Introduction

The following experience marketing approach is based on the final thesis research report by Jiao Wu under the research title “The potential of playing for fashion communication strategies when addressing the Generation Y” written as a student of the course International Fashion & Management at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute. This experience marketing campaign is created in a playful way based on Generation Y’s desire for adventure, stories to tell and their searching for meaningfulness that established throughout my research a link to James Barrie’s Peter Pan. My approach is developed for fashion brands that strive to connect with the German Generation Y in order to build up brand loyalty. However, this campaign is not developed for a particular fashion brand, but it is essential to illustrate that it provides content that requires a brand or company with a stable financial situation, or an elaborate marketing budget in order to actualize my approach appropriate. Nonetheless, I would like to clarify, that my approach could also be suitable and effective for brands with smaller marketing budgets, but then in an altered more toned down version. Besides, I see the strongest suitability of my approach for brands with a clear identity that feature adventure, a rebellious attitude and individualism, like Diesel for instance, or a brand with a very British brand identity and heritage.

Background

Furthermore I would like to manifest that the approach is implemented in 3 steps, called Levels, built upon creation of mystery, being part of an online community and offline community.

The approach is created with Gamification relevant mechanics, using Sebastian Deterding’s core principles; Meaning, Mastery and Autonomy. Game relevant mechanics used are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game mechanics</th>
<th>Human desire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual goods</td>
<td>Self-Expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score Boards</td>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The campaigns content however is built up on Gilmore and Pine’s vision on experience marketing. Due to that I incorporated a combination of Gilmore and Pine’s 4 realms that deliver, according to them, the richest experience. Those 4 realms by Gilmore and Pine are defined as:

1. **Entertainment experiences**: Passive and absorbing participation, like watching TV. People want to enjoy.
2. **Educational experiences**: Passive participation, but slightly more active, like attending a ski lesson. People want to learn.
3. **Escapist experiences**: Active and immersing participation, which can educate (educate experience) and amuse (entertainment experience) like acting in a play, or descending the Grand Canyon. People want to go and do.
4. **Esthetic experiences**: Rather passive and immersing participation, customers are immersed in an activity, but have little or no effect on it, like a tourist in an art gallery. People want to be.

In addition I used Gilmore and Pine 5 key design principles to create my experience marketing approach, which are:

1. Development of a strong theme.
2. Harmonization of positive impressions
3. Elimination of negative impressions
4. Offer memories to take away
5. Engagement of all five senses

The “Finding Neverland” experience campaign is aiming at the German Generation Y and in particular the Generation Y subcategories “The Wild Child” and/or “The Journey Seeker”, which has been developed due to my research within my research report. Even though the basic characteristics of the whole Generation Y in Germany seems to supply fashion companies with the possibility to reach out to them by experience marketing campaigns, the “Wild Child” and “Journey Seeker” subcategories that I developed based on my research seem to be the most suitable and promising ones when it comes to fashion experience marketing campaigns that are based on interaction and adventure.

Addressing

The introduction of the “Finding Neverland” campaign online should be mysterious and not too specific, so it creates excitement and makes people attentive. The start of the experience marketing campaign “Finding Neverland” will take place in the biggest cities in Germany, Berlin, Cologne, Munich, Dortmund, Hannover, Stuttgart, Bremen, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Dresden via out of home advertising. Throughout Germany the introduction of the campaign functions online via the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. But what exactly would be introduced? How is the mystery created and where does the aspect of playing is incorporated?

The introduction of the “Finding Neverland” campaign is a play in itself. On billboards a close up picture of things that can be associated with the story of Peter Pan in a modern context is visible, next to a question about the picture. No brand logo is visible, no clear connection is established, only a picture, a question and a link of a mysterious online page all of that in combination create a game and aim to develop curiosity.

On social media platforms a campaign page will be created that posts hints and pictures of billboard locations and provide some information about the game as well. The link to Peter Pan in a modern context has to be established also throughout the social media platforms, to eliminate confusion and negative cues, but also to create excitement.

Cruical to mention is that the experience should not be promoted as prize, it is an experiential brand trip, in order to link it very closely to the brand identity and not an external gift.

The first step, the introduction, period has to be long enough to collect the billboard questions and to create mystery, but it should not be too long in order to make the participants bored. Due to that I would suggest a time period of 3-4 month.
The hints and information for further billboards and question should be built up as some sort of game too. The participants need to provide their age, the city they live in and their real name in order to enter the webpage. After the log in has been successful, the system provides the participant with a Peter Pan name in order to develop a distinction between their name by birth and their virtual name, but also to clarify that it’s a game. The webpage function as exchange of information, guideline and community.

The best 20-50 participants, in the sense of finding the most answers, will be invited to a secret trip. Each question will, if successful answered, deliver a letter and can be entered in free boxes that would form a sentence as soon as all boxes are filled with letters, which would clarify the destination of the trip that is promoted. A suggested sentence could be: ‘The journey to find Neverland.

The idea behind it is to provide an experience not only for those few who can be part of the experience trip. The collection of billboards and the answer of question create a game which functions on and offline. The log in information communicates some sort of exclusive membership that is not available for everyone and expresses an experience in itself.

The timespan of step two can vary between 2-4 month and is almost aligned to the time period of step one.

The 20-50 participants, who were able to collect the most right answers to the billboard questions, receive a package including two outfits that have to be brought to the trip. Information of the time of meeting point will be provided for the lucky ones at the webpage, on another level where only the chosen ones have access to. The outfits of the brand have to be leger and practical, but can be collection key pieces as well. Except of the outfit a paper explains what to bring and that the trip will take in total one week. Items that can be brought can be personal things the participant requires (medicine for instance, glasses etc) and a valid passport.

First the guests have to leave their stamp on the train by using provided ink that allows them to individualize the train. But not only the individual stamp on the outside of the train is required to enter, also a final puzzle needs to be solved in order to be part of this special community.

When entering the train, it is important to incorporate aspects of Peter Pan, here the time and place Peter Pan has been released (London around 1905-1910) could be visible in the train interior and could create some sort of atmosphere. I would also include children books and board games in the inventory to feature the interaction between the members.

Aso due to that the brand will ask to hand over their mobile phones, which they will get back after the trip. Everyone receives a smartphone with the option of digitalize their pictures afterwards. Mobile phones would distract from the actual experience and the interaction.

After collecting participants from the source and north of Germany, the train heads up to its final destination, Amsterdam Schiphol airport. From here a small plane, one for the members only will bring them to Hua, for example, in Thailand, or the Maldives, important to mention, the guest still do not know what exactly they have to expect from the trip. The ambient of the plane needs to fit to the train interior, also considering atmosphere, Peter Pan and food.

To clarify, the train as well as the plane provide sleeping opportunities. Otherwise it would not comfortable for the guest to experience the brand in a positive way for a longer period.

When arriving at the airport, our old sailing boat (again, the authentic interior needs to be incorporated) picks them up from the harbour and ships them to a lonely island. The next 4 days the guests experience the island. They build up their own camp out of material tool boxes supplied from the brand. Everything the guest need, food, camp materials, games etc. is supplied in several “Creating Neverland” tool boxes available at the beach including a description.

The participants can sleep at the old sailing boat which is staying in the shallow water, or in the camp they built up with the help of the tool boxes. The possible activities for the upcoming days, as island treasure hunt or island survival course, are offered and explained with the tool boxes.

The focus lies on building something, solve problems, playing games and learning, but the overall goal is an adventurous Peter Pan experience, which is the overall framework of every designing aspect and activity and has to be visible continuously.

One activity is the story teller aspect in combination with clothing. In starter kits the guests receive tools and material to sew, glas, or somehow make T-shirts and are asked to visualize with one T-shirt as creative as possible their experience trip story. They are told that this T-shirt will be produced by the brand and exclusively available as a survival collection, featuring the name and story of the person who made it in the label and on the shirt. They are allowed to use everything they get in the tool boxes and the island for their design. Also available in the T-shirt Peter Pan starter kit is a based on nature creative book that should inspire to include the nature, the sand, flowers, water and fun for their designs. The brand also communicates that they aim to copy their T-shirt as perfect as possible, but have to consider that some ways of producing are not industrial possible.

After 4 days on the island, the guests will be brought back the same way they came. They have to give back their outfits and cameras to the brand for a short while and receive their mobile phones back. After taking pictures of the destroyed and used clothing and copying the pictures of the one way cameras, the participants will receive both back as a constant reminder of their experience.

The online community webpage will last and provide the platform for further feedback, information exchange and promotion campaigns.

The brand itself is also making a link to the campaign by including the campaign social media page, as well as the webpage on the brand specific online appearance to make a link, to create trust and to enhance with that the brand identity. However, it is crucial that the brand is bringing the mysterious message across, establishing a link in order to support further association, but it is essential that the brand is not “selling” the campaign as such, but communicate a link that supports the campaign and pictures the brand identity in a playful manner.

Important Peter Pan aspects that should be used throughout the campaign are following:

- Pirates
- Sailing boats
- Magic
- Flying
- Island and the beach
- Nature
- Fireflies
- Crocodiles
- London around 1900-1950
- Books and stories
- Alarm clock

Another important aspect that has to been mentioned is the state of the garments. Throughout the experience the garments will get dirty and probably somehow destroyed, but those clothing can be used for marketing and communication purposes after the trip, for telling the story of Neverland survival. The outfits of the brands, of Diesel for example, could be a denim overall, function as content brand reminder and are also staged due to the pictures that are taken by the participants, which will deliver also photo material for campaigns afterwards.

Also the special train that has been personalized from the guest can be used as a promotion tool afterwards. The overall goal of this expensive campaign is the bonding with potential and existing customer by creating memories for a lifetime due to the brand experience. The best possible case would be that the participants associate the logo and brand with their own adventure experience trip every time they think about it, or are reminded somehow. They will show pictures to friends, they are before and afterwards part of the staged experience and the feeling of being special should have been established.