Airlines experiential marketing: gaining and retaining customers

Case studies of British Airways, SAS, Air France, Easy Jet and KLM

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Abstract

Title: Airlines experiential marketing: gaining and retaining customers

Research Question: How do airlines use the experiential marketing to gain and retain consumers?

Supervisor: Venilton Reinert

Course: Strategic Marketing with Independent Project

Keywords: Airlines, experiential marketing, experience, loyalty, sense, emotions, feelings

Purpose: The aim of this research is to understand how airlines’ users can be acquired and kept thanks to experiential marketing. This study allows analysing the news consumers’ expectations and how companies adapt their strategies to meet customers’ needs thanks to experiential marketing. All airlines mentioned in this study are European.

Methodology: A qualitative research has been used for this paper. The authors of the thesis proceed choosing five European airlines: British Airways, Air France, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Easy Jet and Scandinavian Airlines System. The case studies have been used to describe, thanks to a number of Internet tools, how companies use the experience and feelings in marketing to urge consumers to purchase and be loyal. Then, authors used Schmitt theory to collect data. Finally, a number of frameworks have been used to analyse data.

Conclusion: Airlines want to carry the customer to think and act through the experience. A successful experiential marketing occurs when the customer behaves thanks to his emotions. So, airlines’ marketers create competition, challenge, and game to remind customers. The interaction with public and internet users is necessary used in each experiential marketing event by airlines to promote the event and permeated to the customer share its experience, meet people and identify him in a group. If customers experience unique and perfectly experiential event, they will remember the service, and consequently the brand in the long-term as remarkable. In this way, the brand gain or retain customers.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Market globalization, intensified competition, economic recession and the dynamic evolution of new technologies cause that the tourism industries all over the world are currently facing rapid changes (Tsio, Ratten, 2010) and (Schmitt, 1999). Consequently, tourism has to re-evaluate and nowadays, uses the e-business to promote its marketing (called e-marketing). In this way, the brand can reach visitors easier thanks to the modern image and the use of new technologies (Skinner, 2008). E-marketing permitted also offering adapted services and to compete with other brands and distribution channel (Pedro Beça, and Rui Raposo, 2013). The e-tourism is well-liked by customers because it minimize transaction costs, bring higher quality products to the market, share market information, reduce uncertainty, assist distribution channel efficiently and help them to control their production costs (Tsio, Ratten, 2010). Thus, online marketing transforms tourists from passive travellers to active PROSUMERS (Toffler, 1980) of travel experiences. So, tourism companies adapt their advertising campaigns to take advantage of new destinations (Tsio, Ratten, 2010). The tourism business uses the new technologies and jeopardizes the work of traditional tourism agencies. Now, consumers compare a lot of sites and they relate to previous experience to choose their travel and the internet boom offers permit travellers to be transported with affordable flight, quicker than never and customers have more destination choices (Poria and Oppewal, 2003). This phenomenon accentuates the desire to travel and to explore the world. The International Air Transportation Association (IATA, 2012) expects a 31% rise in passenger demand by 2017, namely 930 million more travellers than in 2012. Also, to explain this trend, according to Mattila (2004), the consumer behaviour is a dynamic and eclectic field of tourism marketing. This means that the tourism global consumption is influenced by many aspects of the environment. The aging of travellers creates changing demands in facilities and services that airlines are offered to tourists (Louviers et al., 2003). Kim and Geistefeld (2003), also discover that the demand for full service tourism resorts will rise because of the aging of population and the demographic segment of the population influenced the tourism environment. Moreover, Mueller et al. in 2003 found cross-cultural differences of the global travel market. Indeed, they show that Irish and American consumers have a
different perception of service encounters. In addition, according to Prebensen et al., (2003), consumers differ due to their ethnic background and individuality. Effectively, vacation styles are affected by both geography and culture depending on origin (Dolnicar and Leisch, 2003) and (Chen and Uysal, 2003). The airlines consumption patterns are changing through the emergence of developing countries like China or India. This orientation means an increase of travel demand because tourists are richer and had more time to spend. (Louviers et al., 2003). This huge growth is normally good news for airlines, but, this also means a competition increase. Moreover, every airline has the same argue of added value in their advertisings: friendly service, comfortable flights, cheaper prices but nowadays it is no longer enough. The differentiation is not easy because of the advertising plenty and the recurrence of offer, consumers have to make a decision thanks to the price (Elhaj, 2012). Nonetheless, working on the price is no longer effective. Customers need more: the passenger has to recognize himself in a brand and not only to choose a flight. Airlines must know their customers to propose the best offer and have to realize that each person is important. In this way and according to De Clerck (2015), the danger with too much mass advertising and internet offer is losing out on where the true value is and forgetting how people really think. Tourists and hidden-emotions need to be understood. So, the emotion business is smart and interesting to be employed.

Pine and Guilmor (1999) judged the experience as a new offer on the market. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the experience production is a company’s way to gain a competitive differential and to apply higher prices. In this “new experiential economy” the company becomes a director, and the customer is a looking for sensation guest. In accordance with Gottdiener works in 1997, Pine and Guilmore thought about topic to create a good storyline as examples paradise, far west and oriental fantasy. The offer is memorable and each profit is different for each customer and reveal with time, depending on what memories about the event. Schmitt, in 1999, proposed that the experiential marketing uses sense, feel and act relate with the consumption experience. According to Ladwein (2003) an offer is experiential if the offer is sensorial and uncommon. Shaw (2007) says that only emotions matter in customer experience. He adds that customer lives an experience when he doesn’t think about his behaviour, he behaves thanks to his emotions. Consequently, experiences can help airlines connect with consumers on a more personal basis. In fact, beyond live them, travellers love
telling their experiences, in particular thanks to the social networks (Fotis et al., 2011). They allow consumers to inform them about the feelings (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Consumer’s opinion directly affects the market because clients trust content produced by users before the tourist agencies’ websites or mass media (Fotis et al., 2011). The requirement is to prove that the brand is the best bringing the traveller in a positive experience, not only in advertising. That’s where that experiential marketing is coming.

Before experiential marketing, it’s necessary to understand what the marketing is. In 2013, Kotler et al. defined the marketing in a simple definition as a way to “managing a profitable customer relationship” (Kotler et al., 2013, p.2). The Marketing main goal is to attract new customers. Companies create values for customers in order to build a strong customer relationship that is primordial to make them loyal to the brand. Nowadays, brands are a part of consumers’ way of life because they enhance their experience, “marketing is not the old sense of making a sale telling and selling anymore, but a way to satisfying customer needs after understanding the market and customers” (Kotler et al., 2014, pp. 4-5). After that, marketers perceive consumers’ needs; they can easily develop, distribute and promote products that provide higher customer value and prices (Kotler et al., 2012). In the case of airlines marketing, it can be better to understand the characteristic of the service marketing. In 2012, Zeithaml et al. defined service as all economics activities consumed at the time, which it produced and provides added value in forms that are essentially concerns of its purchase. Marketer needs to adapt the marketing strategy because services are products but they have 4 special characteristics (Intangibility, Variability, Inseparability and Perishability). These characteristics make difficult to assess the customer and to synchronize supply and demand. Service quality depends also on uncontrollable factors (weather for instance) and actual service delivered often does not match with what was planned and promoted (Zeithaml et al., 2012). Thus, service brand have to establish their strategy and positioning through the traditional marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion). However, and because service differed from tangible products, they need a complementary marketing approaches called the additional 3Ps (People, Physical evidence and Process). The customer’s decision and levels of satisfaction is influenced by these 3 additional marketing approaches. Concerning the experiential marketing, Schmitt (1999, p. 53) defines it like “a view of consumers as rational and emotional human beings who are concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences” In fact,
marketers have discovered that the customer wants to have a unique and personified experience (Williams, 2006). A research undertaken by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and IMI international, a marketing service consultancy, operating customer marketing research and specialized in the brand activation optimization (Williams, 2006), emphasize that experiential marketing is the best way to reach and make more receptive consumers. Bearing in mind that more than 85 percent of consumer preferred the chance to multisensory experience (SRI and IMI international researches), brands try to increase the experiential aspects of their offer because of customers’ perceptions of competitive advantage and satisfactions were decreasing with mass offer, advertising policy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). In this way, they want to differentiate themselves from competitors and achieve competitive advantage (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Experiential marketing has become the cornerstone of strategic orientation in many industries, like tourism market, with a real potential for its application in this sector. Experiential marketing can give airlines the exposure needed to convince consumers that the flight experience will be just as appreciable as the one they have in print. Companies are quick to coaching and it began to find ways to branch out and focus on new ways to create a positive customer experience.

1.2. Problem

SRI International in 2007 emphasizes the importance of the experience in the purchase process. In fact, its research shows the better consumers’ receptiveness to experiential marketing than other communication. This research proves that consumers have a better propensity to consume thanks to an interaction with a product before the purchase (Williams, 2006). Similarly, Williams (2006) makes a reference to the ID Live Brand Experience organisation which undertook a research and stated that 85 percent of consumers esteem that the use of sense is decisive to make a purchase. Nonetheless, experiential marketing isn’t suitable for all industries. Like Tisotsou and Ratten (2010) mention, experiential marketing is appropriate in tourism marketing. In keeping with this statement, Williams (2006) says tourism and hospitality industries are particularly adapted because they can offer “acts of theatre”, desirable for this kind of marketing. Moreover, experiential marketing is a way of differentiation because it provides a sustainable competitive advantage adding experiential aspects (Prahalad and
Ramaswamy, 2004). This competitive advantage is essential: a brand should be unique and difficult to imitate (e.g. Barney, 1991, 1997; Hall, 1992; Grant, 1995). So, experiential marketing is an excellent marketing strategy in the tourism industry. Indeed, Tourism industry is always associated with an experience (Williams, 2006). Lewis & Chambers (2000) said that this business is a total experience. Nonetheless, McIntosh and Siggs (2005) argue that the experiential marketing way is not undertaken enough in the travel and tourism industries. Tsiotsou and Ratten (2010) notice the experiential angles of tourism are still unexplored. This point of view is also shared by Yuan and Wu (2007). Indeed, many are the studies about tourism marketing but there are few pertinent researches about experiential marketing in the tourism industry. A lack of work on strategic issues and distribution processes in relation to travel and tourism has been identified. The main reason of this lack is that marketing was recently used in tourism services. Moreover, it was more concentrated on the destination or outlet (related to the product offered) and not focused on the consumer (Williams, 2006). But, according to Tsiotsou and Ratten (2010), the offer has become less important due to the enormous heterogeneity of consumer’s needs, motivations and behaviours and the changing of the global social and economic conditions. So, tourism firms have to redefine their strategies to respond to these changes. Thus, the customer relationship marketing constitutes a contemporary strategic orientation of travel business and a research framework for retaining customers (Shoemaker and Bowen, 2003). The authors noticed a strategic approach: to face the competition and customers’ reduced loyalty, the travel and tourism firms answered developing loyalty programs, using emotional and affective factors, to create a stronger customer relationship and achieve sustainability advantage. This approach was complete by many authors as Au and Law (2002), Tsaur et al. (2002); Kozak et al. (2012). But, theories should identify the most appropriate models of relationship marketing for each sub-sector in tourism because differences are expected due to the nature of the structure and the offer (Tsiotsou and Ratten, 2010). In this way, marketing goals are different if it’s a tourism destinations as a city or if it an airline. Another future more specific research should be done to develop and adopt the effective customer relationship management and this is why airlines were chosen.

As previously mentioned, it’s necessary to deal with each subsector to understand well the distinctive features of all of them. A report from the Air Transport Action Group
(ATAG, 2012) notes airlines industry represents 3.5% of the GPD in the world. This fact is representative seeing that since 2005; the number of passengers has increased of 60% and represented 3.5 billion passengers in 2015 in the global airline industry, according to Xerfi Global (2015). The International Air Transport Association (IATA, 2013) has announced a 31% rise of passenger demand by 2017 compared to 2012 being 930 million more passengers. These rises, the change of tourism marketing and consumer habits previously mentioned urge us to focus on experiential marketing in airlines.

This research adds new contributions about experiential marketing in a tourism industry: airlines. The study of the experiential marketing in airlines industry can allows companies to understand the consumers’ behaviours. Knowledge in marketing using experience and, especially in the airlines industry can help firms which think adopt experiential marketing strategy. The research adds new contributions to know why companies have to use experiential marketing with analysed of the emotional effects and the measurability of experiential marketing used by airlines. Indeed, more and more tourism and airlines companies can be attract by another marketing way: this study allows understanding factors that influence consumers and drive them loyal analysing case studies. It can also contribute to analyse how companies adapt them of the new consumers’ expectations and the change of marketing for a few years.

1.3. Purpose

The aim of this research is to understand how airlines’ users can be acquired and kept thanks to experiential marketing. This study allows analysing the news consumers’ expectations and how companies adapt their strategies to meet customers’ needs thanks to experiential marketing. The authors of the thesis proceed choosing five European airlines: British Airways, Air France, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Easy Jet and Scandinavian Airlines System. The case studies will highlight how companies use the experience and feelings in marketing to urge consumers to purchase and be loyal. Finally, all this study will answer to this principal research question:

How airlines use experiential marketing to gain and retain customers?
2. Literature review

2.1. Experiential Marketing: What is it?

2.1.1. Difficulties to define experiential marketing

It exists many ways to define experiential marketing (Meier, 2010). The author points out that Hauser said in 2011, that the definition of experiential marketing is fluid - as is the methodology itself. In 2011, Hauser asked in the Experiential marketing Forum, the definition of Experiential marketing and received about 200 different answers from 150 countries. He concluded with this result that the term “experiential marketing” refers to actual customer experiences with the brand/product/service that drive sales and increase brand image and awareness. Schmitt (1999a), inspired by Pine and Gilmore, mentions an experiential economy like a process to identify customers wants (to satisfy them) with two ways of communication that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the target audience (Same, 2012). More completely, for Smilansky, the experiential marketing is the process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and aspirations profitability, engaging them and adds value to the target audience (Smilansky, 2009). Snakers and Zajdman (2010) define experiential marketing as a new way by making the customers living an experience through the creation of emotions. Thus, experiential marketing has a goal to create emotions to the customers. And this emotion leads to enjoying the experience. Cantone and Risitano (2011) agree with that, confirm that in the last years, many firms are adopting CEM strategies. Indeed the role of emotions, feelings, sentiments, passions and experiences in the consumer-brand relationships is highlighted. According to Yuan and Wu in 2008, the experiential marketing is a marketing tactic designed by a business to stage the entire physical environment and the operational processes for its customers to experience. In accordance with You-Ming (2010), experiential marketing is a “kind of face-to-face communication method, which mainly raises customers” physical and emotional feeling so that customers expect to be relevant and interactive to some brands and to feel and experience wholehearted” (You-Ming, 2010, p 190). According to the authors, and to conclude this definition, all these definitions indicate that experiential marketing is mainly and directly related to emotions, feelings, and senses; and has less to do with cognitions and human intentions.
2.1.2. Marketing experiential start off

In 1852, during the beginnings of economic growth of the second empire, Aristide Boucicaut bought the department store “Au bon Marché” in Paris. For him, it was necessary to adapt the architecture of the store to the expansion of consumption. Thus, in 1869, he built the first purpose-built building and fully engaged in the use of large trade news. Everything was done to make the visit a pleasure with free admission, service home delivery and a library where customers can read press, make their mail, offering buffet…This first idea of “experiential marketing” was more and more developed and all the shops give to the customer the touch, smell and sight power in a sound ambiance (Norén, 2012). Since 80’s, emotions are an important research, mainly in the customer’s behaviour studies. In the 90’s, the experiential marketing enter in Europe just before grow up of internet. Indeed, marketers need to differentiate their brands in the promotion (Ahnyne, Bouthara, El Ouassi, Lafrouji, n.d)

2.1.3. Traditional marketing towards experiential marketing

2.1.3.1. How experiential meet the new consumers’ expectations?

Change of consumers’ needs

For several decades, consumers’ behaviour has changed especially in the satisfaction and behavioural levels (Johnson et al., 2006; Mittal et al., 1999). The customer is saturated with conventional mass communication so, customers become hardened to advertising (Lenderman and Sanchez, 2008). Indeed, consumers give more importance to affective purchase and want to have a multisensory experience, receive stimulations and feel emotions during the purchase (Lafrouji, El Ouassi, Bouthara, Anhyne, n.d). These changes induce a change of marketing. Whereas the traditional marketing focused on the product, experiential marketing focuses on the customers’ expectations (Norén, 2012). Indeed, customers are attracted by sensitive and emotional dimensions: they want to have something unexpected (Norén, 2012). The author adds that a company no longer has to meet a need but seduce clients to differentiate it. Webster (1997)
emphasized that customers are more and more informed and expect more. Moreover, Norén adds that aesthetics aspects and design are decisive in the purchase decision and in the product perception. Brands have a high interest to build a customer relationship thanks to the experiential marketing. People are not only buyers, they feel and think too and the mass-customisation no longer meet the customers’ expectations (Addis and Holbrook, 2001) Customer wants to take pleasure and lives a true experience with a brand so the notion of hedonism, experience and subjectivity will be developed.

*Experience: an essential notion in the customers’ consumption*

The experience consumption and experiential marketing theories are important in the consumer culture theory (Holbrook and Hirschmann, 1982, Pine and Gilmore, 1999, Schmitt, 1999) because the experience is seen as getting symbolic senses, aesthetics, emotions, hedonic reactions (De Rezende and Silva, 2013). Schmitt (1999) added that companies have to be experiential (experience providers) to be in the “experience-based economy” and not only in the service economy. De Rezende and Silva (2013) added that firms highlight their positioning with experience to induce customers to purchase thanks to their imagination, emotions and hedonism. Unique experiences allow service and product to be remarkable. Experience was the field of philosophy that made important contributions toward understanding the nature of this word. As a philosophical term, experience has been used since 1800’s in the content of within the meaning of life and living by philosophers (Saarinen and Väyrynen, 2010). In 1982, Holbrook and Hirschman wrote an iconic paper on the consumption experience and discover the importance of the experience aspects of consumer behaviour. They felt that information processing neglected important consumption phenomena that involve fantasies, feelings, and fun — including playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, aesthetic enjoyment, and emotional responses. According to the authors:

“By focusing single-mindedly on the consumer as information processor, recent consumer research has tended to neglect the equally important experiential aspects of consumption, thereby limiting our understanding of consumer behaviour. Future research should work toward redressing this imbalance by broadening our area of study to include some consideration of consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun.”

(Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p. 139)
Research in experiential marketing is impossible without a good understanding behind the subject. According to Same, 2012, it’s necessary, to define experience. In 1999(a), Schmitt said that the experience is the hottest movements in business practice. In a book titled “Experiential Marketing,” Schmitt contrasted traditional marketing’s product-oriented focus on functional features and benefits with experience marketing’s customer-oriented focus on experiences. Rather than focusing on closely defined product categories (e.g., shampoo, shaving cream, blow dryer, and perfume) and their features, Schmitt argued that experience marketers focus on consumption situations such as “grooming in the bathroom,” and ask how products and brands can improve the consumption experience. Experiences may be called by products, packaging, communications, in-store interactions, sales relationships, events…

Since Schmitt, many authors published articles to understanding what constitutes experience. But, the definition is not clear and many confusions are still present (Same, 2012). Also Tynan and McKechnie (2009) confirmed that the definition is confused because it’s both a noun and a verb, even if the Cambridge advanced learner’s dictionary defines an experience as a noun as “something that affects the way you feel”. As a verb, “experience” means it happens to you or you feel it. So experience, “it’s used variously to convey the process itself, participating in the activity, the affect or way in which an object, thought or emotion is felt through the senses or the mind, and even the outcome of an experience by way of a skill or learning for example” (Tynan and McKechnie, cited by Same, 2009, p.4). In 2006/2007, Holbrook tried to prove the lack of definitions for experience marketing. The objective of this book is to examine this term to understand the phenomenon. In 2004, Poulsson and Kale said that an experience in its most general use is simply the mental state that occurs in any given individual, at any conscious moment. But, by experience Carbone and Haeckel (1994) explain the "takeaway" impression formed by people's encounters with products, services, and businesses – a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information. They say that “experience may be good or bad, lasting or fleeting, a random phenomenon or an engineered perception” (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994, p.8). Carù and Cova (2003) confirm that the concept of experience is still ill-defined or defined in ideological terms and that in the field of marketing authors must use a typology of consumption experiences which goes beyond an ideological view that tends
to consider every experience as extraordinary. Their analysis showed that in the social sciences and philosophy experience is defined as a “subjective episode in the construction/transformation of the individual with, however, an emphasis on the emotions and senses lived during the immersion at the expense of the cognitive dimension”. Marketing gives experience a much more objective meaning, confirming the idea that the result may be something extremely significant and unforgettable for the consumer immersed into the experience. In 2002, Tourism researcher Veijola describes the term “experience” has been used in various ways. The different definitions may be placed into two categories: The first experience called in German: Erfahrung or in Finnish: Kokemus, or keiken in Japanese as “already perceived and / or experienced – the past in the present moment”. The second experience in German: Erlebnis or in Finnish: Elämys, or taiken in Japanese “not previously experienced – the future of the present moment”. German, Japanese and Finnish make a distinction between two words, as Dutch or Estonian contrary to the English language, as in many Romanic languages (French, Spanish, and Italian), there is only one term to refer to both. Other languages use two separate lexicalized items that has just one word for experience. This can also explain why this term is so confused. In this thesis, which is focused on experience marketing, the term used to refer to experiences in the here and now — perceptions, feelings, and thoughts that consumers have when they encounter products and brands in the marketplace and engage in consumption activities.

In accordance with Schmitt, “Experience, as a concept and as an empirical phenomenon, is not as established as other consumer and marketing concepts such as choice, attitudes, consumer satisfaction, or brand equity” (Schmitt, 2012, p.123) Marketers realised that understanding how customers feel experiences is interesting and useful to compete, differentiating their offer in the competitive marketplace. In 2009, for the Association for Consumer research conference, Chris Janiszewski presented a speech about the increase of customer experiences and asked: “So, what is your opportunity? In what substantive areas do we, as a discipline, have a special interest and a competitive advantage?” The answer is “consumer experience” … He argued that “benefits are not in the products. Benefits are in the customer experience”.
Hedonism consumption: an evolution towards experiential consumption

One other of the most important notions in experiential marketing is hedonism consumption. As mentioned previously, people opt for hedonic consumption to take pleasure and have fun (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). The subjectivity is a salient point in hedonism because experiential marketing calls on feelings, experience and perceptions, non-rational and subjective things that allow understanding customers’ behaviour. The subjectivity can be influenced by the concept of trust and the involvement (Turnbull and Valla, 1985) and is important to take on board in hedonic consumption. The weariness of the mass-customization increased the subjectivity of customers. Indeed, they feel with their own perceptions, feelings and judgements and customers want to have an individual relationship with the brand (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Companies have to grant importance to the subjective and objective customers’ responses because these determine the customer value of a product. The interaction creates this relationship between the product and the consumer that allow the consumers to gain something thanks to his consumption experience (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). The following schema emphasizes the responses with the interaction between the object and the subject (Holbrook, 1999b).

![Figure 1: The consumption event- Addis and Holbrook (2001), p. 15](image)

The expectations from products are not the same depending on the kind of product or service. Therefore, the response will be different. Indeed, as Addis and Holbrook (2001) say it, a product can be utilitarian, balanced or hedonic. A utilitarian product induces objective reaction and hedonic products involve subjective responses because customers create their own value with their perception. In order to analyse the array of emotions during the experience, Richins (1997) creates the Consumption Emotion Set.
Nonetheless, some products imply as much subjective as objective responses: balanced good (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). As previously mentioned, companies have to be attentive with hedonic product because the subjective reactions are significant to the creation of the customer perceived-value and, nonetheless, these responses are not foreseeable (Holbrook, 1999b). The schema below summarises this discussion about the utilitarian consumption and the hedonic consumption:

Figure 2. Utilitarian consumption/Hedonic consumption- Addis and Holbrook (2001), p. 16
The hedonic consumption requires interaction, variability, rationality, emotion, uncertainty and experiential consumption (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). All of that is justified by the fact of emotions have a high role in an experiential consumption (Hirschmann and Holbrook, 1982). After the assessment that customers are thinkers (Venkatraman and MacInnis, 1985) and that they have multisensory skills (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997), scholars establish that companies have to do marketing considering consumers’ emotions, feelings and experiences. Further to this, Schmitt (1999a, 1999b) creates a new marketing approach: experiential marketing.

2.1.4. Objectives of Experiential marketing

In the face of the change of consumers’ expectations, traditional marketing has changed and experiential marketing has emerged. Experiential marketing is a new trend and embodies a current “big theme” (Gautier, 2004). McNickel (2004) added that experiential marketing can become one of the most important tool and concept in strategic marketing. He is joined by Craig (2002) who said that experiential strategies might be the future of the marketing. Pine and Gilmore (1999) are the originators of the experiential marketing studies but it is Schmitt (1999) who has coined the term of experiential marketing showing the change of the traditional marketing through marketing using experience such as product categories and competition, customer characteristics, and research method (Schmitt, 1999). Schmitt (1999) quoted by Yuan and Wu (2007) added that experiential marketing highlights even the pre-purchase, the moment of truth and the post purchase. The scholar (Schmitt, 1999) notes five kinds of experiences which can be set up by marketers:

- “Sense”: aesthetics and sensory benefits, how customer get information and perception by senses.
- “Feel”: moods and emotions by way of company/brand experience
- “Think”: analytical / imaginative thinking, the consumer can re-evaluate the product/company.
- “Act”: long-term actions and behavioural experiences,
- “Relate”: social experience in a reference group.
Also, he emphasizes this experience importance by four steps in the experiential marketing process:

Figure 3: Four steps for experiential marketing process (Schmitt, 1999), p. 18

The last step represents the holistic experience that “integrates individual experiences by engaging all human senses in all dimensions” (Srivastava, 2008 p.56). The IMI International research shows that customers are more likely to be satisfied if they can interact with a product before the purchase. Bashford (2004) has completed stating experiential marketing allows consumers to have their touch in the brands. Companies take advantages of this ground-breaking marketing too because they have a better return on investments (Witthaus, 2004). Marketers have noticed that customer’s perceived value is damaged as well as their satisfaction (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The experiential marketing therefore appears like a strategy of differentiation from competitors, achieving a sustainable competitive advantage using emotions and experiences to appeal to the customers (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). In fact, experiential marketing allows a brand to build a brand experience with the customers (Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello) and particularly in some industry like tourism and travel sectors because there are experiences themselves. Beyond relevance of experiential marketing, it can be important to study its measure and performance. Yuan and Wu (2007) propose to measure the customers’ perception and satisfaction meeting the service providers (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Ennew & Binks, 1999; Kristensen, Martensen, & Gronholdt, 2000). Strauss and Frost (2002) argue that experience, attitude and consumers’ beliefs form the customers’ satisfaction. The study of this customer perception is fundamental because it embodies a competitive advantage: a satisfied
consumer will repeat purchases and be loyal (Fontvielle, 1997). Agreed with this idea, Barsky and Nash (2003) maintain that consumer satisfaction is essential to achieve loyalty and profitability. In addition, a good consumer satisfaction produces a good word of mouth and a better market share (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Fornell, 1992; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996). Moreover, the brands have to convey their CRM to reach the customers’ expectations (Blattberg, 1998). Customer value and perception are important in the tourism industry (Blattberg, 1998) because, as previously mentioned; experience is the essence of this service.

2.1.4.1. Application of experiential marketing

Event marketing

According to Sistenich in 1999, events are interesting tool to promote experiences. Indeed, consumers have the opportunity to become actively involved in areas of personal interest an interaction processes whereas this is impossible in the true daily life. In the sphere of services marketing event particularly shows higher potential (Vila-López, Rodríguez-Molina, 2013).

In 1998, Pine and Gilmore emphasize that economic value progresses from commodities, to goods, to services and to experiences. So, the authors propose a switch from “service-based marketing” to “experience-based marketing”. This new point of view provides a new perspective for marketing, directly concerning experiences (Gavilan et al., 2010). In accordance with Pine and Gilmore, in order to gain competitive advantages and customer satisfaction, companies have to offer a successful customer experiences. Namely, an experience is that the customer find unique, memorable and sustainable over the time. The customer must desire to repeat the experience and are enthusiastically spread by word-of-mouth (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). Heinonen et al. (2010) defined:
Event marketing allows establishing memorable relations; it's a new communication strategy involving the target audience as active participants (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). The authors say that service brands (without tangible output for consumer), have to use the experiential marketing to constructing and strengthening relationship between the customer and the company. Event marketing, according with Wohlfeil and Whelan in 2004, is an interactive hyper realities concerning the brand where consumers are actively involved at behavioural level, possibly leading to an emotional link with the brand. For Wohlfeil and Whelan (2004), event marketing has 4 characteristics:

- **Experience orientation**: The consumer is encouraged to experience brand reality and not being passive (Weinberg and Nickel, 1998);
- **Own initiative from the organization**: Marketers control the process that creates consumer feelings and experiences;
- **Interactivity**: Participants, spectators and brand representatives can interact during the event (Zanger and Sistenich, 1996);
- **Drama**: The surprise allows consumers to live an emotional experience of brand reality

Events are interesting to create emotions and sensations (Schmitt, 1999). According to Kao et al. (2007) the surprise, the participation and the immersion are essential components to cause emotional experience during an event. Here is the development of each component:
• **Surprise**

Hirschman and Hoolbrook in 1982 say that consumer experiences usually relate to the research of fantasies, feelings and entertainment. Indeed, a great experience surprises the customer because it’s unique and extraordinary and therefore memorable (Schmitt, 1999). Consequently, marketers need to create a unique, creative and original experience in the goal that the experience stays in the customers’ minds. Kao *et al.* (2007) think that the surprise should be in any event. The surprise makes the customer exclusive and this feeling of surprise wake up emotional experiences towards the event. Thus, a pleasantly surprise develops positive emotions and so, it’s a vital antecedent of emotional experience event (Lenderman and Sanchez, 2008).

• **Participation**

Emotional experience is not only surprise, but also interactive participation from the public (Vila-López, Rodríguez-Molina, 2013). Kao *et al.* define in 2007 the participation as the degree of interaction between customer and products, services or environments during consumption. According to Pine and Gilmore in 1998, the success of experience get consumers involved in the activities rather than simply entertain them. The more involved consumers are in the event, the stronger their tendency and desire take part in them and process relevant information (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Voluntary participation in events creates higher emotions for the customer (Drengner, 2003). Therefore, active participation during an event is required to be called Emotional experiential event (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

• **Immersion**

The immersion is the involvement of consumers when enjoying the consumption and the ability to forget the passing of time (Vila-López, Rodríguez-Molina, 2013). The immersion may be rapid or more gradual, depending on the situation (Fornerino *et al.*, 2008). An immersion can be achieved by using drama. Consequently, they exist a coincidence between immersions an emotional experience of an event (Fornerino *et al.*, 2008). According to Damperat *et al.*, 2002; Caru and Cova, 2006, immersion in an environment provides access to emotional event experiences. So immersion leads to
emotion. The immersion leads the consumer in an unforgettable and unique experience (Arnould et al., 2002). The immersion is the most significant experiential antecedent because the events transport the customer in time and space if the immersion is successful (Caru and Cova, 2006).

To summarise, according to Petkus, in 2004, the surprise involves sensing, the participation implicates learning and immersion affects doing.

Brand Experience

The pleasure, arousal and dominance dimensions by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) are hoped during an event experience. The pleasure is the degree to which the person feels good, joyful, happy or satisfied in the event (Kao et al. 2007). Arousal is the degree to which a person feels excited, stimulate, alert or active in the situation (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). And the dominance is to the extent to which the customer feels in control of the situation (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). According to Donovan and Rossiter in 1982, the pleasure and the arousal influence positively in the customers’ buying behaviours. So, event-brand image is important. If the “image” is positive and creates pleasure and arousal for the customer, this influences directly the purchase (Kuster et al., 2009).

Brand personality

The brand personality is designates by the set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). The author created a scale to measure brand personality with 5 dimensions: “Sincerity”, “Enthusiasm”, “Competence”, “Sophistication” and “Solidity”. Therefore, brand differentiation and positioning are based on symbolic and emotional characteristics directly associated with the brand (Purkayastha, 2009). Thence, in the sphere of service where functional attributes are less obvious, it’s necessary for a brand to create an own personality. Brand experience and brand personality are connected (Brakus et al., 2009) so the brand need to have construct a clearly differentiate personality, and consequently, different brand experience (Keller, 1993, Aaker, 1997). Brakus et al. (2009) study confirms that the higher the general score on the scale of
brand experience, the more likely it is that the consumer will allocate more personality features to the brand.

**Brand reputation**

The brand reputation is, according to Sarkar and Singh (2005), consumer perception of the brand and it’s that consumers associate with a brand such as authenticity, credibility and trust. It’s considering brand reputation as a global perception of the brand over time by Fombrun and Van Riel, in 1997. According to Purkayastha (2009), a brand with personality will lead to higher perceptions of reputation.

![Conceptual framework of event experience-brand experience](image)

**Figure 4: Conceptual framework of event experience-brand experience - Vila-López, Rodríguez-Molina (2013), p. 23**

### 2.1.4.2. Loyalty and Experiential marketing

Since 2000’s, many researches have been undertaken about the customers’ emotional attachment with the brand, the brand community and the brand company through customer experience (Anderson *et al.*, 2006; Barber and Strack, 2005; Bendapudi and Bendapudi, 2005; McGrath and Macmillan, 2005; Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2004; Narayandas, 2005; Selden and Macmillan, 2006) and conclusion was experience in marketing allows retaining customers (Macmillan and McGrath, 1997; Carbone, 1998; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Rowley, 1999; Wyner, 2000; Calhoun, 2001; Arussy, 2002;
Berry et al. (2002; Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Lamperes, 2002). Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi (2006) did a research to show the way to reach a lasting customer loyalty (LCL) thanks to a total customer experience (TCE). Calhoun (2001) argues that it’s the best company’s way to be successful. Scholars mentions, among others, the case of Disney. Indeed, Disney represents a model in experience field because everything in Disney Company induces a positive emotion. Everything is thought to be sensory and then, all represents a way of differentiation (Carbone, 1998). Pine and Gilmore (1998) add that experience is the main characteristics of Disney. Thanks to this case, Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi (2006, pp. 398-399) highlight some features common of all this kind of company:

- “Anticipating and fulfilling customer needs and wants better than competitors”: authors remind that product cycle and sales are not the only aspect to take into account, loyalty is important.
- “Providing real consumer experiences”: Brands have to be beyond the physical attributes and take on board emotions, memory, brand relationship and so on (Shaw and Ivens, 2002)
- “Experiences as distinct market offerings”
- “Experiences as interactions”: Experience has to have an effect on the consumer involvement and his participation (Berry et al., 2002; Hoch, 2002)
- “Experiences as engaging memories”: thanks to the experience provided by a brand, consumers will create memories, key of loyalty (Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006)

**Total Customer Experience (TCE)**

Authors define it as: “a totally positive, engaging, enduring, and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience across all major levels of one’s consumption chain and one that is brought about by a distinct market offering that calls for active interaction between consumers and providers” (Mascarenhas, Ram Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006, p399). Scholars establish a direct link between the total customer
experience and the lasting loyalty. Consequently, the higher is the experience, the higher is the loyalty.

Lasting customer Loyalty (LCL)

The loyalty is a “deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby, causing repetitive same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour” (Oliver, 1999, p. 34). It exists three types of loyalty (Mascarenhas, Ram Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006):

- Behavioural loyalty is measured by the historical purchase in one brand compared in competitors and is determined by the customer satisfaction.
- Attitudinal loyalty is conditioned by the customer preference and can change easily depending on the competitors.
- Situational loyalty: This kind of loyalty depends on the situation and occasion.

Behavioural and attitudinal loyalties are very important to take into account because there are the more critical in the long-term. Undeniably, companies multiply experiential action because people want experiences (Mascarenhas, Ram Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006). In order to be different, companies have to do lasting experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

2.1.4.3.Limits of experiential marketing

The experiential marketing is faced some limits. The first is the respect of the charter of the brand identity. Customers must recognise the brand through the experiential activity (Anders Norén, 2012). Moreover, each person is different and according to Norén (2012) it’s impossible to convince everybody with one charter. And because each person has a different past and story, an experience can remember different feels in dependence of who lives the experience. Secondly, the integration of experiential marketing involves a new mind-set that will mobilise the entire company. Finally, it’s to
offer a unique experience. For this, the experience must be conducted with the light of creative innovation that was developed by the competition. Thus, the risk is to neglect the actions of competitors and no longer meets the requirements of the applications better than focus on the relationship that the company has with his clients (Norén, 2012).
2.2. Experiential marketing in a tourism industry: Airlines

2.2.1. Tourism industry and experiential marketing

In order to go into the airlines subject in depth, it need to precise specific features. Airlines industry is a service and the marketing has to be adapted. Moreover, the tourism industry can be developed because a high link exists between airlines and tourism.

2.2.1.1. Tourism industry

In 2000, tourism was the largest generator of wealth and employment in the world (Rita, 2000). Indeed, the tourism industry constitutes 11% of global GDP with 200 million jobs worldwide, which is 8% of total employment (Rita, 2000). In 2000, tourism holds 5.5 per cent of the EU GDP, 6 per cent of employment, and 30 per cent of services exports. Europe is the main tourist destination in the world with 59% of international tourist arrival and 52% of tourism revenues. It is forecast that Europe will register 717 million incoming international tourists in 2020 (Rita, 2000; World Tourism Organisation), and implementation of the competitiveness growth strategy in tourism (Metka and Gallouj, 2012). The European Commission, suggests “empirical evidence of direct and indirect effects of service, tourism and tourism innovation on growth, employment and competitiveness of the economy” (The European Commission, 2011, p.11) in the last 15 years.

According with Weiermair in 2006, Tourism products can be tangible or intangible. For instance, destinations include hotels, restaurants or tourism guides are tangible. But, tourism is not only based on the production of goods and services (Margarida Cagica Carvalho Soumodip Sarkar, 2014). Indeed, several intangible characteristics are embodied. So, Weiermair (2006) defines the tourism product as an experience. Other difficulties are related to the characteristics of tourism products due to the simultaneity of production and consumption (Weiermair, 2006) and also cordiality (Miles, 2005). In accordance with Hall and Williams in 2008, the tourism sector is faced a high degree of competitiveness. This obliges firms to innovate to stay on top of the competition. Moreover, firms have difficulty to “protect” their innovation and it’s easy for
competitor to imitate new practices (Porter, 1998). Thus, touristic Companies are constantly challenging to innovate and hold on to a competitive advantage. According with Margarida Cagica Carvalho Soumodip Sarkar in 2014, tourism sector is today, influenced by 2 main factors:

The first is the globalization who implies deregulation and increased competition (Weiermair, 2006). The number of tourists has increased, and they have more and more access in many destinations. In this context, tourism brand have to adapt to the new situation and develop strategies to improve or maintain a competitive advantage. (Margarida Cagica Carvalho Soumodip Sarkar, 2014)

Secondly, the tourists profile has changed and they are more experienced and informed. They need for alternative and more sophisticated products (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003). Tourists consequently, are today more independent, and they tend to organize their holidays themselves.

2.2.1.2. Experience in Tourism

Experience is an important feature in the hospitality and tourism industry offers (Yuan & Wu, 2007), and thanks to it, firm can realize strategies such as interpretation (Beeho & Prentice, 1997) and experience innovation (Gentile, Spiller & Noci, 2007). These campaigns are means to satisfy tourists’ experiential expectations and needs (Lee & Smith, 2014). About tourism and experience, Driver and Toucher (1970) as well, wrote study and separated experience into five stages: planning, leaving for the destination, experiencing the destination, returning, and remembering. The experience stage is difficult to understand and to realize because it can change depending on factors like businesses which can be controllable or not (Ittelson, 1978). Therefore, Yuan & Wu (2007) emphasizes that the creation of unforgettable experiences is essential to the success of firms in the tourism industry. Indeed, consumption experience alludes to “the total outcome to the customer from the combination of environment, goods, and services purchased” (Lewis & Chambers, 2000, p. 46). This success can be decisive on one hand because providing unforgettable experiences; the tourism industry makes repeat and loyal customers (Yuan & Wu, 2007) thanks to memorable campaigns (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and on the other hand, experience can be a cornerstone providing a sustainable competitive advantage (Prahalad & Ramaswany, 2000). Indeed, consumers
prefer take advantage of experience that they have never had instead of purchasing new product without experience (Yuan & Wu, 2007). This is explained as a result of experience is the outcome of some interaction formed by different psychological stages and events (Schmitt, 1999). Actually, experience allows people to feel positive, special (Yuan & Wu, 2007) and bring emotions to consumers (Berry et al., 2002) thanks to some factors creating different and relative perceptions due to stimulations. These can be through music (Areni & Kim, 1993; Hui, Dube, & Chebat, 1997; Milliman, 1982), smell (Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson, 1996), color (Bellizzi, Crowley, & Hasty, 1983). It's important to underline that these factors influence the customers’ satisfaction, emotions and perception (Li, 2001).

2.2.1.3. Experiential marketing in tourism

Besides, some studies have been written about the consumption experience on adventure leisure (Arnould and Price, 1993), or the experiential marketing in the tourism and hospitality industries with Williams (2006). He has applied the Pine and Gilmore’s schema (1998) for the experience in tourism showing the customer participation and connection.

Figure 5: The four realms of experience, adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1998), Williams, 2006, p. 29
To explain this schema, Petkus (2002) says that the Entertainment Realm entails sensing, the educational realm learning, the Escapist one involves acting and the Esthetic Realm “being there”. In the middle, where the Realms meet, represents the richest experience. Williams (2006) notices that experiential marketing in the tourism and hospitality is useful to avoid the commodification effects. He completes his research saying that tourism firms have to take advantage of innovative experiential design because it represents a creation of value. In the same idea, emotion and nostalgia are inherent of tourism marketing and can be a source of customer loyalty (Shoemaker and Bowen, 2003). In 2003, Mueller et al., Prebensen et al., Teye and Leclerc don’t have forget to deal with cultural differences in the tourism marketing joined by Dolnicar and Leisch, and Chen and Uysal who review in detail how tourism is affected by geography and culture. Moreover, experiential marketing can be use with IT; Poria and Oppewal (2003) have written a study on how consumers reply to new technologies. Internet has to be used with the change of landscape of the travel distribution process (Tsiotsou and Ratten, 2010). Vasudavan and Standing (1999) deal with the airlines: they must increase their direct communication because of the virtual agencies. Riege and Perry (2000) have proposed, in 2000, three strategies: the consumer-oriented, the competitor-oriented and the trade-oriented approaches. They advise to combine the three strategies.

2.2.2. Service and experiential marketing

A number of theoretical frameworks have been suggested in an attempt to assist marketers to understand how consumers think about, and respond to, brands, therefore enabling them to implement effective consumer-centred marketing activities and gain sustainable differentiation (De Chernatony, 1993; Keller, 1993). However, these models have a distinct tendency to conceptualise the brand in terms of physical goods, with minimal regard, or reference to the branding of services (Turley and Moore, 1995). There are a number of factors which explain that promotion is neglected among many service providers and in much of the services literature. Promoting services through advertising is seen as a difficult task because consumers find it difficult to understand clearly the nature of an intangible service (Bateson, 1979); they also find it difficult to
develop a list of potential providers and to evaluate the service both during and after consumption (Zeithaml, 1981). Legg and Baker (1991) suggest that to overcome these problems it is necessary to “teach” consumers about the service and the service provider by providing relevant tangible objects, concrete language, dramatizations and “interactive imagery” to link the service to the service provider. If the service cannot easily be customized, pricing becomes the obvious element to change for promotional purposes (Peattie and Peattie, 1995). Farris and Quelch (1987) suggest that price promotions can encourage service trial, help to smooth demand fluctuations, allow differential service pricing to be targeted at different segments, and add excitement to the purchase of services that might otherwise become trite or perceived as commodities. Coupons or other forms of promotional pricing are used in certain services markets, such as travel and fast food, but there are difficulties and dangers which accompany their application to many other services. This is partly because setting prices for services is already difficult (Thomas, 1978), and consumers often use price as a surrogate measure of quality (Peattie and Peattie, 1995). Another problem with price-based promotions is that they assume that consumers are price averse or value seeking and are price aware. In practice, customers’ assumption that price is linked to quality can often make them to some extent price-seeking (Tellis and Gaeth, 1990), and they are often surprisingly hazy about the price details of their purchases (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990). Woods (in Lovelock, 1984) suggests that promotional pricing in financial services has not proved worthwhile for several reasons including relatively high levels of customer loyalty, the dangers of price wars (e.g. the “disastrous” price wars waged in the USA over free checking in banks), and the often crucial role of pricing in overall positioning. Nevertheless, the opportunity to use sales promotions in a strategic manner, and to integrate them fully into the marketing mix to achieve benefits beyond a short-term sales boost, is open to any services marketer (Peattie and Peattie, 1995). One such neatly integrated promotion was the award-winning Conti-Flug Airlines campaign promoting their new 1992 London to Berlin route, aimed at business travellers. The promotion involved a carefully targeted direct mailing of a discount coupon, with a prize draw competition to encourage response. Both the mailing and the competition were laid out to link into the airline’s brochure format. The promotion was then advertised to the travel trade through two trade journals and to the target audience through the Evening Standard. This shows the particular case of “tourism and travel sector” and more particularly “airlines”. Travel and tourism is one of the few service
sectors where sales promotion and competitions in particular, make some impact in the sales (Middleton, 1988).

2.2.3. **Airlines and experiential marketing**

2.2.3.1. **Airlines industry**

With 3.5 billion passengers in 2015 (60% more than in 2005), the global airline industry is in current expansion phase (Xerfi Global, 2015). Commonly, air transport it evolved from 1919 (with the establishment of international routes from the International Air Convention signed in Paris), in the post-war of pioneers activity. Since, countless airlines companies was born and, often enough, as quickly gone. Nowadays, around 1,397 commercial airlines are appeared in the world (James, 2003, Xerfi Global, 2015). Amongst them, some alliance as the largest was found; StarAlliance founded in 1997 with 28 members in 2014 to serve 1,330 destinations in 192 countries (Xerfi Global, 2014). Literally hundreds of alliances have emerged in recent years, so these alliances represent the culmination of a process that may be traced to the increasing deregulation of the airlines industry, the privatisation of state owned airlines and the spread of the liberalising philosophy (Driver, 2001). This alliance can also “demonstrate the critical importance of large airline size and the economies of scope that go with it, especially those in marketing” (Burton and Hanlon, 1994, p. 209). In strategic term, according to Driver, in 2001, alliances are about proactive competition and defence against competitors. OneWorld alliance, the second biggest alliance says “OneWorld is about people, not planes”, in accordance with the alliance; the consortia of airlines should be a marketing initiative consistent with the concept of customer orientation – promise of smoother travel, more destinations, reduction prices, improved quality service offered… (Driver, 2001). In 2014, the global airline market is a €600bn business. The IATA member airlines generated over €548bn in revenues, 77% of which were derived from passenger transport business and the air transport industry supports more than 58 million jobs in the world (Xerfi Global, 2014).
2.2.3.2 Airlines marketing

For a long time, marketing activity of airlines is following traditional and well-tried methods. Decisions reflect the product/service provision of routes, seat allocation and types, in-flight and ground-based services, the price structure, distribution channels and promotional activity (Driver, 1999). But, marketing airlines environment is becoming more competitive with the expending of international market (Betts, 1994), and many technological developments are pushed as larger aircraft, computer reservation system simplified and pre/post-flight experience improved (Driver, 1999). All this change challenging airlines to pay greater attention to their customers and marketing effort is becoming necessary. Even if airlines are complex organisations with traditional practices, a good marketing in this many forms, is increasingly seen as the key to airlines’ competitive success (Driver, 1999). In 1999, Driver raised computer reservation systems, frequent flyer programmes, segmentation strategies, advertising communication, code sharing and the emerging opportunities of the Internet as traditional strategies. According with the author, the network rationalisation and expansion have been a dominant strategy and this has widened the basis of competition as airlines, dominant in some areas, seek to penetrate or expand in new ones. In the main to facilitate this marketing competition, the corporate branding was focalised in the attract customers and to establish strong distribution. In this way, the branding has permeated to orient the marketing airlines. In 1999, Driver says that airlines marketing competition is centred on the communication of what services are offered, and the customer must be attracted and prepared to invest time and effort. This task has traditionally been eased by the specialist services of travel agencies or airline direct sales outlets. The traditional marketing advises to adapt the strategies to the new environment. Thus, corporate advertising will help establish promotional offers provide consumer incentives to consider particular airlines (Driver, 1999).

Bagnall (1999) had already noted the lack of studies about marketing strategies in relation to travel and particularly airlines. And because any paper was fund about how customers are retained by the airlines experiential marketing, authors of this thesis will focus on this subject in the following of this paper.
3. Methodology

This paper has adopted content analysis as the research method to examine how airlines gain and retain customers with the experiential marketing.

3.1. Method

According to Yin (1994), research strategy should be chosen as a function of the research situation. Each research strategy has its own specific approach to collect and analyse empirical data, and therefore each strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages. The objectives of the research of all case are to “describe, decode, translate or otherwise come to terms with the meanings, not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the natural world” (Van Maanen, 1979a, p520).

3.1.1. Quantitative

The quantitative approach is a result of academic tradition that places considerable trust in numbers that represent opinions or concepts (Amaratunga et al., 2002). Kothari (1990) argues that “quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to a phenomenon that can be expressed in terms of quantity” (Kothari, 1990, p.20). The following definition, taken from Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), can help us to understand what a quantitative research method is. The authors explained that a quantitative research is the collect of numerical data, using mathematically methods as statistics. For Horma in 1994, quantitative investigations are characterised by the assumption that human behaviour can be analysed by “social facts” and can be investigated by methodologies that use the logic of the natural sciences. Horma (1994) added this process is used to test hypotheses and theories. Nau, in 1995, said that the quantitative research is appropriate to examine numerical data and is always concerned for determining the truth-value of propositions and allows flexibility.
in the treatment of data (comparative analysis, statistical analyses, and repeatability of data collection) in order to verify reliability.

Amaratunga (2002) stated that many arguments support the use of quantitative researches because results provide statistical proofs. This is especially true in the academic environment with limited resources and pragmatic origins. The author contrasted saying it is not appropriate for measure physiological factors such as the motivation or employees’ capability.

3.1.2. Qualitative

The qualitative research is for a long time linked within organization and management research (Catherine Cassell Gillian Symon, 2006). The first authors were Dalton’s (1959), Watson’s (1977) and Jackall’s (1988). Since, more and more researches observe and ask people. Qualitative research can be found in all the domains that cover the diverse organization and management field, for example: marketing (Daymon and Holloway, 2003; Moisander, 2006); market research (Mariampolski, 2001); information science (Myers, 2002; Trauth, 2001); accounting and finance (Humphrey and Lee, 2004); entrepreneurship and small business (Cope, 2005); and international business (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004). Gummesson argued that, now, qualitative techniques can provide “powerful tools” (Gummesson, 1999).

Qualitative responses are always sentences, description or stories (Patton, 1980). So, observations are notes and not numbers. Therefore this analysis is called qualitative research (Tesch, 1990). According to the author, qualitative collects are all data that cannot be expressed in numbers. For Patton, qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of events, situations and interactions between people and things providing depth and detail (Patton, 1980).

Qualitative researches are consequently, difficult, to define because of the range of different approaches that are subsumed under the heading “qualitative” (Symon et al., 2000), which is exacerbated by the multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of management and organization research (Brown, 1997; Watson, 1994); and the diversity
in philosophical assumptions that underline qualitative research (Knoblauch et al., 2005; Prasad and Prasad, 2002). The term as it is conventionally used within the management field is “to represent those techniques of data collection and analysis that rely on non-numerical data” (Cassell and Symon, 2006).

Qualitative methods are focus group discussions, surveys, observations, ethnographies, conversational analysis, content analysis and in depth interviews. The use of one or more of these different methods or a combination of a number of these will allow data to be gathered on verbal (or “noise”) occurrences, visually recorded occurrences, written reports and documentation, and researcher experiential data within a specific context (Gilmore and Carson, 1996)

![Figure 6: Suitability of qualitative research methods for service marketing, p. 36](image-url)

3.1.3. Our choice

Concerning our thesis, qualitative researches are more suitable to study services and their nature of product (act, process, performance and service delivery) because they are difficult to understand with traditional research (Bateson, 1985, Bitner et al., 1985; Shostack, 1977). In this way, the qualitative method is appropriate to analyse the airlines industry service. In accordance with Gilmore and Carson (1996), qualitative researches are adapting for social science background for use in organizational and managerial situations. In particular, these methods can be adapted for research into the marketing of services and marketing management decision making in the context of
specific organizational and marketing situations (Gilmore and Carson, 1996) as experiential marketing.

Indeed, the qualitative view can allow us to directly experience the world of informants and all of its variations and to know the phenomenon under investigation in a way that few other methodologies permit (Hill, 1993).

In 1979, Van Maanen shows the advantage of the qualitative methods: quantitative researchers admit that they need a description of the context in which the behaviour of their subjects takes place. Then, they attempt to see that behaviour from the position of its originator to understand well. Thus qualitative methods take account of what is learned throughout the research process as well as research outcomes and results. Recognition of the researcher’s experiential understanding is also important in the development and interpretation of qualitative data (Gilmore and Carson, 1996).

In order to study marketing actions and particularly “how airlines gain and retain customers thanks to experiential marketing”, the qualitative research has been chosen.

### 3.2. Type of research

In order to do a better collect and analysis, an appropriate type of research had to be chosen. Indeed, depending on the research question, kind of research can change. It is needed to define the three types of research:

#### 3.2.1. Exploratory

The exploratory research can be defined as the initial research that develops hypothetical/theoretical idea rather than testing hypothesis (Kothari, 1990). The researcher has an idea or observes a phenomenon and wants to understand it. Stebbins (1960) characterized exploratory research as the process that gives a fleeting and preliminary stage in the research process. It is a way of approaching and carrying out a social study. Indeed, exploratory research is often the initial groundwork for future research.

There exist 2 types of exploratory research: first, a new topic which is unexpected and unexplored, starting new finding, and secondly, new angles came from new ways of analyse or measuring something (Kowalczuk, 2014).
3.2.2. Descriptive

The next step after the exploratory work is the descriptive research. It defined as the step that explore and explain more new information about the topic. So, descriptive step describes what is happening in more details, filling in the missing parts and expanding our understanding. More as possible information are collected in this part (Kowalczuk, 2014).

3.2.3. Explanatory

After exploring something new and conducted descriptive analysis to increase our knowledge with exploratory and descriptive researches, it’s needed to explain them (Kowalczk, 2014). “Explanatory models should be abstract analogies to the processes believed to have generated observed outcomes, ot summaries of statistical relationships between variables” (Sørensen, 1999, P. 22). It’s an attempt to connect ideas to understand cause and effect and how things come together and interact (Kowalczk, 2014). Explanatory research establishes causal relationships between variables (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009).

3.2.4. Our choice

The descriptive and exploratory research was chosen. Indeed, Kowalczuk (2014) said that the descriptive research can allow us to study a subject ever explored: the experiential marketing. Nonetheless, the paper is focused on the airlines experiential marketing, and this subject was never examined precisely thus, it clarified. Moreover, the descriptive research is adapted for the problematic with the question “How”: the answer is logically descriptive and this research allowed us to give an accurate and detailed idea. Then, the exploratory research is useful for new or incomplete subject as the airlines experiential marketing. Indeed, we familiarized this subject, asked some questions and fund ideas for new researches. Moreover, we immerged in the airlines experiential marketing; we really improved our knowledge about them that it’s allowed us to well-understand the companies’ strategies.
3.3. **Population and sample**

3.3.1. **Type of population and sample**

The population is all the possible case that has an interest for a survey (Byrne, 2002). The population sampling is a concept of taking some subjects that is representative of an entire population. A sufficient size is necessary to warrant a statistical analysis. A sampling must be done because testing every single individual in the population is impossible, but, more the researchers test all individual and more the results are reliable, valid and accurate (Explorable, 2009).

The probability sampling is a sample with the members of a population has equal chance of being selected (method without bias). This method can be used to estimate representative and entire population parameters (Ranieri, 2009). The non-probability sampling is a sample with the members of a population has not equal chance of being selected. The method is useful for studies which don’t want analyse the parameters of an entire population (Ranieri, 2009). Different types of non-probability sampling exist: the Quota sampling, convenience sampling and the purposive sampling.

The aim of a quota sampling is to select a proportion relative to the population to make easier the data collect. Nevertheless, sample can be inaccessible and the non-randomly choice can be a bias for the analysis (Lund Research Ltd, 2012).

A convenience sampling is “one where the units that are selected for inclusion in the sample are the easiest to access” (Lund Research Ltd, 2012). Sample can be stopped in the street for instance. Nonetheless, this type of sampling cans under-represented or over-represented groups, this lead bias.

A purposive sampling is also called selective sampling because it is based on the researcher judgement and experience. It allows representing one particular group and it is not representative of the population. The judgement of the researcher is a subjective component that can be a brake for the analysis (Lund Research Ltd, 2012).
3.3.2. Our choice

All European airlines didn’t organize experiential marketing actions and it appears logical to do a selection among those that did it. Consequently, a non-probability method based on the purposive sampling has been done. Indeed, our judgement about what airlines made in experiential marketing actions influences our choice. So, 5 companies were selected: KLM, Air France, Scandinavian Airlines, Easy Jet and British Airways. First, we choose these airlines because each did experiential marketing. Moreover, we make the choice to limit our study to European airlines. KLM was chosen because this company is, with Air France, most performant company in our native country, leaders in the European Airlines market. This alliance seemed interesting to be study in order to understand how they succeeded in their customer relationship strategies. Then, Scandinavian Airlines was selected to understand our studies area. Finally, two British airlines have been picked (Easy Jet and British Airways) to compare low cost and no-low cost companies, come from the same country.

3.4. Instrument to collect data

The aim of this paper is to understand how airlines use experiential marketing to gain and retain customers. Consequently, in order to answer this research question, collect data had to be collected. Many are instruments to collect data but all are not efficient to have appropriate and reliable answers.

3.4.1. Focus group

The focus group allows getting consumers responses about a product, consumption or a social topic thanks to the researcher question. A main characteristic of focus group “is the use of interaction between research participants to generate data” to understanding and increase knowledge about a specific topic (Mitchelle and Branigan, 2000). Focus group is basically more critical than individual interviews (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). Usually; it was the step before a quantitative research (McQuarrie, 1996).
3.4.2. Survey

The survey is not an appropriate method to our research question. Indeed, the authors of this paper wanted to know the companies ways to use experiential marketing and, as previously mentioned, a qualitative method was used. Nevertheless, survey stays one of the most used instruments to collect data. Hox and Boeije (2005) define the survey as a research with a “large number of standardized questions” (Hox and Boeije, 2005, p.594) in an interview of a lot of people. This method is efficient to collect and analyse many answers.

3.4.3. Case studies

Yin (2014) argued that the most frequently used research strategies are survey, experiment, archival analysis, history and case studies. Strach and Everett (2008) add that the case studies allow helping solving a social sciences research problem. It also allows understanding, in depth, a phenomenon in the real life (Merriam, 2009). Willis (2007) highlights 3 main characteristics of case studies:

“It allows you to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting. It is also holistic and thus supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experience in the social context. Then, unlike experimental research, it can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals” (Willis, 2007, p. 240)

Case study can be single case or multiple cases, embedded or holistic. A single case is the analysis of one case and multiple case studies are the analysis of several cases. The holistic design is accurate to compare and study phenomenological and narrative description. It’s follow only qualitative research (Yin, 2014). Embedded design can induce qualitative and quantitative researches (Yin, 2014). Case study is particularly adapted for exploratory research question and to answer “How” and “Why” research question (Yin, 2014). Yin explains that case study is accurate for relative new phenomenon with few or not control. The case study also allows clarifying a decision and highlighting how decision were made and with which way (Schramm, 1971).
3.4.4. Content Analysis

Cole (1998) defines the content analysis as a method of analysing written, visual or verbal communication messages. It’s a research method to describe and quantify a phenomenon objectively (Krippendorff, 1980, Downe-Wamboldt, 1992 and Sandelowski, 1993). Content analysis is also a method used to analyse existing documents: researchers can test theoretical issues to improve the data understanding (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008) concerning meanings, intentions, context and consequences (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Krippendorff (1980) added that content analysis allows researchers to make valid inferences from data to their context. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) argue that the results have to be reported completely in the process and with as much details as possible to establish a link between results and data. This guarantees the reliability of the content analysis. Then, the method is flexible. Consequently, the guideline depends of the researcher (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a guideline is needed to explain and advise people on how something should be done. The guideline is a process to explain our collect data, step by step.

3.4.5. Five variables of the experience, Schmitt (1999)

Schmitt (1999) develops own experience evaluation model thanks to the brand image interface with consumers and innovations. This model allows understanding the level and the kind of experience thanks to five components:

- Sense: sight, hearing, touch, taste and sense of smell are stimulated during an experience
- Feel: Customers are immerged in an atmosphere that appeals to their emotions
- Think: imagination, thought, creativity are called up
- Act: the customer’s implication in the experience allows him to have a special behaviour
- Relate: The customer can share its experience, identify himself in a group and meet people.
A perfect and memorable experience is reached thanks to these five steps. The study of it allows measuring the experience. Combined with other methods, the 5 variables of the experience (Schmitt, 1999) can make an assessment of the experience actions in companies.

3.5. **How do authors collect data?**

In order to collect data to answer our research question, a qualitative method with exploratory and descriptive research has been chosen. We privileged a non-randomly sample with five airlines chosen thanks to our judgement and experience; therefore it’s a purposive sampling. Finally, the multiple case studies seemed to be the best choice to establish an assessment of way used by airlines. Additionally, the Schmitt model helped us to understand the airlines experiential marketing.

In this paper, authors have chosen the case study to explore and describe the airlines experiential marketing. This study used a multiple case study with holistic design. These allowed us to compare and analyse how airlines companies proceed to gain and retain consumers. In this paper, we have studied existing documents to understand the context of our five airlines and to analyse written as articles or annual reports, visual and verbal documents with video on YouTube, uploaded by airlines. For this study the choice to was collect them online. Indeed, the experiential marketing is too recent and difficult to find in books. Moreover, the time and the money to write our thesis are limited; consequently, internet was the efficient method to collect our data. The content analysis focus on some selected criteria to collect data:

First, a general presentation of each company based on the same type of information has been done. Consequently, a short historical presentation seemed essential and was available on the airlines websites. Their own sites provide easily clear and precise data. Then, the economic context of each airline had to be understood. Hence, the revenue and the growth in 2015 have been noted in addition to the number of destinations and passengers. Afterwards and to get the industry of each company, image, motto, low-cost or not had been take into account to highlight the priority and the positioning that the
brand would have. Annual reports allowed us to have reliable, complete and transparent
details about the economic trends and the market of each firm. Reports being legally
compulsory for each company, therefore they make available same data and we just
report exactly these information.

Secondly, collect data are focused on experiential marketing actions done by the
selected airlines. Indeed, our research question takes customers’ loyalty into account
and we needed to relate the experience lived thanks to the experiential marketing. In
order to understand it, we based our collect on Schmitt’s theory with Sense, Feel, Think,
Act and Relate. We proceeded to describe as reliable as possible information available
online, on YouTube with spot uploaded by companies or articles. These latter were
among other things from independent industry, consumer trends research agency online,
one of the most powerful marketing and advertising blog and so on. All information was
noted about atmosphere, music, non-verbal and verbal responses, goodies, if a crowd
was present or not, promotion of the event by companies and other and then, we
gathered them in table following the five variables of Schmitt (1999). This allowed us to
have a first point of view of the actions. In order to collect feedback of consumers and
conscious that companies communicate only positive comments, it seemed needed and
essential to compare feedback didn’t collect and relay by companies themselves.
Consequently, we checked on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and
note the number of retweet, likes, views, and hashtags being careful to notice only
feedback about the events. Each piece of information was checked with several other
sources, put together to avoid mistakes and to be as reliable as possible.
4. Empirical study

4.1. KLM – Royal Dutch Airlines

4.1.1. Presentation

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines was founded in 1919 to serve the Netherlands and its colonies. KLM is consequently today, the oldest airline still operating under its original name. Since May 2004, KLM and Air France are regrouped to become the largest European airline group. Each airline has retained its individual identity, trade name and brand. KLM is at the forefront of the European airline industry. KLM wants to become the most customer centric, innovative and efficient European network carrier. KLM wants to be the customers’ first choice, to be an attractive employer for its staff and, a company that grows profitably for its shareholders. KLM has always guarantee a high level of service before, during and after the flight. As of summer 2015 KLM offers 138 worldwide destinations (71 European and 67 in the rest of the world) in 69 countries. It’s revenues was 9,905 million (+3.9%) which 28,540 million passengers. KLM uses many slogans in their advertising, but the famous is “Journeys full of inspiration”.

4.1.2. Surprise, December 2010

The KLM airline published a video on YouTube. It was the “surprise” video, a campaign in which the airline decided to investigate the users who published in the social networks that they would be traveling with KLM, to know about what they liked and then give them a present while they were waiting in the airport. According with the DigitalBuzzBlog, the airline decided, for instance, to give a box of chocolates to a user that published through twitter that he was going to visit his girlfriend, or they sent a fancy limousine to a passenger that was late to catch the KLM flight he was going to
take in a few hours. KLM published many videos of these operations with enjoying music and where KLM customers seem very happy.

In this experiential marketing event, all the customers’ senses are mobilized. Indeed, the touch and the view are used to published in the social network, and to take and discover the give. The hearing is use when the customer speaks with KLM staff. The smell and taste are used if the KLM “surprise” is something to eat (e.g.: chocolate), perfume…

Customers who assisted to the event was very surprised and felt happy to be helped enjoy and enthusiastic to receive a present or help. In fact, the airline offers to customers to do something: write a tweet or Facebook publication but, customers are not sure for the “surprise”. This operation permits to meet other people in the airport and KLM staff. The participant’s wan goodies as chocolates or limousine tour so this operation was really positively commented and the crowd was enthusiastic.

4.1.3. #HappytoHelp, From October 13th to October 17th 2013

In accordance with the Co.Create site, KLM selected a specialized team scanned social media during five days for passengers facing travel problems throughout the world, and responded with a creative and relevant #HappytoHelp answer in real-time, even when those passengers were not travelling with KLM. Selected problems would then be solved in a variety of ways, ranging from actual physical intervention – such as helping someone retrieve a forgotten passport and still make their flight – to providing one-to-one advice or information through social media, which ranged from a simple text message to a social media video. A custom-designed ‘real-time newsroom’ glass pavilion based at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport served as the central ‘control hub’ for the campaign and housed rotating 30 people teams from both the airline and its agency, working round-the-clock in shifts. Meanwhile, KLM agents at Amsterdam Schiphol, São Paulo-Guarulhos, New York JFK and Hong Kong International also proactively approached travellers that seemed to have a problem. The airline had film crews on standby to shoot filmed responses to customers’ problems and record footage of the most interesting and unusual problems solved, which have been uploaded online. In this operation, all the senses are mobilized. The touch and the view are used to text a message in social media. The hearing is use when the customer speaks with KLM staff.
The smell and taste are used if the KLM staff helped customers with food, sanitary products… Customers feel happy to be helped with only one tweet. They are also surprised because they can think that the KLM #happytohelp is maybe not true. Consequently, customers interact online, in the social network and in the airport with others travellers and when they meet the KLM team in the airport that helped us with advices, a breakfast or make-up. In Instagram, there was 14,600 #happytohelp. This number shows the operation’s popularity. Moreover, the company upload a video on YouTube in order to share with everybody this huge operation.

4.1.4. Live High Five, 28th August 2014

The 28th of August 2014, KLM’s 'Live High Five' event took place in two cities: New York and Amsterdam. Because article explained that through an interactive video connection hundreds of people in Amsterdam and New York were connected to give each other the perfect High Five. When succeeded, the winners received two tickets to New York or Amsterdam from a stewardess. Therefore, the touch was used when passengers high five in the screen, the view and hearing were used thanks to the interactive video. People seem happy and intrigued to meet new friends in Amsterdam or New York. A video of this day was published online by the airline with an enjoying music. The video has more than 470,000 views on YouTube with many positive comments. There are several positive comments also during the video by participants and the crowd.
### 4.1.5. KLM Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Information</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues in 2015</td>
<td>9,905 million euros (+ 3.9%)</td>
<td>KLM annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of destinations in 2015</td>
<td>138 destinations in 69 countries</td>
<td>KLM annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of passengers in 2015</td>
<td>28,540 million</td>
<td>KLM annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>High level of services, “Journeys full of inspiration”</td>
<td>KLM annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential marketing action</td>
<td>“Surprise”</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>All senses</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>Surprised, happy to be helped, enthusiasm</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>Doing something without thinking good</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Write on a social network</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodies</td>
<td>Participants can receive breakfast, transports, make-up… they are helped</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles, Instagram, tweiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Positive comments in the crowd and by the participants.</td>
<td>Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles, Instagram, tweiter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**
- KLM annual report (2015)
- Video on YouTube posted by KLM, articles, Instagram, tweiter
4.2. Air France

4.2.1. Presentation

Air France was created in 1933. It was a fusion between (Air Orient, Air Union, CIDNA, les lignes Farma). Air France is the main airlines in France. In 2004, Air France gattered with KLM (Netherlands airlines) Today, Air France it’s 316 destinations in 115 countries. The company has 534 aircrafts in operation. In 2015, the company had 79 016 million passengers and it revenue was 26.06 billion euros and is up 4.6 %.

The airline Air France mainly targeting businessmen often enrolled in loyalty programs). It communicates years on values such as comfort, travel experience, a relationship - close and careful customer and quality service. It can therefore qualify as high-end company. However, the market leader for years, Air France is now suffering from increased competition with the emergence of low cost airlines and new airlines (including Asian and Arabic Emirates). It thus seeks to extend this pre-established target, addressing target younger, trying to revitalize its image and offering lower prices and better services.

For many years, Air France was governed by a relatively smooth and wise marketing strategy, characterized by its famous slogan "Making the best spot of the earth sky" . But with the arrival of new competitors on the market and a change of direction (in July 2013 Alexandre de Juniac becomes the new CEO of Air France) the airline decided to completely redesign its brand image with high quality, attention and pleasure. In 2013, therefore, the brand identity has been completely revised and fully dusted emphasizing the "French touch" of the brand. Now, its new slogan is “Air France in the air”. Indeed, the ambition of Air France is to be a leader European air transport by offering to all segments customer transport offers adapted between Europe and the rest of the world/Europe.
4.2.2. Mystery luggage, 18th September 2012

Air France recorded a video on YouTube with a motivational song where the company has proposed to Toulouse inhabitants to go on trip to one of direct destinations served from Toulouse. Air France has installed a giant suitcase in the heart of the city. All the day, people on the street were asked to press a buzzer (mobilize the touch) which launched a jackpot. If three identical symbols lined up, the bag automatically distributing a gift (mobilize the sight and hearing). The website StreetPlanneur valued they were more than 1,500 participants, 200 people in average were in the queue at the same time because Toulouse inhabitant was enjoy to play a game in the street and intrigued by this randomly-game. The luckiest ones were given air tickets from Toulouse and the crowd appears happy and enthusiastic for the winners and winners happy to win a goodies. The video records around 49,000 views on YouTube.

4.2.3. AF351: Daily flight Air France between Paris and Toronto, 24th October 2013

Air France was published online a video (with 93,050 view) of the 24th October, when the company created an event in Toronto’s street. The members may win a direct flight in Paris in the AF351 airplane. The registration was free and participants received a boarding pass online. The event day, they have to be present in the meeting point (David Pacaut Square) with their boarding pass and luggage to be ready flying to Paris. Almost 600 people were present, ready to leave Toronto. In the David Pacaut Square, Air France produce a real airport decoration like flight attendant, a true airport signalisation and same announcements than in a real airport: all things reminding the airport atmosphere. People waiting in line up the random draw after that the staff checked the passport and identity of future passengers. People are speaking with others in the crowd. The company offered champagne and blue, white and red macaron (French flag colours). Indeed, all senses are engaged. During the event, customers feel eagerness and enthusiasm to maybe win a flight. At the end, flight attendants choose by
random 4 passengers that they won a round-trip ticket Toronto-Paris. This entire event was followed by MediainCanada and this event was retweeted 10,350 when Air France published the spot on twitter.

4.2.4. Upgrade challenge, February 2015

Waiting around in an airport can be a bit of a yawn-inducing affair. But Air France made sure that wasn’t the case with its mobile-based upgrade challenge game. It was possible to upload the application in an AirFrance website. For the launch of the new business cabins in Asia, Air France turned the 15 minutes before boarding into a real time competition to win an instant upgrade to business class. Activated in Singapore and Japan airports, the first mobile game that allowed travellers to compete for an upgrade required travellers to download the ‘Cloud Slicer’ app. Indeed, users touch, sight and herd their mobile phone to play. The airline transformed the boarding gates into a gaming arena where passengers had 15 minutes to beat their 200 fellow passengers to win a seat in Air France’s new business cabin. The atmosphere looked like a trading-room with stress and rapidity as the competitors sliced through the clouds as fast as they could; their rankings were displayed real time on the giant screens. The highest scorers were instantly upgraded, and could enjoy the delights of business class; from a free newspaper to a fully reclining chair, it’s safe to say they were delighted with their victory. Air France published an Upgrade Challenge video on YouTube with around 1,115,000 views.

4.2.5. Personalized surprises for Chinese New Year, 8th February 2016

Air France surprised its customers travelling to China on departure from Paris-Charles de Gaulle with gifts, greeting cards, sweets, unique lucky charms and musical entertainment to wish them a happy Chinese New Year in the plane because it’s a long travel and that Chinese New Year it’s very famous and lovely by Chinese. The staff spoke Chinese with passengers and the departure lounge was decorated with Chinese details. Air France did a little spot, uploaded on YouTube, showing the Chinese atmosphere with a festive sound. This video was really loved by Chinese people. On
the video, they were impressed and enjoy celebrating this famous day together even if they were far from their family and close friends and they sharing this moment with all the passengers. All the senses are mobilized in this experience because Chinese’s received goodies (for instance, food and drinks).

### 4.2.1. Air France table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues in 2015</td>
<td>26.06 billion euros (+ 4, 6%)</td>
<td>Air France annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of destinations in 2015</td>
<td>316 destinations in 115 countries</td>
<td>Air France annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of passengers in 2015</td>
<td>79,016 million</td>
<td>Air France annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential marketing action</td>
<td>Mystery luggage</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AF351</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upgrade Challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>Touch, sight, hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All senses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Touch, sight, hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All senses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>Enjoy to play a game in the street, randomly-game, intrigue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eagerness, enthusiasm to maybe win a flight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stressful and enthusiasm for the competition, desire to go in business class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surprise, enjoy, reassurance to celebrate a very famous day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think</strong></td>
<td>Hope to win a flight thanks to a big, unique and funny luggage in the street.</td>
<td>Thinking of the travel in France from Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act</strong></td>
<td>Press a button and win goodies</td>
<td>Leaving a country just after the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relate</strong></td>
<td>Enthusiasm to press the button in the street in front of a lot of people</td>
<td>Meeting and speaking with a lot of people in the crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goodies</strong></td>
<td>Everybody win goodies (little present/flight ticket)</td>
<td>Flight ticket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td>1,500 participants a day, around 49,000 views on YouTube, 200 people in the queue waiting for the queue</td>
<td>93,050 views on YouTube, 10,350 spot retweet on twitter. Positive comment in the crowd during the event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. Scandinavian Airlines System

4.3.1. Presentation

Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) is formed from AB Aerotransport (ABA), Det Danske Luftfartselskab A/S (DDL) and Det Norske Luftfartselskap A/S (DNL), the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian airlines. Founded in the beginning of the XXth century, the three companies have decided to create SAS in 1946. SAS became quickly a pioneer firm because it was at once the first to “round the world service over North Pole” and introduce reservation electronic system in the middle of the XXth century. Today, the firm is recognized as the first airline in the Scandinavian countries and one of the founders of StarAlliance. SAS helps travellers in 119 destinations in 1.300 offered by the group. In 2015, SAS observed revenue of US$ 3.16 billion being an increase of 2.3% compared to 2014. The same year, more than 28 million of passengers travelled with SAS airline, it represented around 70,000 passengers per day. Scandinavians make more than 5 trips per year and that these frequent passengers are 70% of all sales. SAS esteems that 60% of this frequent travellers choose SAS. In order to improve the passenger's loyalty; SAS creates the program “Eurobonus” (4 million euro bonus members in 2015). This program is in keeping with the priority of the company: win Scandinavia’s frequent travellers. Consequently, its headline is “To make life easier for Scandinavia’s frequent travellers”. The customers’ satisfaction index reached 74/100 in 2015 being a rise of 2 points compared to 2014. The company implements new cabins in business class, innovates and develops its products and then, improves the digitalization. Also, SAS makes a point of honour to create an efficient operating platform and secures the right capabilities. Scandinavian Airlines System differentiates itself thanks to its punctuality because the company has been awarded with the election of the most punctual airline in Europe and the third worldwide by flight stats. In order to face low-cost companies, SAS choose to reduce its costs and came up to low-cost price politics. In order to try to differentiate, the company creates lounge at the top of the range for business customers. As every airline, SAS does marketing actions and the company resorts to experiential marketing.
4.3.2. The TimeKiller App, 2011

In 2011, Scandinavian airlines launched the TimeKiller-App. The aim of this app is to make fun of the other companies which are not punctual. Thanks to this app, SAS competitors’ consumers can kill the time due to competitors’ delay with four little games. The promotion of this app is a movie praising the SAS punctuality and presenting the four fun games with a show. The video collected 40,000 views on YouTube. According with DigitalBuzzBlog, the music of this advertising reminds a waiting music. It seems to be a true advertising except at the end, when Scandinavian airlines propose download the app or book a flight on its website. Indeed, the advertising stimulates curiosity, enjoying and intrigue. When travellers are watching the advertising, they realize that they don’t want to be delayed anymore. Players can challenge their friends and users can note, comment and share the app. The app draws on senses, and particularly sight, touch and hearing with the device use. The video can provoke emotions (enjoy, laugh, desire).

4.3.3. Comfy Challenge, 2015

In order to promote its new business class cabins, with wide seats, bedding from Hastens, and mood lighting, Scandinavian airlines organized a sleep competition: The Comfy Challenge. The Benchmark report Airline Marketing describes this event: it took place in the transit hall in the Oslo’s airport where the new business class cabin was recreated. This day, the airport was busy. The board announced the following mention “Ssssh! We are testing our new chair”, bystanders could saw the step of participants’ sleep and the entire competition. The atmosphere was calm and comfortable in the goal of well-being and relaxing the customers. Lie on the bed with a blanket, ear plugs, eye mask and electrodes to measure the brain activity, a few travellers had to fall asleep quickly. The winner of a flight to New-York in Business Class was the one who fell asleep in the shortest time. Scandinavian airlines upload a little movie with pleasant and soothing music, relating the experience and showing participants and bystanders feedbacks. The video counts more than 190,000 views online. All the senses were stimulated for sleepers and the smell, sight and hearing for the bystanders. The customers seem intrigued, curious and comments positively the comfy challenge.
## 4.3.4. SAS table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation / history</td>
<td>Creation in 1946 (Swedish, Danish and Norwegian airlines) and one of the founders of StarAlliance</td>
<td>SAS annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue in 2015</td>
<td>3.16 billion US$ (+2.3%)</td>
<td>SAS annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of destinations in 2015</td>
<td>119 destinations</td>
<td>SAS annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of passengers in 2015</td>
<td>28 million</td>
<td>SAS annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Non low cost company, “To make life easier for Scandinavia’s frequent travellers”</td>
<td>SAS annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential marketing action</td>
<td>The time-Killer App</td>
<td>YouTube video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>The app draws on senses (sight, touch, hearing)</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All senses are stimulated (sleepers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sight, hearing and smell (bystanders)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>The movie can stimulate emotion (enjoy, laugh, desire) and the app stimulates and provokes emotions: desire to win, entertainment</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The atmosphere is calm and comfortable. Relaxing and well-being emotions. Possibility to win a flight to New-York in Business Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>Curiosity, enjoying, kill the time, intrigue. Music reminds the stressful music in waiting room.</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intrigue, curiosity, imagination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>People want to book a flight with SAS or download the app.</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleepers participate directly whereas bystanders look the competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Players can challenge their friends. People can note, comments app and share the spot.</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Several people share the same experience; bystanders can meet other people in the crowd.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>40,000 views on YouTube</td>
<td>video uploaded by SAS on YouTube + article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive comments (bystanders and participants), more than 190 000 views on YouTube</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4. Easy Jet

4.4.1. Presentation

EasyJet is a British low-cost airline created in 1995 by Stelios Haji-Loannou. In 2000, easyjet.com celebrated its 10 millionth passenger. In 2014, the company transported around 4.680 million passengers being 70,000 per day. In twenty years, EasyJet has become quickly a big company in the airlines industry with more than 130 destinations in 31 countries. The desire of making travel easy and affordable with safety explains the success of Easy-Jet. Its affordable prices do it the historical competitors of Ryan Air, Lufthansa and Norwegian Air Shuttle, low-cost companies too. The British low-cost airline differentiates itself with the personalisation, particularly with targeted marketing. In 2015, Easy-jet observed revenue of £68 million being a rise of 18% since 2000. The company’s ambition is to become the preferred short-haul airline in Europe keeping its cost advantage. Easy-Jet has adopted experiential marketing several times.

4.4.2. “Guess Who?”, 2014

In order to celebrate the 10 millionth passenger in 10 years, EasyJet choose to organise a live version of the old game “Guess who?” or “Who am I?” in Toulouse airport, in France on February 28th, 2014. The event was transcribed by AirlineTrends website. In orange scenery, 24 people were seated with their name in front of them. The other passengers were invited to guess the 10 millionth passenger who has hidden in the group of 24. Inspired of the childhood game, bystanders had to ask question like “Does he/she have brown eyes?” consequently, some people were eliminated question after question. This game mobilised mainly the sight and hearing senses. Bystander who found the 10 millionth passenger thanks to the questions won a flight with EasyJet. This game developed the curiosity, intrigue and desire to find the passenger. After the game, for 10 days, EasyJet launched a digital version online (called: “Enigme A Board “). This digital version was played more than 2,500 times the first day. This game permitted to customer meeting and speaking people directly during the experience.
4.4.3. Hidden flight tickets, April 2015

According with O2B Cerodosbe website, the hidden flight tickets was inspired from the game Hidden cash and Easy Jet decided, in April, 2015, to hide 10 tickets in a few cities in Spain. EasyJet Spain used its Facebook page and other mass media like radio to communicate clue, early the morning. Thanks to these clues, people tried to find the free tickets. With the immersion in the city, all the senses are used by the customer. The fastest 10 people to find tickets won a free flight to the European destination of their choice; therefore, players are really involved in the game and desire to succeed the course and are eager to find the tickets. Players were in contact with city inhabitants’ because of the tourism office mobilisation and citizens. Moreover, the promotion was did by several mass media like radio.

4.4.4. EasyJet table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of destinations in 2015</td>
<td>130 destinations in 31 countries</td>
<td>EasyJet annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential marketing action</td>
<td>“Guess Who?”</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td>Mainly the sight and hearing senses</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>Curiosity, intrigue, desires to find the passenger. Well-being with the childhood reminder</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to finish the courses and succeed. Eager to find tickets.</td>
<td>Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think</strong></td>
<td>Reminder of the childhood, thinking of characteristics, questions, being smart</td>
<td>Collecting clues to find tickets quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act</strong></td>
<td>Asking questions, being involved in the game thanks to the childhood reminder.</td>
<td>Being involved in the game, high participation with running, seeking in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relate</strong></td>
<td>Meeting and speaking people directly during the experience.</td>
<td>Contact in social networks and in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goodies</strong></td>
<td>Yes, a flight to the passenger’s choice destination in Europe</td>
<td>Yes, 10 tickets can be won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Face to the Game Success, EasyJet launched a digital version for 10 days, played 2,500 times the first day.</td>
<td>Promotion by several mass media like radio and mobilisation of tourism office and citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5. British Airways

4.5.1. Presentation

A British Airways Board was established by the United Kingdom government in 1972 to manage the two nationalised airline corporations, British Overseas Airways Corporation and British European Airways, and two smaller, regional airlines, Cambrian, from Cardiff, and Northeast Airlines, from Newcastle upon Tyne. British Airways is the UK's largest international scheduled airline and one of the world's leading global premium airlines. The Group's principal place of business is London with significant presence at Heathrow, Gatwick and London City airports in 2015, revenues for the year was £11,719 million, up 2.6 per cent over the previous year. Operating one of the most extensive international scheduled airline networks, together with its joint business agreements, code share and franchise partners, BA flies 400 destinations worldwide. British Airways’ vision is to be the most admired airline. British Airways targets different customer segments for its four levels of services: economy, premium economy, executive and first class. To achieve long-term growth, British Airways will concentrate on enhancing value perception of its services by present and perspective customers within target segment. Service value perception will be effectively increased by British Airways top-level and marketing management by maintaining strategic customer relationships in relation to all segments and application of creativity and innovation to many business processes.

4.5.2. Magic Flying, 2013

In 2013, British Airways set up a billboard that shows when a British Airways plane is arriving and displays the flight number and origin. A little boy is shown to stand up and take notice of the arriving flight, running towards it then pointing at it before text showing the flight number and origin appears. This campaign asked mainly the sight sense and people are intrigued to try to guess the origin of the flight or other information that they will discover in the advertising after the plane flight. The company won the Grand Prix in the direct category at the Cannes lions in the International Festival of Creativity in 2014. People can share and discuss with others people who watching the billboard.
4.5.3. Flight Simulator, February 2013

British Airways created an installation motion flight simulator in a Boeing flight simulator, normally reserved for the exclusive training of professional pilots. The company posted a video on YouTube with this experience. They also wrote an article available in the company website. This was at the Victoria Station in London, where people could play on a flying simulator to win tickets to different destinations. First, people have had a 30 minute pre-flight briefing including flight deck instruments, controls and systems. Once the training is complete they will be at the controls from take-off to touchdown: all of this under the instruction of a British Airways pilot. Players can be amused, intrigued, proud and desirous to learn to drive a plane. The experience stimulated sight, smell, touch and hearing senses. After the success of this experiential event, British airways decide to place a pay-permanent flight simulator in Hatton cross.

4.5.4. Virtual reality, 19th December 2014

British Airways offers travellers special virtual reality experience. Travellers were the launch of an innovative system that allows customers to virtually experience the destinations even before booking. The “Oculus Rift” utilizes footage shot in real life with a special equipment to create a visual experience 360° and high resolution. Mainly the sight sense are used but also the hearing and touch senses. So, British Airways has proposed three travel experiences in the United States: Customers who have tried to Milan, Frankfurt and Paris have tamed a wild horse in Texas, ran rollerblade under the California sun and skated on the ice in front of the New York skyline. The company posted a video on YouTube and it has 90,158 view with 123 likes and a lot of positive and enthusiastic comments. Watching the video, travellers seems to be disoriented, exciting, curious to discover a US destination, amused, and sometimes stressed by the unknown and can share with people just around them.
**4.5.5. British Airways table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of information</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation / History</td>
<td>British airlines was born in 1972</td>
<td>British Airlines annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenues in 2015</td>
<td>£11,719 million (+2, 6%)</td>
<td>British Airlines annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of destinations in 2015</td>
<td>More than 400 destinations</td>
<td>British Airlines annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of passengers in 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Non low-cost airline, vision: to be the most admired airline</td>
<td>British Airlines annual report (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential marketing action</td>
<td></td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senses</td>
<td>Mainly the sight sense, but also hearing and touch</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>Intrigued, trying guess the origin of the flight</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>Thinking about the plane who arrive</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Stay in front of the billboard and watching it</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Share/discuss with others people who watching the billboard</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Winning Grand Prix in the direct category at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in 2014.</td>
<td>YouTube video posted by British Airways, article, British Airways website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Winning Grand Prix in the direct category at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in 2014.
- After experiential event success, the company decides to place a pay-permanent flight simulator in Hatton
- 90 158 views on YouTube (123 likes) + positive comments
5. Analysis of Empirical Data

5.1. Airlines experiential marketing strategies

5.1.1. KLM

KLM fostered the social media use in its experiential marketing actions. Effectively, the company bring customers to publish on Facebook or Twitter with the both “surprise” and #happytohelp events. This strategy can be doubly winning. According to Tsiotsou and Ratten in 2010, new technologies have emerged and customers like them. KLM adapted the experiential marketing in a current move: social media. This strategy gave to the company an actual vision for the customer and visibility. Moreover, using of social media is very smart because when surfers use the hashtag (#) or mention KLM, this is indirectly free-commercial for the brand. Consequently, the brand privileged the relational dimension and meeting people (virtually or not). This can be illustrate with the High five action, where the company use once again the new technologies as interactive video connection in 2 different countries and particularly social media with this Skype social media reminder. People are once more connected together thanks to KLM social media. These campaigns gave to KLM a dynamic, actual with the time and friendly image to attract and retain new customers.

5.1.2. Air France

Air France, with the Chinese New Year, the upgrade challenge and the AF351 flight actions, has chosen mainly to concentrate it experiential marketing in foreign countries and population. This strategy can be applied because Europe is the first tourist destination in the world (Rita, 2000) and that the World Tourism Organisation forecasts that Europe will register 717 million incoming international tourists in 2020 in Europe. This foreign strategy can permit to Air France stay competitive facing other European airlines in the next years. Every Air France experiential marketing actions are really different from each other. Indeed, the action can take place in the street (mystery luggage, AF351 flight) or in the airport (upgrade challenge or Chinese New Year), participants can win goodies, flights or upgrade depending on the action. In this way,
Air France act in unexpected, innovation, renewal to impressed their customers thanks to experiential marketing because its aim is to offer a unique, memorable and sustainable experience (Pine and Guilmore, 1998).

5.1.3. Scandinavian Airlines System

“To make life easier for Scandinavia’s frequent travellers” is the SAS’ motto and pictures its experiential marketing strategy across simple and efficacious actions. With the comfy challenge, the brand purposes passengers to try the Business Class and better, travelling in the business class. It’s a way to promote this class to give passengers a comfortable and relaxing travel. This experience allows customers to be involved in the brands and according to Bashford in 2004; customers are more satisfied if they interact with the product before the purchase. With the time-killer app the brand supports its “make the life easier” because SAS put forward that it was the most punctual airline. This campaign strengthens the trust that customers can have in the brand and the simplicity feel that SAS wants to bring to its customers.

5.1.4. Easy jet

Easy Jet organised, amongst other, two experiential marketing events: The “Guess who?” and the hidden tickets. The company uses games. With the childhood reminder, emotion and nostalgia are solicited and according with Shoemaker and Bowen, in 2003, they are a source of customer loyalty. Indeed, in front of the success of the king-size “guess who?” the brand decided to launch a digital version for 10 days. Nonetheless, this digital version shows once again that Easy jet stays in the child and game world for its experiential marketing events.

5.1.5. British Airways

British Airways uses mostly high technology in its experiential marketing actions. It’s a way to make the customer traveling without a real plane and using new and not common experiences. According with Norén in 2012, customers want something unexpected and the company answers with the flight simulator, virtual reality and magic
flying to this need. Each action stay in the airlines/plane/flight themes escorted with impressive technologies. The access to the flight simulator is something that person can do once in his live. And the virtual reality is something really new and rare; therefore customer feels privileged to try this technology in preview. These campaigns are in accordance with the vision of British Airways to be the most admired airline.

5.2. **Different ways to make experiential marketing by Airlines**

Experiential marketing implemented by airlines were different and provoked various responses and feelings. Indeed, during events, participants were immersed in different atmospheres which convey a message wanted by companies. As Kao *et al.* (2007) explain it, companies insisted on one or several components to cause emotional experience as the surprise, the participation and the immersion.

In order to capture customers’ attention, Air France would create the astonishment setting up a huge luggage in the street. Indeed, passers-by were intrigued and curious to see that and wanted to get a closer look. The stupefaction was higher when they realized that the mystery luggage allowed them to win goodies and for the luckiest, a ticket to one of the new destinations from Toulouse. The experience has started with the surprise to see a big luggage and gone on to the gain. Air France succeeded the experiential marketing thanks to the surprise and making a unique, extraordinary and unforgettable experience to satisfy customers’ demand (Schmitt, 1999). Air France repeated currently the experiential marketing provoking surprise with the Chinese New Year in 2016. Chinese travellers attach importance to this very famous day; basically celebrate with close friends and family. The airline used the probably homesickness to comfort all their Chinese clients with a Chinese New Year in the plane, during the flight. Emotions were strong because all reminded China: stewards spoke Chinese, music was Asiatic, and all passengers won goodies to celebrate this day together. All senses were stimulated to create a brand differentiation and positioning based on symbolic and emotional characteristics associated with Air France (Purkayastha, 2009). The company succeeded to put travellers’ multisensory skills to good use to create its experiential marketing (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997). Moreover, emotion and nostalgia can be a source of customer loyalty in tourism marketing (Shoemaker and Bowen, 2003).
KLM focused one of these actions on surprise. Travellers who posted a tweet with #KLM received a surprise as a gift, a present a service and so on at the airport. People was happy and enjoy to be helped without ask something directly to KLM. Around, the crowd seemed intrigued and envious. We can induce that the aim of KLM was developed positive emotions thanks to a pleasantly surprise (Lenderman and Sanchez, 2008).

In the case of Air France and its “mystery luggage”, players were, at the beginning, passers-by and, then, participants. Indeed, an experiential marketing induces participation. The degree of interaction varies depending on airlines. EasyJet created action of experiential marketing that needed participation with different degree. At the Toulouse’s Airport, Easy Jet wanted to remind childhood organizing two actions of experiential marketing: first, a reconstitution of the old game “Guess Who?” and participants had to find the 10 millionth travellers in a group asking question. At the beginning, people seemed curious and intrigued but quickly, the desire of play was coming. Participants became active. By the way, EasyJet would to promote its new destinations and celebrate the high number of passenger with the bystanders’ voluntary. In fact, people are more likely to satisfy with their own participation. The action can allow meeting people and create a warm atmosphere. Consequently and as Drengner (2003) mentioned it, the voluntary participation induces higher feelings and then, better perception. Secondly, EasyJet organized a kind of treasure hunt in Spain. The treasure was ten flight tickets hidden in the city. The company used social media to communicate clues. People had to run and be smart to find tickets. Finally, EasyJet gave the opportunity to become actively involved in the brand actions (Vila-Lopez, Rodriguez-Molina, 2013). KLM decided to use the relationship around the world with a young vision. Its event took place in the street and, thanks to a billboard connected between Amsterdam and New-York, passers-by could high-five in the screen simultaneously with another person in the other city. Firstly, people were intrigued because they could speak with someone in the other side of the world. Then, people were enjoy and happy to participate actively. Beyond the relationship between passers-by, participants can win flight to New-York or Amsterdam. In this way, KLM succeeded to create a link between several passers-by using interactive imagery (Legg and Baker, 1991). Moreover, the event creates a link between the brand and participants
to establish a strength relationship necessary to gain and retain customers (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998).

Another British company organized this kind of experiential marketing: British Airways implemented its “Magic Flying”. Indeed, British Airways put an interactive billboard with flights information in real time. The participation was passive because travellers didn’t have a role in the action but the airline used the dream and the magic to promote its flights. The aim of this campaign is to provoke interest and create interest with an infrequent advertising.

To go further in the active participation, companies ensure experiential marketing carries on and involves the customer in an entire experience: in an immersion. With the Comfy Challenge, SAS allowed participants to be immersed from the beginning of the competition whereas bystanders were passive to assist the experience. Indeed, SAS wanted to highlight the comfort of its new business class. In order to prove this, SAS organized a competition of sleepers. The first who was falling asleep the most quickly won a flight to New York in this new Business Class. This experiential marketing used all sense of the participants because when someone is falling asleep, senses are stimulated at the beginning and after the awakening. SAS would to raise the intent of purchase allowing participants to interact with the product. The IMI International research shows that this allows customers to be more satisfied. Bystanders played an important role during this challenge because they participated passively with the hearing, sense of smell and sight. SAS succeeded to convince both bystanders and players because immersion is the most significant experiential antecedent carrying on the customer in time and space (Caru and Cova, 2006). SAS knew take both participants and bystanders into account and this strategy encourages the desire to repeat the experience with the brand and the spread by word-of-mouth (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

Contrary to SAS that used experiential marketing to promote the comfort and the well-being, Air France used the stress and the pressure in an experiential event. In the lounge looked like trading-room, with a chronometer, 15 minutes before the take-off, all the passengers in economic class were invited to participate to a game. The rules were to challenge everybody and win the game during all scores were, in real time, written in board. The winner won a seat in business Class. We induce that Air France would reconstitute a trading-room to be coherent with the award reminded business: a seat in business-class. The use of this strategy allows the company to promote the flight in Asia
promoting the use of its apps. The customers’ perception is better because experiences engages memories, emotions but also brand relationship (Shaw and Ivens, 2002). Also, British Airways used an experience whose people can’t have frequently: to pilot a plane. In this way, the consumer is immersed in the company as a real pilot of British Airways plane and at once intrigued and proud of him. Consequently, consumers feel privileged to have tried the plane as a pilot and feels he belongs to the company. British Airways used the total immersion thanks to new technologies in another event: the virtual reality. The participant is carried on another city, in another country and can feel completely in this other place thanks to his senses and his movements. British Airways wanted to create the desire to travel in a wonderful destination, proposed by the airline and tried during a few moments.

Each company used different way to do experiential marketing. All of the actions used more or less senses. All senses were used in immersion because customers lived an entire experience. Experiential marketing, with the use of experience, involves customer in a relationship with the brand and allows customers to have their touch in the companies.

5.3. Variables of Airlines experiential marketing

Each company has its own strategy and consequently, own identity trough their marketing – brand experience and personality are connected (Brakus et al., 2009). In accordance with Kuster et al. in 2009, the brand image is important and a clearly and positive image create pleasure and arousal for the customer and influence directly in the purchase. Customers must recognise the brand through the experiential activity (Norén, 2012). Indeed, it’s necessary for the brand to keep its own brand personality because the brand positioning is based on emotional characteristics directly associated with the brand (Purkayastha, 2009). Consequently, airlines can work on different variables in experiential marketing actions.
5.3.1. Emotions

Despites their differences in their personality and in strategy to create experiential marketing actions, all of the companies have similarities, necessary to build a powerful experiential marketing. Because of the mass communication, the customer needs more attention and wants to have multisensory experience, stimulations and emotions. (Lafrouji, El Ouassi, Bouthara Anhyne, n.d.). In this way, airlines experiential marketing focuses on customer’s expectations (Norén, 2012), and companies propose emotional and sensitive marketing to offer something unexpected to the customer. Thereby, KLM called customers emotions with a friendly and dynamic image, Air France with the surprise, SAS with the simple feel, Easy Jet with the remind to childhood and then, British Airways with new technologies astonishment. All of these means serve to create stimulations and emotions. According with Addis and Holbrook in 2001, customers’ feedbacks are personal and various. Norén in 2012 said that everybody is different, and it’s impossible with one charter to convince all of them. They feel with their own perceptions, feelings and judgements (Addis and Holbrook in 2001). Thus, subjective reactions can’t work for each experiential marketing actions. Consequently, experiential marketing can be a failure. In the case, of Easy Jet, the hidden ticket event not had the success expected. Indeed, the event wasn’t shared as the company hoped.

5.3.2. Sense

Airlines should use the senses to approaching the experiential marketing. It’s necessary to give information and perception to the customers with the 5 senses because 85 percent of consumers esteem that the use of sense is decisive to make a purchase (SRI, research).

The most sparked sense is the sight for each company. Indeed, the sight is the easier element to immerse the customer in an experience with décor (Air France with the AF351 flight in Toronto creates a false airport’s corridor, Easy Jet established a giant “guess who?” toy in the airport, British Airways uses the sight to employ the virtual reality glasses). And, even if the main goal of the experiential marketing actions does not solicit the sight, with events as the comfy challenge, the customers are always looking around.
The hearing is also an important sense and companies enforced the experiential marketing actions without neglecting the hearing. The most telling example is the videos that airlines upload with a specific music in background to accompany images. Air France joins its upgrade challenge video with a stressful music to amplify the ambience “trading room”. In KLM video, it was enjoy and happy music to join the “surprise” and #happytohelp events. Many airlines experiential marketing actions are watched in live by crowd. Consequently, witnesses hear the event. The touch is equally a mobilized sense in almost all the experiential marketing actions. This sense is principally significant in the use of devices (phones and computer) for KLM and the social media utilization, and with the high Five, for AirFrance and SAS with the upgrade challenge and Timekiller app. In the British Airways flight simulator, the touch is an essential sense. Moreover, all the experiences where the customers win goodies use the sense of touch because the customer has to keep it. The sense of smell and the taste are more unusual and are involved only when the experience offers foods, drinks, or special odor to completely immerse the customer in the experiential marketing action (Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson, 1996). It’s for instance the case in the Air France’s AF 351 flight, where the company offers French foods and drinks (macaron and champagne) to remember the country. In the easy Jet hidden tickets, the players is totally immersed in the city, thus, he feels all the elements in the city. Smell and taste can also be used when goodies are food (Air France with Chinese New Year or KLM and “surprise”/#happytohelp).

5.3.3. Feel

Concerning the feel, airlines gain the customers’ sympathy thanks to positive emotions. Thus, all the experiential events have the same characteristic: make customers happy. According with Lenderman and Sanchez in 2008, the positive emotion is a vital element of experience. KLM uses the surprise and helps customers making its customers enthusiastic. Moreover, consumers feel special (Yuan & Wu, 2007) in this experience that it’s influence the customers’ satisfaction, emotions and perceptions (Li, 2001). The music can improve the positive customers’ perceptions (Areni & Kim, 1993; Hui, Dube, & Chebat, 1997; Milliman, 1982) as in the Chinese New Year where the traditional music remember this famous event and create reassurance and well-being emotions to
the travellers. In the comfy Challenge, SAS plays a calm music in order to create a relaxing sensation. Moreover, the colour can improved the positive emotions according with Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty in 1983. Indeed, Air France in the AF 351 flight uses during the entire event the French flag three colours: Blue, white and red. Consequently, participants are totally driven in France and feel eagerness and enthusiastic to maybe win a flight to France. SAS uses light colours in its experience, this, supports the relaxing thematic of this experiential marketing action. In this way, sleepers and bystanders feel comfortable and casual when they experience the comfy challenge.

5.3.4. Think

According to Schmitt in 1999, the think recalls the customers’ imagination, thought and creativity. When airlines organized a competition, the customer wants be victorious. Thus, the customer thinking is concentrate to being smart and win the game (upgrade challenge, time-killer app, comfy challenge, “guess who?” , hidden tickets, high five, flight simulator). In all of these experiences, the customer doesn’t think about his behaviour but he wants to win, consequently behave with his emotions. According with Colin Shaw in 2007, a customer lives an experience when he behaves thanks to his emotions. Therefore, customers are thinkers (Venkatraman and MacInnis, 1985) in all the experiential marketing actions. When customers tweet with the #happytohelp, they hope to be helped by KLM. When they look the magic flying billboard, they think about the plane arriving or departure. Indeed, it’s important to marketers to understand how customers think in order to respond correctly (De Chernatony, 1993; Keller, 1993).

5.3.5. Act

In accordance with Pine and Guilmore in 1998, active participation during an event is required to be called emotional experiential event. For this, British airways experiential event’s asked customers active participation in the flight simulator (the customer has to drive a plane) or in the virtual reality (consumers may visit virtual streets). The customer has consequently, a special behaviour, and, according with Schmitt in 1999, it’s the customer’s actions in the experience who allows this behaviour. Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006 said that people wants experience and, thus, action.
Undeniably, airlines have to multiply experiential experiences where customers can be active. Easy Jet permit travellers to play with the “Guess who?” and hidden tickets. Indeed, person feels active and stimulates during the situation (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982) and act to win during all the competition. According to Pine and Gilmore in 1998, the success of experience get consumers involved in the activities rather than simply entertain them. So, each experiential marketing actions studied in this thesis seems answer to this “Act” criteria. Zaichkowsky, 1985 and Drengner, 2003 added that the more involved participation in events create higher emotions for the customer (Drengner, 2003). For instance the high five experience creates more commitment with the act to put your hand in the screen in the same time that another people, that the British Airways Magic Flying where the customer has just to looking the billboard.

5.3.6. Relate

Vila-López and Rodríguez-Molina in 2013 tell that emotional experience is also interactive participation from the public. Effectively, the crowd contribute to the experiential experience. In the Air France mystery luggage, 200 people are waiting in the waiting line hoping win a flight. Progressively, the event becomes a friendly moment where winners share with the crowd and crowd congratulates winners. According to Schmitt in 1999, the customers share its experience, meet people and identify himself in a group. In KLM, the social media use allows customers to share online the hastag #happytohelp, and more, to create a community. Thanks to the Chinese New Year, Air France allows passengers to share an experience in the plane and they can enjoy this moment together.

5.4. Loyalty

All level of experience involves customers in relationship with the brand. As a result, the higher is the experience, the higher is the loyalty (Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi, 2006). Thereby, airlines created an emotional attachment with customers through the participation, the immersion and generally, the experience. For instance, KLM developed a strong link with its customers through social networks. Air France used the nostalgia and memories to gain and retain Chinese users and the stress to
immerse people in a business atmosphere. Moreover, goodies as free tickets were a mean to promote the airline and gain consumer differently because people will try the real service after the experience atmosphere. Definitely, people will remember these experience and the emotions felt during unique moments. KLM, Air France, SAS, Easy Jet and British Airways conveyed participants in a “totally, positive, engaging, enduring and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience” (Mascarenhas, Kesavan and Bernacchi, p.399, 2006) and undeniably customers are more likely to repeat their purchase in these companies because experience in marketing help to retain customer lastingly (Macmillan and McGrath, 1997; Carbone, 1998; Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Rowley, 1999; Wyner, 2000; Calhoun, 2001; Arussy, 2002; Berry et al., 2002; Gilmore and Pine, 2002; Lamperes, 2002).
6. Conclusion

6.1. Study purpose

Tourism, and consequently, airlines industry currently face rapid changes. Nowadays, customers have to recognize them in a brand and not only choose a flight. Customers give also more importance to affective purchase and want multisensory experience, stimulations and felt emotions during the purchase. Thus, airlines use the experiential marketing as new strategic orientation because this sector has a real potential for its application. The experiential marketing is directly related to emotions, feelings, and senses. Effectively, experiential marketing is needed to meet consumers’ new expectations. This thesis adds new contributions about experiential marketing in tourism because it focuses on airlines industry. In this way, the research understands how KLM, Air France, SAS, Easy Jet and British Airways use different experiential marketing actions to acquire and keep customers. In order to explore and describe the airlines experiential marketing, the multiple case studies and 5 airlines was selected. An assessment of several experiential marketing actions done by these airlines was established with the Schmitt model.

6.2. Outcomes of the analysis

In order to answer our research question about the airlines use of experiential marketing to gain and retain customers, this research highlights usage of senses and the feel, think, act and relate rallying. The aim of airlines is to arouse positive emotions to consumers (participants and bystanders). The customer prefers take advantage of experience that he has never had, instead of purchasing new product without experience. In order to trigger enjoy and enthusiasm emotions, brands use the surprise, the help, the competition, the aesthetic or remind to childhood. Because of feel depending on senses, the brand should not to neglect that all of them are essential. The sight and hearing are more requests. Then, touch, sense of smell and taste are also employing to even more immerse the customer in the brand experience. But, customers’ feedbacks are personal and various. Thus, subjective reactions are difficult to comprehend and some senses can provoke various feel depending on the person. Airlines want to carry the customer to think and
act through the experience. A successful experiential marketing occurs when the customer behaves thanks to his emotions. So, airlines’ marketers create competition, challenge, and game to remind customers. The interaction with public and internet users is necessary used in each experiential marketing event by airlines to promote the event and permeated to the customer share its experience, meet people and identify him in a group. If customers experience unique and perfectly experiential event, they will remember the service, and consequently the brand in the long-term as remarkable. In this way, the brand gain or retain customers. Goodies in an experiential marketing event can be added value to allow the customer remind this experience, especially if the goodies are an experience (flight or upgrade).

Finally, as mentioned all long of this paper, customers want to go further with the brand to be convinced and stay loyal, especially in touristic and service industries. Experience is one of answers possible and airlines marketers meet these new requirements with experiential marketing. Confucius can summarizes the main idea of this thesis: “I Heard and I forget, I See and I Remember, I Live an Experience and I understand”

6.3. Limitations

All airlines evoked in this paper are European and concern the people transportation. The research data is limited to existing documents and Internet tools. Indeed, the authors would have deal with the case studies in depth with interviews of several airlines but it was not possible because of the lack of time, relationships and therefore answers in experiential marketing.

6.4. Further studies

This paper focuses on mean implemented by airlines to gain and retain customers with a new trend: experiential marketing. Therefore, case studies and the theoretical influence on customer’s perception are taking into account but measures of the success of these experiential actions are mainly deduction based on precedent researches. Companies’
point of view and a deeper analysis of impact and influence on customers’ behaviour and loyalty would complete this research. This can take the shape of a quantitative method with a survey and be on the case studied. As previously mentioned, some information could accurate analyse of experiential marketing actions in airlines like expenses and return of investment.

Moreover, this study is concentrated on European airlines and especially five. The same study can be developed all around the world or in another area and bring out cultural differences.
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