** attends to explore music, food, fashion and people, with strong expectations around inclusivity, safety, no judgement and self-expression
- **Treat the festival grounds as a content studio,** where attendees are actively seeking curated, shareable moments; long dwell times (six to eight hours) enable extended brand exposure
- **High repeat visits** demonstrate strong loyalty to the festival IP beyond individual performers, with positive spillovers to brands that enhance the experience

### 2. Strategic implications for brands

In festival environments, brand impact is earned - not asserted. The most effective presence emerges by either addressing meaningful needs or elevating the sensory and aesthetic experience of the festival itself. Music festivals unlock four high-value opportunities for brands, namely:

- **The “phygital” loop:** Music festivals act as real-world anchors for digital storytelling, generating large volumes of shareable content through installations and live interactions
- **Ownable moments (opportunity to create micro-IPs):** Brands can claim specific festival “moments” before, during or post festival and turn them into repeatable and recognizable brand cues
- **Deeper immersion:** Multi-hour dwell time enables layered, meaningful interactions across discovery, trial and play, driving stronger emotional connection than traditional channels
- **Category leadership and music patronage:** Brands can demonstrate scale and leadership stature, signaling influence and cultural impact of music

Music festivals allow brands to embed themselves within youth culture and collective storytelling, turning participation into sustained memory, organic visibility and long-term cultural relevance.

**RuPay:** Festivals are not just about catching back-to-back performances but are designed as live playgrounds for attendees to spend the entire day hopping between stages, discovering immersive experiences, clocking steps while doing all this and eventually seeking chill out spaces. RuPay identified that in high-intensity, all-day festival environments, comfort becomes a form of privilege. Through Lolla Comfort by RuPay, the brand translated this insight into tangible, high-utility interventions designed to remove friction at moments of peak fatigue. Rather than competing for attention, RuPay embedded itself into the festival journey as an access-led comfort enabler, delivering relief, convenience, and quiet exclusivity precisely when attendees needed it most.

Brand outcomes:

**61%** felt RuPay enhanced their overall festival experience<sup>24</sup>

**55%** uplift in likelihood to purchase among activated consumers<sup>24</sup>



<sup>24</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey

**H&M:** H&M spotted a simple truth: when people step up for entertainment, they dress up. And if they are dressing up, fashion should be a core part of the moment. They recognized that music festivals are peak moments for self-expression, where consumers invest heavily in how they look and feel. H&M brought its 'The Sound of Style' positioning to life through an immersive fashion runway, the H&M Backstage, an exclusive viewing deck, and tech-enabled experiences including an AI photobooth and the Mic Drop karaoke zone. By launching exclusive product collections built for these social, culture-led moments, it moves from being a wardrobe choice to being a part of the experience itself.

Brand outcomes delivered through experiential activations at live events:

91%

brand recall<sup>25</sup>

58%

uplift in likelihood to purchase among those who engaged with the experience<sup>25</sup>



**Budweiser:** Budweiser identified that festivalgoers seek social energy, discovery and shared celebration. Through its multi-year presence at Lollapalooza via the Brew District, Bud and Burgers and BudX Stage programming, the brand embedded itself into how audiences gather, explore and celebrate music.

Based on conversation with BookMyShow



<sup>24</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey  
<sup>25</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey

**Maybelline New York:** Maybelline New York recognized that festivals are peak moments for self-expression and camera-ready looks. By strategically centering its 12H Sunkisser range through makeovers, photo-ready zones, sampling games and a sundowner DJ experience, the brand turned product trial into a social and shareable beauty ritual where fans willingly engaged with the brand and shared their information for future targeting.

Based on conversation with BookMyShow



“

Fashion and music have always shared a deep cultural synergy, and Lollapalooza offered the perfect stage to bring that relationship to life. At H&M, we believe in liberating fashion for many, and live festivals allow people to express who they are with confidence and joy. Our presence at Lollapalooza was designed to celebrate that spirit — blending style, creativity and community. The response reaffirmed that when fashion becomes part of a cultural moment, the connection with consumers becomes far more meaningful, memorable and emotionally rich.

**Amit Kothari**

Head of Marketing, H&M India

“

Festivals place people outdoors, on their feet, and fully immersed for hours, and that is where care becomes most real. We are excited to be at Lollapalooza 2026, where our intent is not to create noise, but to become a quiet enabler of enjoyment, and we believe that when a brand shows up with genuine utility in cultural spaces, it earns a place in people's memories, not just their photos.

**Shweta Dalal**

Marketing Director, Nivea India

<sup>26</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey



## Indian music concerts: A nation in rhythm

Indian music concerts spanning Bollywood, indie, classical, regional and folk-fusion genres occupy a distinctive position within the live events ecosystem. These formats combine national scale with cultural familiarity, creating shared moments that resonate across generations and regions.

Indian music concerts draw strength from familiarity and cultural rootedness. This connection deepens because audiences have grown up with this music over time. These formats bring together audiences not just through performance, but through memory, cultural pride and timelessness as they relive moments etched in collective memories from the screen, making them some of the most emotionally connective live formats in the market.

### 1. Audience persona: The rooted modernist

The strength of Indian music concerts lies in recognition and lived experiences. Audiences show up for music they have grown up with, but choose to experience it in contemporary, out-of-home formats with friends, families and communities. This blend of scale, familiarity and emotional recall makes Indian music concerts among the most deeply connective live formats in the market. The audience includes:

- **The multi-generational attendee**, where teens, millennials and even Gen X witness the same moment, sometimes as family units, but often simply as different age groups drawn by a shared artist or genre
- **Culturally or regionally proud audiences** who connect deeply with artists or the type of music reflecting their linguistic and cultural identity, and their upbringing; and are driven by high familiarity
- **Nostalgic millennials** drawn by artists who defined their formative years; motivated by nostalgia, sing-along moments and the joy of collective memory

### 2. Strategic implications for brands

Indian music concerts deliver a rare blend of scale, familiarity and contemporary relevance, making them powerful platforms for broad yet meaningful engagement. Key advantages include:

- **National reach, local touch:** Tours span metros as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, enabling consistent brand visibility across diverse markets
- **Cultural positioning:** Indian brands can reinforce authenticity and indigeneity, while international brands can signal genuine anchoring within Indian subcultures
- **The sing-along effect:** Whether it is a legacy artist or contemporary favorites, audiences arrive with deep song familiarity. This creates high-energy, sing-along environments where brands can align with moments of joy, recognition and emotional uplift
- **A contemporary lifestyle stage:** Fashion, beauty, F&B, tech and premium lifestyle cues are highly visible across audiences in such events. This makes the format suitable for modern, youth-forward and aspiration-led brand narratives
- **Trust building:** The multi-generational mix creates inclusive, comfortable settings well suited to reassurance-led and everyday-use categories

<sup>27</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey



**VISA:** VISA forayed into the music space in India by tapping into the power of Indian artists, leveraging their massive reach. They provided additional on-ground Top-Up benefits to the VISA customers to promote “Tap to Pay feature on Visa Cards. For their valued customers, they created elevated lounges with priority lanes and butler service. They also created interactive installations such as the VISA Musical Wall across multi-city tours including Vishal-Sheykhar, Sanam and AP Dhillon.

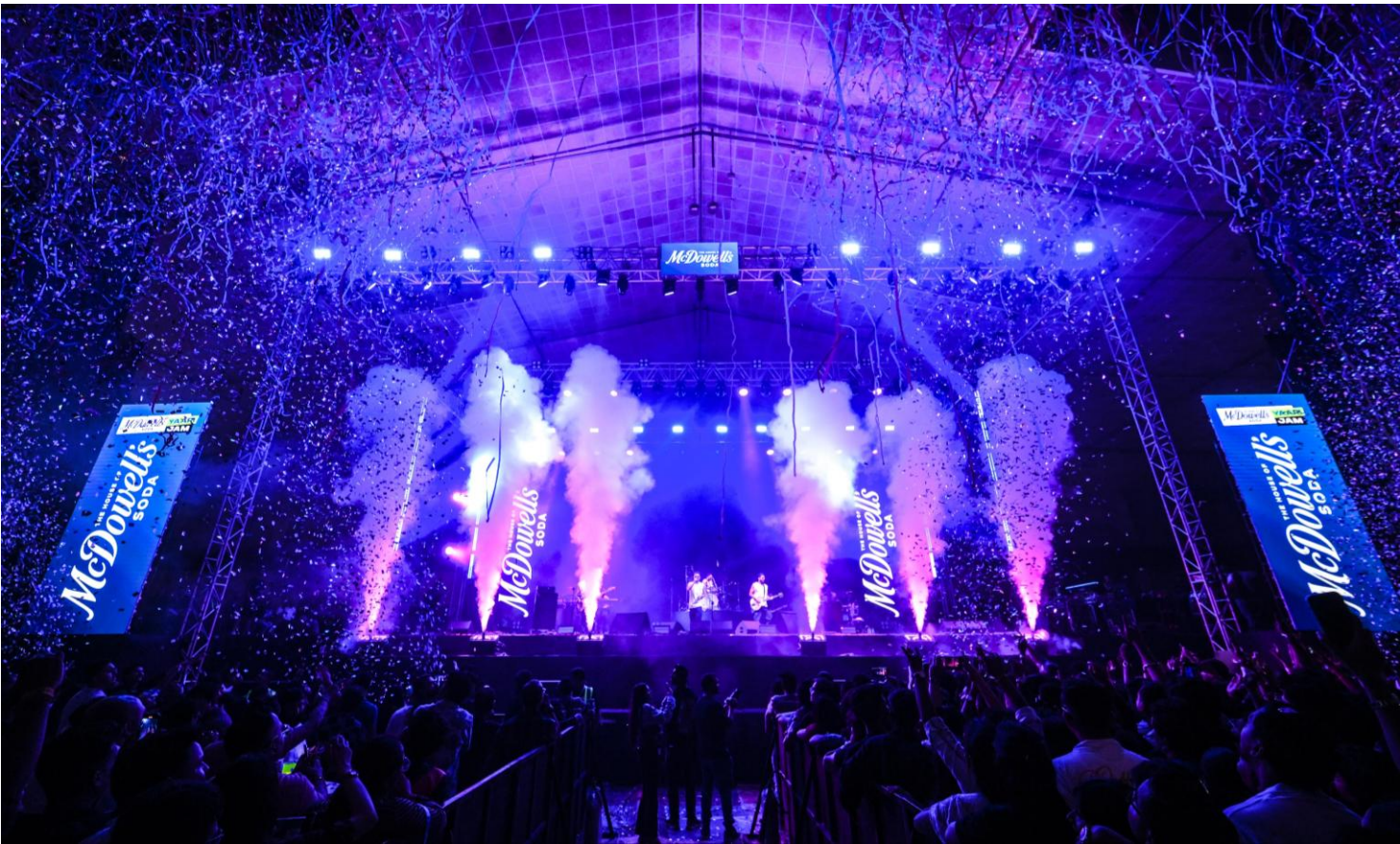
Based on conversation with BookMyShow



**Diageo:** As part of its transformation, McDowell's & Co. reimagined its portfolio under the new identity, the House of McDowell's Soda, and evolved its cultural IP from McDowell's Soda Yaari Jam Fest to The McDowell's Soda Yaari Jam. Designed as a flagship experiential IP, Yaari Jam was created to reinterpret the brand's long-standing 'Yaari' proposition for a new generation by anchoring it in shared, real-world experiences driven by music and contemporary youth culture. The first edition of the IP demonstrated strong on-ground traction, engaging over 50,000 consumers across five cities. Building on this momentum, the property is being scaled to 15 cities in the current year, with a carefully curated artist lineup that mirrors the sound, energy, and attitudes of today's youth, and is projected to reach more than 100,000 consumers nationwide.

Brand outcomes:

**91%** brand recall among audiences<sup>28</sup>



<sup>28</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey



Music has a rare ability to unite India. Live concerts amplify that energy — they are culturally rich, high-emotion moments where people want to feel, not just watch. At Visa, we believe in creating experiences that matter and resonate with the cultural zeitgeist. That is why experiential music marketing for us is about showing up with intent — delivering seamless, personal, and genuinely memorable moments for fans. Guided by our consumer-first approach, we strive to be wherever our customers are, enabling access to experiences they value most. In doing so, we strengthen trust, relevance and long-term preference, in a way only purposeful experiences can.

**Gaurav Ramdev**

Head of Marketing, Visa, India and South Asia



Music has always been a natural extension of our brands' cultural strategy. Each of our labels shows up where its consumers already find meaning; whether that is social connection, global music fandom or elevated, luxury-led experiences. From McDowell's Soda's Yaari Jam, which celebrates the spirit of friendship, to Johnnie Walker Luxe Blended Water's presence across large-scale tours like the Post Malone India concert, our associations reflect clear audience affinity. These partnerships allow our brands to participate authentically in the moments that shape contemporary Indian culture.

**Ruchira Jaitly**

Chief Marketing Officer, Diageo



## Non-music immersive experiences: The enthusiast's playground

Immersive experiences such as Nykaaland, Van Gogh 360 and Jung Kook Exhibit, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Spoken Fest and Comic Con, represent one of the most sophisticated frontiers of experiential marketing. These environments invite audiences to step inside themed, content-rich worlds designed for exploration, interaction and visual storytelling. For brands, this category offers sharply targeted, aesthetically elevated environments for meaningful storytelling.

### 1. Audience persona: The experience connoisseur

Immersive experiences draw a design-conscious, learning-oriented, specialized cohort that values stimulation, aesthetic detail and controlled environments. Key segments include:

- **Design-conscious millennials** who are aesthetically inclined to pay a premium for visually striking, intellectually stimulating experiences
- **Category-curious consumers** already engaged with a specific passion such as beauty, art, pop culture, literature, anime and gaming, seeking deeper exploration
- **High-affinity consumers** who gravitate towards sophisticated, tasteful environments —towards experiences that signal discernment

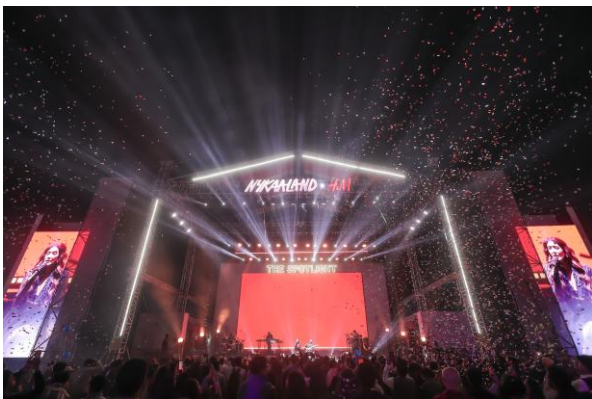
### 2. Strategic implications for brands

Immersive experiences give brands a uniquely refined platform for narrative depth and aesthetic coherence:

- **High-focus engagement:** Visitors offer undivided attention, making these environments ideal for complex, layered storytelling through curated and personalized experiences
- **Tasteful, sophisticated associations:** Perfect for luxury, technology and financial brands seeking to signal refinement, innovation and cultural alignment
- **Content-rich environments:** Visually striking installations ensure natural virality, enabling brands to borrow the prestige and artistry of experience
- **Consistency across formats:** A portfolio of mid-sized immersive events allows brands to build familiarity and cultural capital through repeated, tasteful touchpoints

Immersive experiences allow brands to engage discerning audiences through depth, beauty and narrative richness. Sustained participation in these formats builds a refined, culturally attuned brand identity, one that feels thoughtful, elevated and meaningfully differentiated.

**Nykaa:** BookMyShow Live and Nykaa curated Nykaaland as India's most relevant beauty expo, breaking category convention by presenting it as a music and pop-culture festival—an immersive beauty ecosystem that unlocked discovery and trial through brand-led zones, creator interactions, and hands-on testing, resulting in deeper engagement, longer dwell time, and high-quality content creation in a premium, controlled environment.



**RedBull:** Red Bull's Dance Your Style transformed street dance into a competitive, audience-led cultural platform, enabling participation, creator-led storytelling and community engagement, while reinforcing the brand's long-standing positioning around youth culture, movement and self-expression<sup>29</sup>.



## E Comedy events: The viral culture catalyst

Comedy has emerged as one of India's most dynamic non-music formats. From arena tours to intimate club shows, it reflects everyday life, social change and youth culture with immediacy and relatability. Comedians move fluidly across live stages, social media and digital platforms, turning stand up into a continuous content and community engine.

### 1. Audience persona: The fandom loyalist

- Comedy audiences are expressive, digitally active and sticky to the creators they follow. This audience includes:
  - Affluent, English-speaking, culturally aware audiences who gravitate toward comedians known for wit, satire and observational sharpness
  - Relatability seeker who connects with humor grounded in everyday life, middle-class realities, friendships, hustle culture and emotional vulnerability
  - Young professionals and college goers, digitally native superfans who follow comedians across YouTube, Reels, tours and podcasts, often treating live shows as a place to connect with their "para-social circle", often an affordable, low commitment entry point
  - Those who prefer comedy in their native languages and dialects rooted in local culture, politics and social nuances

### 2. Strategic implications for brands

Comedy events offer brands a powerful trifecta: reach, relatability and loyalty as:

- Personality extension:** Brands can borrow the tone, humor or emotional texture of the performer or fandom to sharpen their own identity and voice
- Viral content engines:** Stand-up formats are inherently "clip ready", brands integrated into stage branding rights, entry experiences or integrating within the creator content naturally ride this virality
- High-attention environments:** Auditoriums and club venues deliver intimate, distraction-free settings which are ideal for premium sampling or subtle brand associations

<sup>29</sup>Telegraph India (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/events/red-bull-dance-your-style-india-2023-finals-in-delhi-was-about-celebrating-street-style-dance/cid/1950627>)

- **Community-led influence:** Comedy fans form tight digital communities. When brands meaningfully show up, they gain credibility within large groups that disproportionately shape memes, trends and online conversation
- **Tier 2 and Tier 3 penetration:** Comedy events in smaller cities let brands engage active and underserved audiences, driving deeper reach and high-impact engagement beyond metro

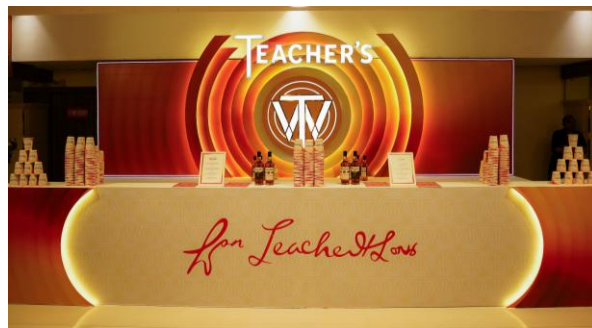
Comedy sits at the intersection of relevance and resonance, where culture is being articulated, questioned and reshaped in real time. For brands, presence here signals modernity, agility, boldness and an ability to speak the language of today's consumers with authenticity and charm.

**NIC Ice Cream:** Grameen Kulfi integrated itself directly into Zakir Khan's India tour that transcends across 20+ cities and 50+ shows with on ground photo ops & kulfi carts in addition to relatable content linking Zakir Khan's brand of comedy with Grameen Kulfi's product truth. The association reinforced Grameen Kulfi's narrative as a homegrown brand scaling nationally, amplified across multiple cities and towns through on-ground moments and creator-led reach.



**Vicks:** As part of a WPP-led partnership executed via TribeVibe, Vicks was organically integrated into Zakir Khan's live comedy set through contextual, creator-led storytelling. The brand appeared as a natural part of the narrative, leveraging everyday humour to drive authenticity and audience resonance. The integration delivered high-attention moments during live performances, which were further amplified through social-first content, extending reach and strengthening brand recall across multiple cities and digital platforms.

**Suntory global spirits:** Teacher's Packaged Drinking Water tapped into comedy's high-attention, emotionally open space by partnering with Vir Das' shows. Through culturally relevant touchpoints like a contextual photobooth and venue visibility, the brand ensured audiences experienced Teacher's in moments they genuinely value—reinforcing its easy-going, social persona and authentic cultural connection.



“Walko, through its brands, has been consistently associated with experiential marketing — because we understand the deep emotional connection it builds between brands and consumers. Grameen Kulfi is a key brand in Walko's portfolio, and this association focusses strongly on the same audience set — youth and Gen Z. Zakir Khan resonates deeply not only with the brand's name and product positioning, but also with its spirit as a true son of the soil — someone rooted in his land, culture and people, yet celebrated nationally and internationally. For a product meant to be savored, remembered and nostalgically revisited, experiential marketing was not a new direction for us — it was the most meaningful next step. It gives us the opportunity to take a product with a flavor born from our soil to audiences across the country in a way that feels authentic, relatable and personal.

**Jeetendra Bhandari**  
 Founder, Walko Food

“Comedy and music are two of the strongest consumer passion points: spaces of high-quality attention, emotional openness and genuine connection. These are exactly the environments where Teacher’s Packaged Drinking Water aims to engage. By investing in these passion points, we are showing up in moments our audiences already value, building brand affinity through experiences that feel authentic, meaningful and culturally relevant

**Prithvi Handa**  
 Category Head - Teacher's & Malt Scotch Whisky Portfolio (Suntory Global Spirits)

**F Indian festivals and occasions: The consumption season**

Indian cultural events are not just holidays but mass public moments where emotion, togetherness and consumption peak simultaneously. These periods combine emotion, community and spending into short, high-intensity windows that drive both cultural participation and commercial activity on a scale.

- Festivals such as Navratri today span more than 2,000 organized events<sup>30</sup> across cities, while Holi ranges from hyperlocal celebrations to mega formats like Martin Garrix’s Holi show that drew ~50,000 attendees<sup>31</sup>.
- Dussehra weekend alone recording 6.8 million<sup>32</sup> movie tickets sold, followed closely by Independence Day weekend.

**1. Audience persona: The cultural modernist**

This audience is rooted in tradition but contemporary in how it celebrates. Festivals are no longer just rituals; they are social, experiential and outward-facing moments. The cultural modernists include:

- **Tradition-aware participants** who respect cultural roots but expect celebrations to be elevated, immersive and socially engaging rather than purely ritualistic
- **Social celebration cohorts** include friends, colleagues and partners who treat festivals as opportunities for collective enjoyment, self-expression and cultural participation beyond the home
- **Modern family groups** who increasingly use festivals and long weekends to explore out-of-home experiences together, blending tradition with discovery and novelty.
- **Community-connected audiences** who participate at scale, where peer influence, social visibility and shared experiences drive participation across neighborhoods and networks

**2. Strategic implications for brands**

Cultural occasions allow brands to become part of the celebration rather than just advertise around it:

**Solving friction:** Brands that enhance order, comfort or safety earn disproportionate goodwill. For example, fast access lanes, dedicated parking, perfume sprays at various touch points

**Ritual enhancement:** Thoughtful integration into belief systems with food, décor, color and symbolic moments allows brands to blend naturally into the celebration. E.g. Maha Aarti through audience participation, seasonal flavored product sampling

**Hyper-local relevance:** Impact hinges on cultural specificity; effective festival activations to connect with hyper local audience through customs, language, symbols and community preferences

**Drive TOMA:** High-emotion, high-spend windows make these occasions powerful for driving recall and influencing purchase decisions



Cultural festivals place brands inside India’s most emotionally open and commercially active moments, making them uniquely effective for building trust, visibility and mass relevance.

<sup>30</sup>BookMyShow  
<sup>31</sup>Hindustan Times (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/htcity/cinema/it-means-the-world-to-me-martin-garrix-celebrate-holi-in-mumbai-with-arjit-singh-and-50-000-fans-101742050634140.html>)  
<sup>32</sup>BookMyShow Throwback 2025 (<https://in.bookmyshow.com/throwback/2025>)

At cultural festivals, brands are activated with clearly defined roles.

**Campa** addressed on-ground heat and refreshment needs during high-energy festive events like Navratri and Ganpati, positioning the brand as a timely, dependable refresher that refuels your energy for the occasion

63%

uplift in likelihood to recommend among activated consumers<sup>33</sup>

31%

unaided recall for the brand<sup>33</sup>

61%

uplift in perception as a "brand for me"<sup>33</sup>

**Tira** found a direct synergy between getting ready and stepping out for festivals. They used the Navratri season activations to drive early salience and beauty-led perception ahead of peak purchase windows, anchoring themselves as a trend-forward destination

59%

uplift in likelihood to recommend among activated consumers<sup>34</sup>

50%

uplift in perception as a "cool brand"<sup>34</sup>



**JBL** strengthened its positioning through association with large-scale moments such as Martin Garrix's World's Biggest Holi

**Bhoomi Group** leveraged Falguni Pathak's Navratri events to build hyper-local relevance among high-income audiences

Across formats, from international concerts and youth-driven festivals to Indian music tours, immersive exhibitions and niche cultural gatherings, live events offer brands strong access to the full spectrum of Indian consumers. Each category presents a distinct audience mindset, engagement depth and storytelling canvas, allowing brands to select where and how they build relevance. What unites them is the power of lived experience: high attention, emotional resonance and authentic community participation. For marketers, the opportunity lies in treating events as strategic, behavior-shaping touchpoints. As India's experience economy booms, brands that invest intentionally across these formats will build deeper affinity, cultural legitimacy and long-term loyalty.

<sup>33</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey  
<sup>34</sup>BookMyShow post-event consumer survey



5

Unlocking activation:  
Execution for brand success

# Unlocking activation: Execution for brand success

To drive higher effectiveness in sponsorship and experiential marketing, brands must move beyond logo-led visibility and adopt a journey-first approach. The impact is maximized when brands participate across all three stages of the consumer journey, i.e., **anticipation, participation and amplification**. Together, these stages form a **fan-love flywheel** – a compounding system in which early cues shape intent, in-the-moment interactions create emotional memory, and post-experience storytelling extends advocacy and cultural relevance over time. Thus, helping brands create sustained value rather than momentary recall.

## A Anticipation: The pre-event runway

Long before a consumer enters an event, opens an app or walks into a store, the experience has already begun. Anticipation shapes desire, signals exclusivity, and gives audiences a reason to actively seek out the brand when the moment arrives.



### How can brands participate during the 'Anticipation' phase?

- **Exclusive access:** Early drops, presales, ring fenced tickets once the shows are sold out, contest giveaways linked to sales or social engagement, gated access, loyalty-led benefits and exclusive previews that reward affinity
- **Contextual storytelling:** Audience-aware, genre-aware and culturally relevant narratives like pre-parties that make consumers feel like insiders
- **Fan-first influence:** Creators, communities or voices that hold credibility with the audience segment
- **Digital breadcrumbs:** Teasers, AR lenses, challenges, city takeovers or interactive hints that build momentum

Brands that win the anticipation stage enter the experience with primed intent; audiences arrive curious, receptive and actively seeking the brand.

## B Participation: Owning the on-ground moments

Participation is the core of experiential success— a moment where consumers feel, act, remember and share. Whether the setting is a festival, a showroom, a pop-up or a digital immersion, this is where emotional resonance is created, and brand preference takes shape.

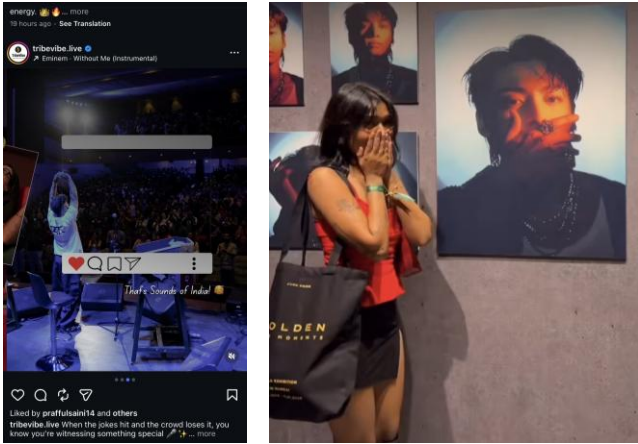


### How can brands participate during this phase?

- **Solving problems:** Utility-first interventions (guidance, mobility, dedicated access lanes, hydration, charging stations and resting pods) earn instant goodwill
- **Design for dwell:** multi-sensory environments, tactile trials and giveaways, immersive storytelling and personalized interactions that deepen engagement
- **Enhance self-presentation:** Style, grooming or photo-ready touchpoints that help audiences look and feel their best, increasing confidence, participation and shareability
- **Leverage immersive tech:** AR/VR, AI mirrors, gamified missions and digital overlays that elevate discovery and create magic
- **Influencer-led experiences:** Integrated creator zones or audience interactions that drive real-time content and social energy

## **C** Amplification: Extending the life of partnership

A well-designed experiential program continues to create value long after the physical moment concludes. Post-event amplification ensures that the brand remains part of the cultural conversation and that the impact compounds beyond the initial touchpoint.



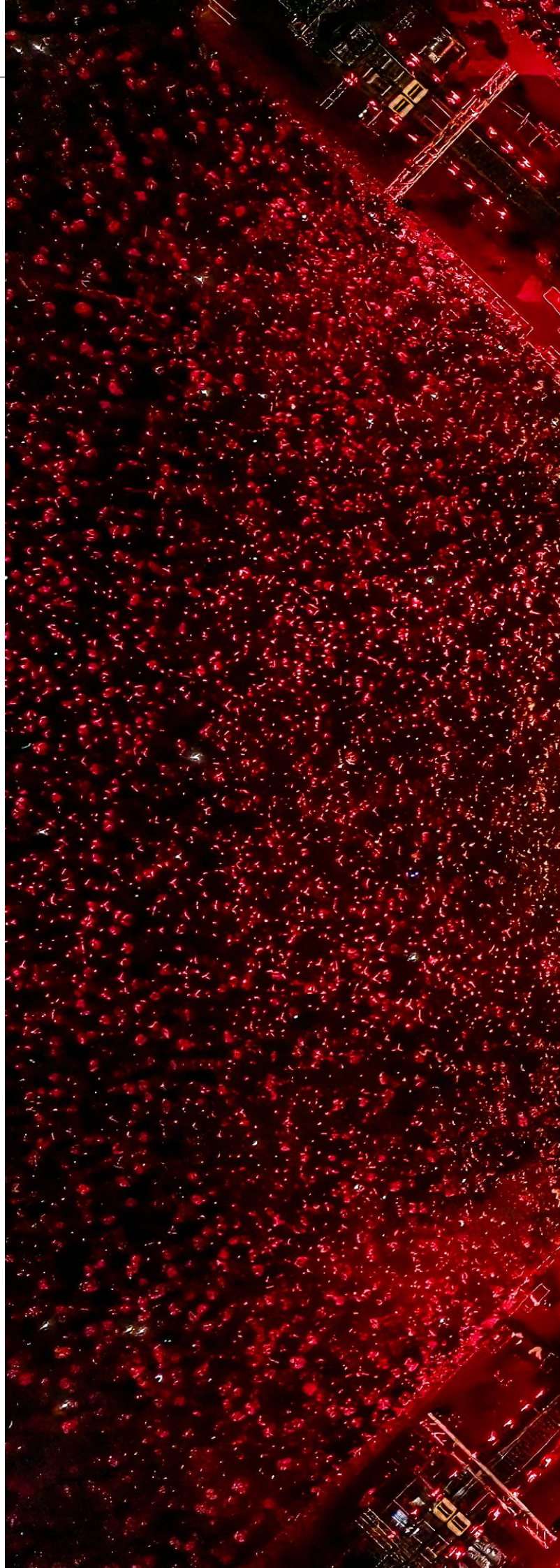
### What does strong amplification look like?

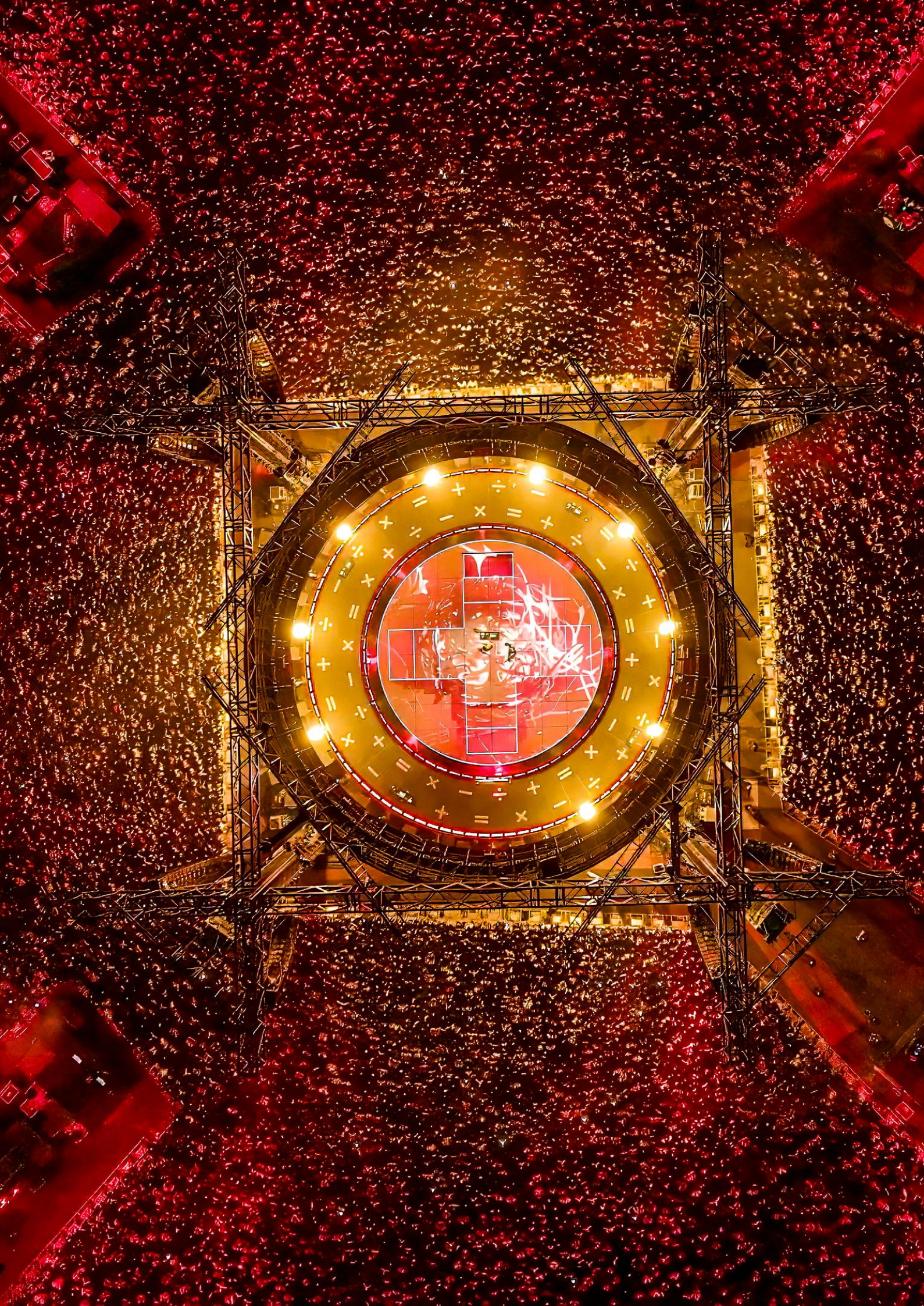
- **Engineer for user-generated content (UGC):** Designing visual moments that excite fans to capture, such as distinctive frames, AR layers, bold backdrops, etc.
- **Creator extensions:** Recaps, reaction videos, narrative edits and influencer POVs that unlock new audiences
- **Memory loops:** Personalized highlight reels, emails, rewards, recap films or exclusive codes that reignite recall
- **Loyalty extensions:** Using on-ground or in-experience data to offer benefits that spark repeat engagement

A recent example is Vicks' integration with Zakir Khan, where a live on-stage moment translated into widespread social traction, with clips circulating organically across platforms and generating engagement far beyond the in-venue audience.

Amplification determines whether an experience becomes a social memory, a community ritual, or a single-night moment. With the right design, one activation can fuel weeks of visibility.

The fan-love flywheel offers a simple but powerful truth: brand impact is not created at the experience; it is compounded across the entire journey. Brands that master this flywheel do not just participate in culture; they shape it. In an era where experiences increasingly define identity and influence choice, this approach will distinguish the brands that lead from those that are merely present.







6

Conclusion:  
Futureproofing your  
marketing strategy



## Conclusion: Futureproofing your marketing strategy

Experiential marketing has moved to the center of modern brand building. As consumers seek new ways of growing social currency, building connections, and engagement through shared cultural moments, experiences deliver what traditional advertising often struggles to achieve: undivided attention, deeper engagement, richer meaning and lasting memory. The findings from this study point to a decisive shift in leadership mindset. CMOs are no longer viewing experiential as an add-on BTL activation, but as a strategic pathway to shape perception and build sustained affinity.

Five takeaways define the road ahead for CMOs and brand leaders:

# 1

**Experiences are core to brand strategy, not a side bet:**

Across sectors, experiential has become one of the strongest drivers of relevance, consideration and affinity. Hence, brand associations must ideally sit within annual planning

# 2

**Full-funnel impact is real and measurable:**

Experiential marketing can influence any desired stage of the consumer funnel: discovery, narrative building, trial, conversion, advocacy and loyalty. With phygital tracking maturing, measurement is shifting from volume-based impressions to value-based expressions such as memory, emotion, imagery, participation, and brand lift

# 3

**Design with experiential impact pyramid:**

Successful brand associations in experiential follow a disciplined blueprint: insight - narrative - participation - phygital integration - immersive brand moments - cultural legacy. Thus, experiential success is engineered, not improvised. To design structured, high-performing experiences

# 4

**Activation must span the entire fan journey:**

Brands build real equity when they engage audiences before, during and after the experience, not just in the moment

# 5

**Consistency beats virality:**

Culture associations and imagery codes compound through long-term platforms and frequent presence

As India's experiential landscape continues to expand, brands have an opportunity to influence not just consumer choices, but the cultural fabric itself. The opportunity ahead is clear: move from visibility to involvement, from awareness to affinity, from audience to community.



## About this report

### Research methodology

The CMO survey included in this report was administered by EY-Parthenon. EY-Parthenon designed the survey and aggregated and analyzed the responses to identify patterns in budget allocation, strategic priorities and the evolving role of experiential marketing for brand leaders.

Insights on brand recall, activation performance and uplift are based on post-event consumer surveys conducted by BookMyShow across attendees of over 20 events like Lollapalooza India, Ed Sheeran, Guns N' Roses, Travis Scott, Aditya Gadhvi, Vishal-Sheykhar and Yaari Jam events in 2025.

Data provided by participating organizations and partners was used as received and has not been independently validated by EY-Parthenon & BookMyShow. Additionally, secondary research from media reports and other sources was incorporated without independent verification.

### Assumption and disclaimer

This report has been commissioned by BookMyShow. It has been developed based on primary and secondary research, discussions with various brands and industry stakeholders, and cross-referencing of available data points. All other data used in this report has been sourced through BookMyShow and its affiliates. EY-Parthenon has not independently audited the accuracy of the data and does not assume any responsibility for the veracity of the underlying information. Use of this report is at the discretion of the reader, and neither BookMyShow nor EY-Parthenon assumes any responsibility for its use in any manner. Professional guidance should be obtained prior to using the information provided in this report for any decision making. All live event and experiential activation images featured in this report have been sourced from BookMyShow and are used with appropriate permissions. This report does not constitute tax, operational, regulatory, or other business advice or opinions. By reading this report, the reader shall be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions outlined in this paragraph. Despite our best efforts, errors may inadvertently occur, which we correct when brought to our attention. Please ensure that you are referring to the latest updated version available on our website.



## Glossary

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
ATL	Above the line
BTL	Below the line
B2C	Business-to-consumer
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CMO	Chief Marketing Officer
CRM	Customer relationship management
F&B	Food and beverage
INR	Indian Rupee
IP	Intellectual property
KPI	Key performance indicator
LTV	Lifetime value
M&E	Media and entertainment
POV	Point of view
QR	Quick response
ROI	Return on investment
UGC	User-generated content
UX	User experience
VIP	Very Important Person



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