**Open Questions**

**8 The Translation of Strategy into Concept**

**Question 1**

Read the case description below and work out the assignment.

**Pilot event for branch managers of D-Reizen**

D-Reizen has taken two initiatives: Vakantieveilingen (travel auctions) since June and a pilot project involving holiday advice via social media since September. D-Reizen wants to focus on short city trips with a high degree of cultural travel experience. In this respect, the expensive cities such as London, Paris, Rome and Berlin are still offered, but the main aim is to tempt customers to discover new ‘treasures of Europe’: cities such as Metz, Lille, Dresden, Warsaw, Vilnius, Lisbon, Valencia, and so on. In these cities, high discounts can still be negotiated and thus meet the customer’s needs in terms of price.

D-Reizen has encountered two problems in this process. In the first place, these cities are perceived by customers as less strong brands, whereas they have actually evolved into places where living is good and where there’s a lot to see and do. Secondly, seniors – the target group – may have time and money as well as an interest in culture, but they are not fervent users of new media.

During the Vakantiebeurs (Holiday Fair), all this was clearly communicated to consumers, but the selling of the ‘new treasures of Europe’ starts with the branch managers’ motivation. That is why D-Reizen organized a business-to-employee event at the beginning of December 2011 as a pilot event for about sixty branch managers from the regions of Drechtsteden, Rotterdam and The Hague. They were aged between 25 and 35 and most of them were women. If the concept succeeded, it would be possible for the event to be organized for the other regions before the Vakantiebeurs in January. Event agencies were asked to pitch a proposal for this region. The meeting is planned on a Monday afternoon from 16.30 to 20.30 hrs in an inspiring, more or less centrally located venue in this region.

*Programme*

Walk in starting at 16.00 hrs. At 17.00 hrs, after a word of welcome by general director Steven van Nieuwenhuijzen, the managers were presented with a surprising, varied and informative programme, lasting two hours at the most and aimed at promoting social media, the auctions and the ‘treasures of Europe’. The intention was for the programme to not be too heavy and that it also contained elements of entertainment. The event could be a plenary one, but there could also be breakout sessions.

At 19.00 hrs a two-course dinner buffet (main course and dessert) was opened, related to the theme of ‘treasures’, followed by coffee and tea. The end of the event was scheduled at 20.30 hrs. Informal placement during buffet, because networking was also important. Quiet (live) background music and possibly some low profile entertainment.

*Budget indication*

None.

*Objective*

Enthusing managers for these three new product items by letting them experience as much as possible.

Source: Grunewald, 2017, internal publication, adapted by the authors

Write a proposal for a concept for this event by means of which the objective mentioned can be achieved. Experience elements are: infotainment, food, drinks and location. Additional instructions:

* business debriefing (expressing whether you have understood);
* description of the target group (trends, taste, lifestyle, etc.) and objective;
* the core values you have formulated and the motivation for them;
* your vision based on those core values;
* an appealing title and/or one-liner (e.g. for the invitation);
* brief description including the application of storytelling of the concept (the actual sales story with programme components);
* general time schedule / storyboard.

Leave out the introduction of your agency and give a very brief description of the location and the catering facilities: it is mainly about the translation of strategy to concept (strategic approach).

**Question 2**

Read the case description ‘The You & KLM-event for travel agents’ and answer the questions.

**THE ‘YOU & KLM’ EVENT FOR TRAVEL AGENTS**

Under the umbrella ‘You & KLM’ KLM has introduced useful services to facilitate the work done by travel agents. At the same time, KLM will be having talks with travel agents. To this purpose, a website has been designed, Bluelab Agent. Here, travel agents can bring in their thoughts and think along about KLM services. On the new website klaf.biz all information from KLM/Air France for travel agents can be found and services provided by the Service Desk (helpdesk for travel agents) has been improved.

The essence of ‘You & KLM’ is teamwork. KLM lays emphasis on cooperation: services can only be improved by closely listening to one another. KLM wishes to collaborate more closely to optimize its services for agents, earn their appreciation and improve mutual sales results. It is about strengthening each other’s qualities, where the agent comes first, as it appears from the name of this initiative.

KLM’s objectives can be worked out as follows:

• Improving KLM’s services for travel agents and realising more sales via travel agencies;

• In the field of knowledge: travel agents are kept up to date on (the contents of) ‘You & KLM’ and know its objective;

• Travel agents judge ‘You and KLM’ positively and are enthusiastic about joining its activities and making an effort to collaborate more closely;

• Travel agents feel appreciated by KLM and are positive about the improvements that KLM is implementing and are extra motivated to collaborate with them.

**The ’You & KLM’ event**

An event for the entire target group of 8,500 travel agents had to add an extra dimension to this initiative. The event had to be a direct and cordial gesture towards travel agents. The event had to show KLM’s face-to-face appreciation for the collaboration and relationship with all employees of travel agencies. It was meant to thank and reward them and had to strengthen their relationship with travel agents.

The Live House was hired as the agency designing this event and helping to realise it. They translated the strategy into the concept and actual realisation of a party. To this end, the internet was used in an innovative fashion.

**Target group**

The target group of the event consisted of employees of all IATA and non-IATA travel agencies in the Netherlands, of whom approx. 75% is female; their average age was between 25 and 35. Of KLM itself, the parties involved were also identified ranging from management to account managers, employees of the Service Desk and Consumer Relations. A limit was set to the max. number of KLM employees that were allowed to represent their company at the event. Guests were invited without their partners; the max. number of participants was 2,000.

**Concept**

Central to the basis of the creative design was ‘You’ of ‘You & KLM’. The starting point was the principle of applying ‘You’ to the entire party. Travel agents themselves, for example were offered the opportunity to give substance to certain elements of the party via www.klmbluelabagent.nl. The party also had to revolve around listening; not just before, but also during and after the party. By including elements to pamper its guests, KLM was able to show its appreciation. Personal attention was paid by KLM staff members themselves including the management.

**Communication**

Eventually, all information around the party was communicated via the ‘You & KLM’ portal. The invitation campaign was run through this site. Agents could pass on their choice of entertainment and catering in advance. Via a digital campaign, a real face-to-face moment was created to have KLM express its gratitude towards desk staff and to personally enforce KLM’s gesture. After the event, reports by means of reactions in the form of visuals and text were published via the site.Extra attention was drawn through advertisements and editorial texts in trade journals Reisrevue and Reisbureau Actueel. Also, banners were shown and flyers were made.

**Programme**

Visitors were pouring in at 19.00 hours for a ‘live’ introduction to “You & KLM’. Everyone was personally welcomed by KLM hostesses. They checked admission tickets that were lottery tickets at the same time which prizes could be won with. There was a ‘You & KLM’ trend reporter who was asking questions to visitors about their expectations. An overwhelmingly big number of desk staff had a very original way of obeying the ‘touch of blue’ dress code. Photographers framed all the creations.

When entering the ‘You & KLM Blue Box’ visitors entered the world of ‘You & KLM’. On the screen the last seconds were counting down to the opening. It ran parallel to the clock counting down on the website.

At 8 p.m. sharp, the trend reporter had a ‘live’ talk with Welmer Blom, Sales & Services KLM Netherlands manager, who was on a KLM plane heading for the ‘You & KLM’ event. All elements of the ‘You & KLM’ programme from the employees’ were highlighted from the employees’ point of view aided by ‘pilot’ Bram Gräber, KLM Netherlands managing director and co-pilot’ Roel van Velzen. Roel appeared on stage soon after his band had played the first tones. This marked the start of the party.

Personal attention was central at the ‘You & KLM Foyer’. KLM contact persons of travel agents and the entire management team were talking with visitors very easily. Stylists Maik de Boer and Marielle Bastiaansen were doing ‘total hair and face make-overs’, so that everyone’s personality was expressed even more. A large team of cosmeticians saw to a party look.

Kluun was reading out his new book while guests were lying relaxed holding colourful cocktails in Fatboy bean bags. Chair masseurs were giving brief personal relaxation treatments. Throughout the evening, waiters (mainly male, attractive, young and attentive) were serving delicious healthy snacks and refreshments, which were presented attractively.

During the evening, the winners of the ‘You & KLM VIP Arrangement’ were offered ample opportunity (via the website) to talk to the artists in a luxurious environment and were given preferential ‘make-over’ treatments. Furthermore, two KLM tickets Europe and two KLM tickets worldwide were raffled off on stage. At the request of many guests, DJ Erick E showed a spectacular ‘You % KLM’ finale. The ‘You & KLM’ VJ videos and the taped talks between trend reporter and guests emphasised: KLM listens to us!

Upon departing, everyone was given a well-filled and valuable goodie bag containing, among other things, the latest VanVelzen CD.

**Venue**

The Heineken Music Hall was chosen as the venue for the party. It is the only location in the Netherlands that is specially designed for amplified pop music and has been nominated several times for the much-wanted Pollstar Award as the best international concert hall. Nowhere else in the world does sound sound so good as in the Black Box (big concert hall) of the Heineken Music Hall according to connoisseurs.

In line with the starting points, the big party hall was divided into several smaller halls, where KLM was given plenty of opportunity to spoil, talk to and thank everyone personally. The look & feel was kept powerfully simple: the striking brand mark ‘You & KLM’ was central as well as the familiar KLM blue. That’s where visitors were glowing with joy.

**Accountability**

The aim was to reach and touch 1,500 people with the party; eventually, over 2,000 people applied, of whom 1,800 visited the party. Over a quarter judged it very favourable. The reputation (…..) of the ‘You & KLM’ programme was 92% after the party. Almost 62% said that it was about improved service. A great majority found ‘You & KLM’ very useful for the travel agency and themselves. Two-thirds of visitors assessed ‘You & KLM’ good and believe that KLM should continue this programme.

aDoes ‘Jij & KLM’ involve a basic, memorable or transformational experience? Substantiate your answer.

b There are eight factors that are related to the specific event visitor experience: knowledge, expectations, motives, mood, involvement, social context, personality and values. For each of these factors, describe how they influence the visitor experience of ‘Jij & KLM’.