

## Editors' Introduction

The four qualitative research papers that constitute the special issue of REB address the emerging field of experience marketing development and the design of experience services. The concept of experience marketing is based on that of the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Gilmore and Pine, 2007). The essence of experience marketing has a long history within the services marketing fields of retailing (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; 2002; Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Kozinets et al., 2002; Puccinelli et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009), tourism (Leighton, 2007; LCEEI), entertainment and the arts (Holbrook et al., 1982; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Caru, 2003; Petkus, 2004), and hospitality (Gilmore and Pine, 1997, 2002; Munoz, Wood and Solomon, 2006; Leppiman, 2010). Experience is the key element in understanding consumer behaviour, if not the foundation of the whole economy. It is the main component of experience marketing, and according to LaSalle and Britton (2003) and Schmitt (1999a, b; 2003), of the marketing of the future (Hirschman, 1984; Bagozzi, 1999). Design thinking and innovative methods work as a tool for co-creating experience service and desirable value propositions (Miettinen and Koivisto, 2009). The design of an experience service is challenging, since services are intangible and happen over time (Koivisto 2009).

The first article by Iivi Riivits-Arkonsuo, Kristel Kaljund and Anu Leppiman explores how brand evangelists perceive the journey from the first experience to a strong meaningful emotional bond with a brand, following the logic of the experience pyramid model; at the same time the topic of identifying brand evangelists is addressed.

The second paper by Satu Miettinen, Piia Ryttilähti, Hanna-Riina Vuontisjärvi, Essi Kuure and Simo Rontti constructs a conceptual framework for a discussion of experience design in the field of digital services. Business innovations and the fast implementation of products and services in that field profit from adopting real-time experiments with actual company cases through service prototyping and providing instant value delivery based upon deep customer insights and creating a holistic customer experience.

The third paper by Jana Kukk, Anu Leppiman and Anneli Pohjola focuses on value co-creation in knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS), identifying the key elements of the value formation process in business services.

The fourth paper by Siiri Same addresses the use of experience marketing in country branding, especially for small countries. It proposes a conceptual model explaining the interconnections between experience marketing, country branding, authentic experiences, and image.

We want to thank all the submitting authors of our special issue, and express our profound gratitude for the generous assistance of the external reviewers to the Editorial Board in the paper evaluation process.

On behalf of the Editorial Board

Urve Venesaar  
*Editor-in-Chief*

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