

Guide to increasing exhibition ROI - Case Electronic Arts and Digiexpo

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<p>The purpose of this thesis was to create a guide for the commissioning company, Electronic Arts, on how to increase the return on investment for the game company's participation at the Digiexpo exhibition. This was done by analysing Electronic Arts' 2013 and 2014 Digiexpo participations. Based on the results, the aim was to come up with suggestions for improving future participations.</p> <p>The framework is based on The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry's publication: The role of Exhibitions in the Marketing Mix. The main focus was in the analysis of exhibitions and ROI with an addition of customer relationship marketing.</p> <p>The research method used was qualitative. Included in the research was data from the exhibition organizer, observations from the previous two years participations and financial data. The guide for increasing exhibition ROI was created based on the analysis of this data.</p> <p>The results of the analysis were that more data collection methods should be implemented to better evaluate the success of the exhibition. The data currently available cannot produce accurate results and cannot be used effectively. Furthermore a more active presence during the exhibition is recommended for increased customer satisfaction.</p> <p>As a conclusion it can be said that exhibition participation for companies in the gaming industry is a very good opportunity to leverage the chance to promote upcoming or recently released game titles in a semi-controlled environment at a relatively low cost. For the highest possible gains, companies must, however, plan their data collection methods in order to achieve the best possible return on investment.</p>	
Keywords Events, Digiexpo, gaming industry, promotion, ROI	

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1 Introduction

Exhibitions and trade fairs are a key part of the communication mix in today's business environment. They are also an excellent promotional tool for companies working in the gaming industry, as it allows them to showcase their recently released and upcoming products and services, promote their brand and improve their customer relationships. There are numerous large and small exhibitions held throughout the year, specifically for the gaming industry, and companies leverage these events to announce their upcoming products and services.

While most of the companies in the industry focus their attention on the major exhibitions like E3 and Gamescom, they also typically participate in smaller, regional exhibitions, as well.

This thesis is a product based thesis created for the commissioning company Electronic Arts, in order to create a guide to increase EA's Digiexpo exhibition participation return on investment.

1.1 Thesis topic, project objective and project tasks

The project objective of this thesis, as shown in figure 1, is to create a guide how to improve Electronic Arts' Digiexpo participation for the purposes of increasing the exhibition return on investment. The project tasks are as follows:

1. Analyse Digiexpo consumer electronics exhibition figures
2. Analyse Electronic Arts participation in the exhibition in 2013 and 2014
3. Create a plan how to increase ROI of participating in Digiexpo

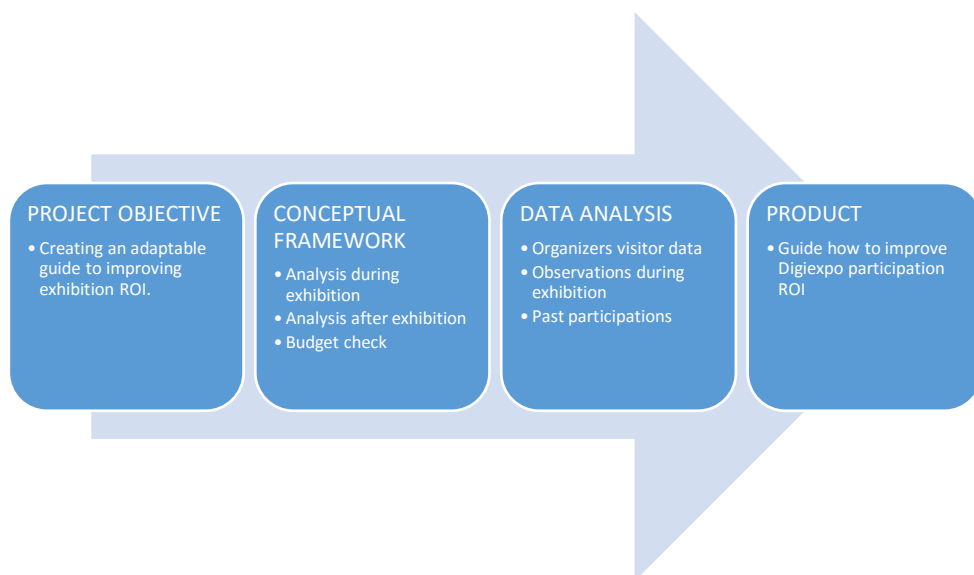


Figure 1. Thesis framework

Key concepts

According to Dr. Hamso of the Event ROI institute, events are held in order to create value to stakeholders by influencing the behaviour of the participants. Events do not have a value without specifying the stakeholder. As such, the return on investment discussed in this thesis is related to the value Electronic Arts as a company, gets from participating in the Digiexpo exhibition.

Exhibition participation is both a marketing and a sales investment, and a company should expect to get a return on investment from the participation. The main issues arise from the fact, that measuring exhibition participation ROI is not easy, unless measurement processes are set in place. For companies looking to gather leads and turns those leads into sales the measurements are quantifiable, but for companies looking to promote products or services sold outside of the exhibition, measuring the value of participation becomes much more difficult. (Davis. 2011)

Definition of customer relationship management by Shaw and Reed (Measuring and Valuing customer relationships. 1999, 4) defines it as follows: "Customer relationship management is an interactive process for achieving the optimum balance between corporate investments and the satisfaction of customer needs to generate maximum profit."

1.2 Project scope

The scope of this project as shown in figure 2, is in evaluating the efficiency of investing money into an exhibition and the outcomes from that participation, as well as what improvements could be made to increase that efficiency.

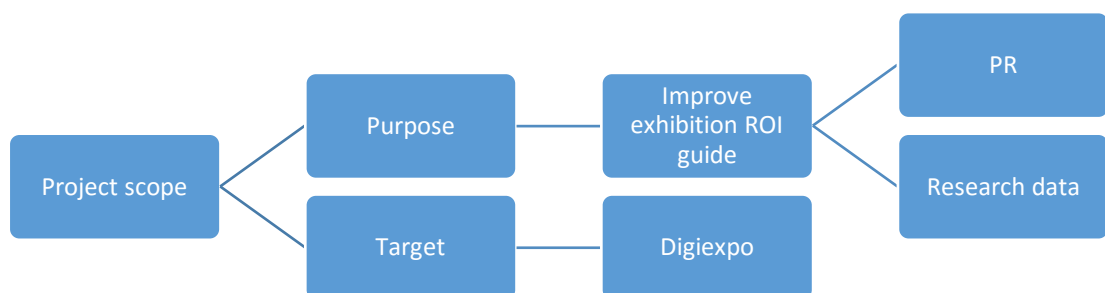


Figure 2. Project scope

1.3 International aspect

Electronic Arts is a global interactive entertainment software company with offices around the world. The Nordic main offices are located in Stockholm from where both the Swedish and the Finnish market are being organized with the assistance of a Finnish sub-contractor assisting with local operations. The topic of the thesis focuses on the company's participation in the Finnish Digiexpo exhibition.

1.4 Commissioning organization: Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts, Inc. is a global interactive entertainment software company. It was founded on May 28, 1982 by Trip Hawkins. Electronic Arts, Inc. develops, publishes and distributes interactive software worldwide for video game systems, personal computers, wireless devices and internet. The company is organized into six operating labels: EA Games, EA SPORTS, Bioware, Maxis, PopCap and Social/Mobile Studios. EA is responsible for game titles such as: Dragon Age, The Sims, Battlefield, Dead Space, Medal of Honor, Need for Speed, FIFA, NHL Hockey and Madden NFL. (EA.com)

EA currently holds the position as the second-largest video game publisher in the world behind Activision-Blizzard, and it is the only one to be a major publisher in each of the gaming platforms. The company recently announced its fiscal year 2015 results, which exceeded both revenue and profits from last year, with a GAAP net revenue of \$4.5 billion. This is a sharp rise from the company's revenues from previous years (\$3.8 billion in 2013 and \$3.58 billion in 2014) (endgadget.com)

1.5 Gaming industry

Over the past years the gaming industry has become one of the largest market segments in the entertainment industry, and the latest forecast by DFC Intelligence estimates it to pass \$100 billion worldwide by 2019. (Gamesindustry.biz. 2014)

Table 1. Worldwide game software market forecast by DFC Intelligence (Gamesindustry.biz 2014)

Total Worldwide Game Software Market by Segment: 2009-2019								
Year	Console SW	Portable Soft	PC Soft	PC Online	Console Online	Mobile Phone/Tablet	Portable Game Online	Total Game Software Retail & Online
2009	\$19 458	\$7 055	\$2 719	\$11 757	\$1 825	\$447	\$351	\$43 613
2010	\$20 635	\$5 109	\$2 616	\$14 440	\$2 694	\$1 200	\$404	\$47 098
2011	\$18 982	\$4 830	\$2 300	\$17 449	\$3 506	\$3 055	\$434	\$50 555
2012	\$15 759	\$4 733	\$2 137	\$19 334	\$3 944	\$5 853	\$522	\$52 281
2013	\$13 565	\$4 140	\$1 833	\$22 618	\$4 649	\$9 927	\$695	\$57 427
2014	\$13 592	\$3 554	\$1 759	\$25 382	\$5 184	\$14 593	\$780	\$64 846
2015	\$15 885	\$3 073	\$1 662	\$27 607	\$7 945	\$18 909	\$832	\$75 913
2016	\$16 940	\$2 683	\$1 551	\$29 685	\$10 135	\$22 561	\$851	\$84 406
2017	\$18 508	\$2 425	\$1 434	\$31 326	\$46 722	\$26 235	\$824	\$93 023
2018	\$16 468	\$2 088	\$1 370	\$32 761	\$14 077	\$30 334	\$770	\$97 869
2019	\$13 962	\$1 681	\$921	\$35 454	\$15 041	\$35 006	\$682	\$102 748

DFC Intelligence forecasts in millions of dollars

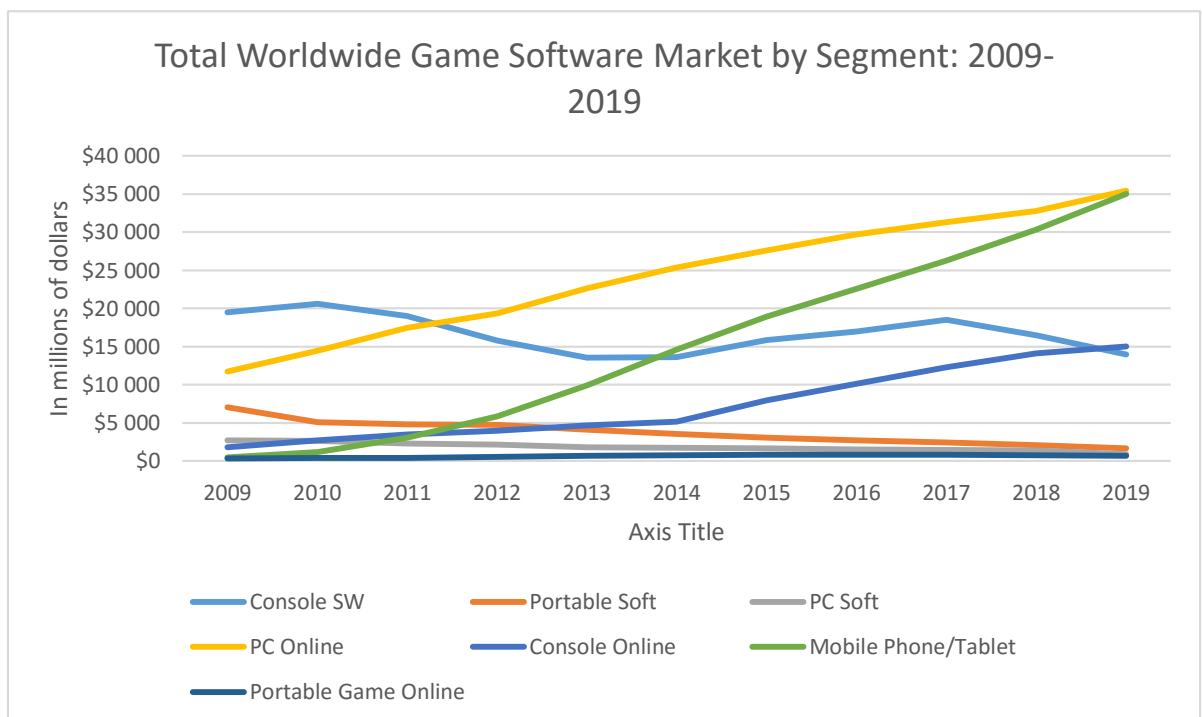


Figure 3. Worldwide game software market forecast by DFC Intelligence (Gamesindustry.biz 2014)

Based on the DFC Intelligence forecast shown in Table 1 and the Statista estimated CAGR show in Figure 4, there are clear trends towards great market growth and the push towards digitalization in the industry. This poses a challenge for the marketing side, as the need for physical aspects of marketing are becoming less effective.

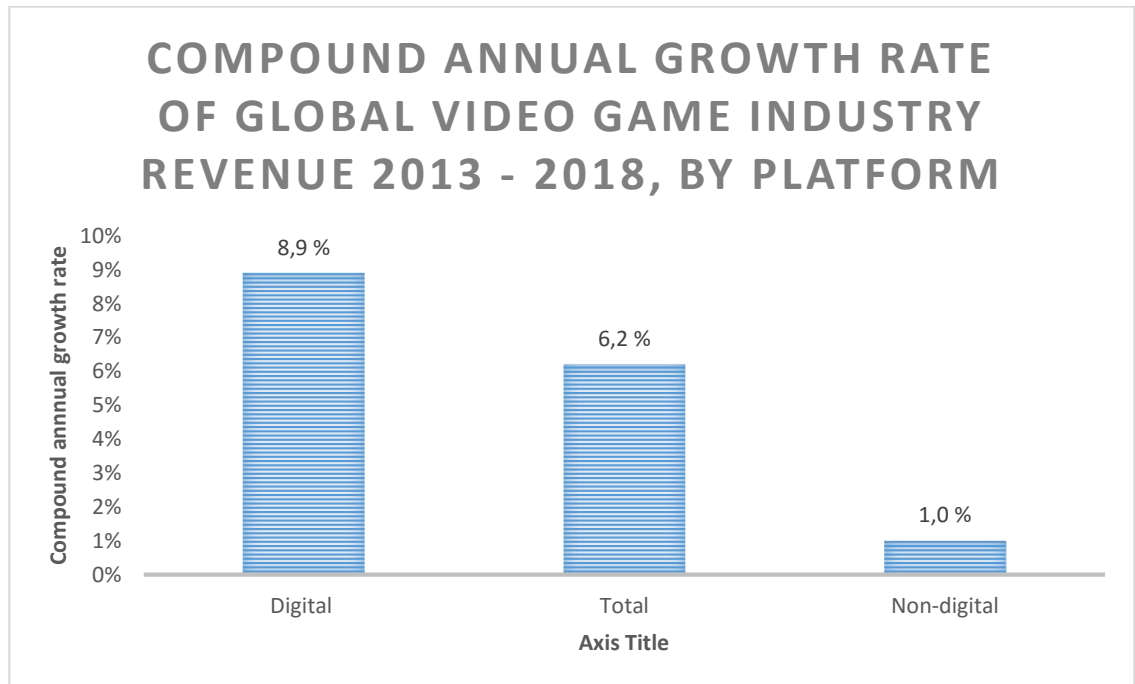


Figure 4. Compound annual growth rate of global video game industry 2013 – 2018 (Statista 2015)

In Figures 3 and 5 we can see the industry segmentation and their respected CAGR numbers which are forecasting increase in all but the handheld games sector, which matches the DFC Intelligence forecast show in Table 1. This can be explained by the large increase in mobile phone and tablet games market.

GLOBAL GAMES MARKET 2013 - 2017 REVENUES PER YEAR AND MARKET SEGMENT

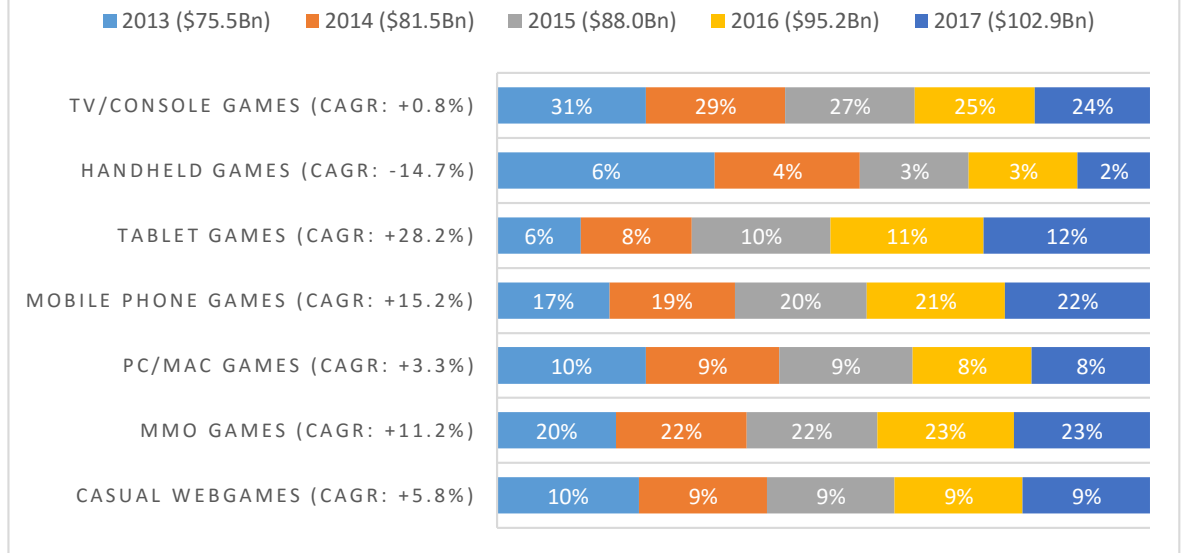


Figure 5. Global Games Market 2013 – 2017 (Statista 2015)

In 1993 a game called Doom was released, and with production costs estimated at \$200,000 it was one of the most expensive titles of its time. As the markets and technology developed, the industry started to mimic the Hollywood way of banking on blockbuster games (Triple-A titles) by using massive budgets in hopes of big sales. In 2008 a game titled Grand Theft Auto 4 was released with production costs reaching up to \$100,000,000.

To ensure their big productions generate expected revenues, game publishers use large promotion budgets to create elaborate and engaging marketing campaigns, to ensure the game sales meet the expectations. A recent Triple-A title Destiny by Bungie reported estimated production costs of \$140 million, with the publisher marketing spending raising the total budget to \$500 million.

Nordic market

Nordic market, and especially the Finnish gaming software market, is relatively small as show in Table 2 and 3 below. When comparing the 2013 total retail figures of 64 864 134€ (~\$86 628 507) vs the global \$57.427 billion it is evident that the Finnish retail figures represent only fraction of the global market. One thing to note however is, that the Finnish retail figures only account for the physical retail sales, and not the digital sales, which have seen a tremendous growth.

Table 2. Finnish retail sales 2013 (ANGI)

Retail sales in Finland 2013					
Platform	Volume 2013	Change in % vs 2012	Value € 2013	Changein % vs 2012	Average price €
Total	1 829 174	-16,94 %	64 864 134	-15,44 %	31,56 €

Table 3. Nordic key figures 2013 (ANGI)

		Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Finland
Retail sales divided by:	Volume (%)	35,59	23,51	21,17	19,73
	Value (%)	35,5	25,03	21,09	18,38
Population		9 555 893	5 051 275	5 602 628	5 426 674
GDP Per Capita, Euro/PPP		119	181	116	106
Economic Growth (%)		0,8	3,1	-0,5	-0,2
Inflation rate (%)		0,9	0,4	2,4	3,2
Unemployment rate (%)		8	3,2	7,5	7,7
Currency		1 SEK = 0,112 €	1 NOK = 0,121 €	1 DKK = 0,134€	Euro
V.A.T		25 %	25 %	25 %	24 %

Source: Numbers taken from the Nordic Council. Currency converted with XE Universal Currency Converter 28/2 2013

2 Designing conceptual framework

According to UFI the success of an exhibition is related to its ROI, and as such it is crucial to analyse each participation to find out whether it was a “success” or not. To do this, companies must calculate and weight the benefits gained against the costs of participation (money, man-hours, and other costs). Figure 6a shows the complete version of the conceptualization framework required to do a full evaluation of an exhibition participation, but due to the lack of available data that is required, this thesis will focus on a preliminary evaluation using the data currently available.

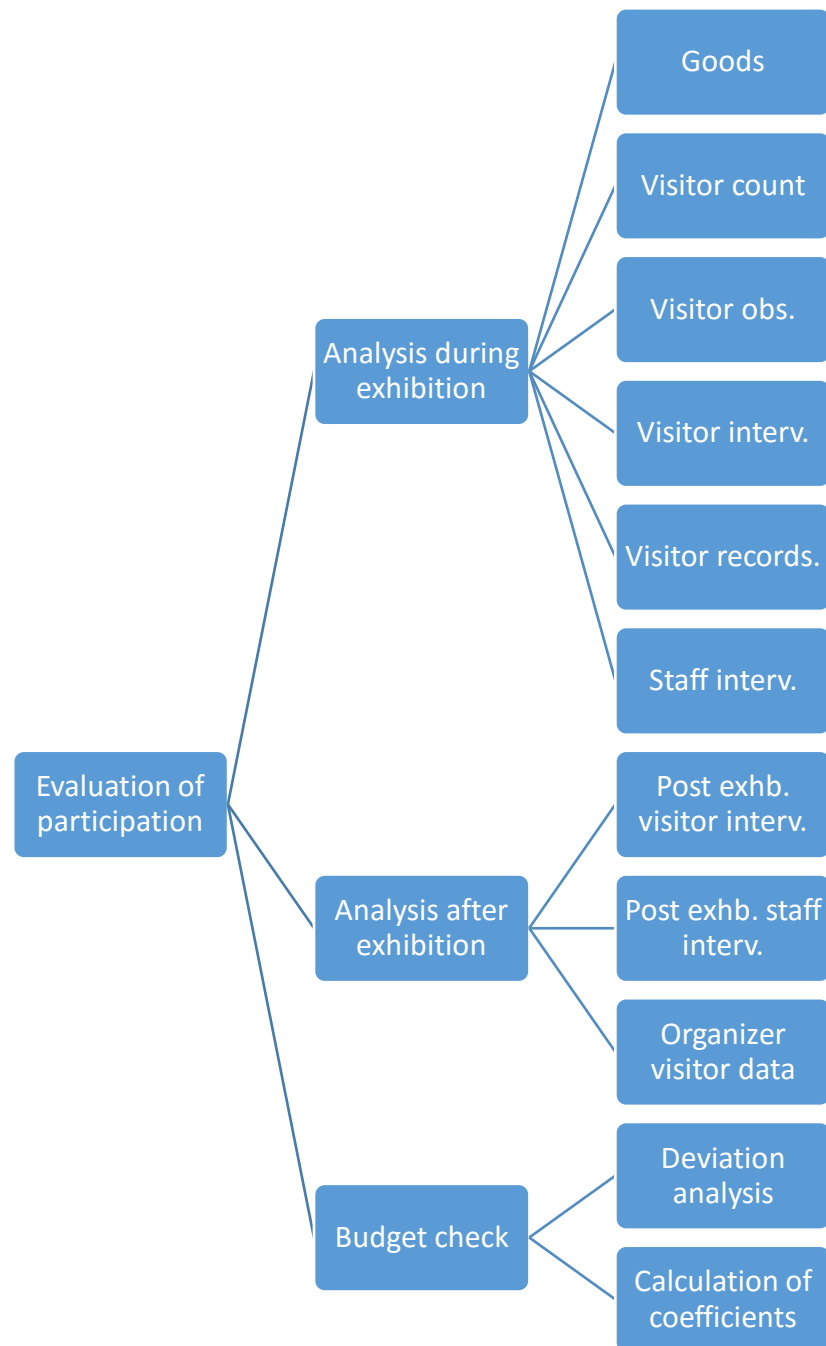


Figure 6a. Conceptualization framework (UFI)

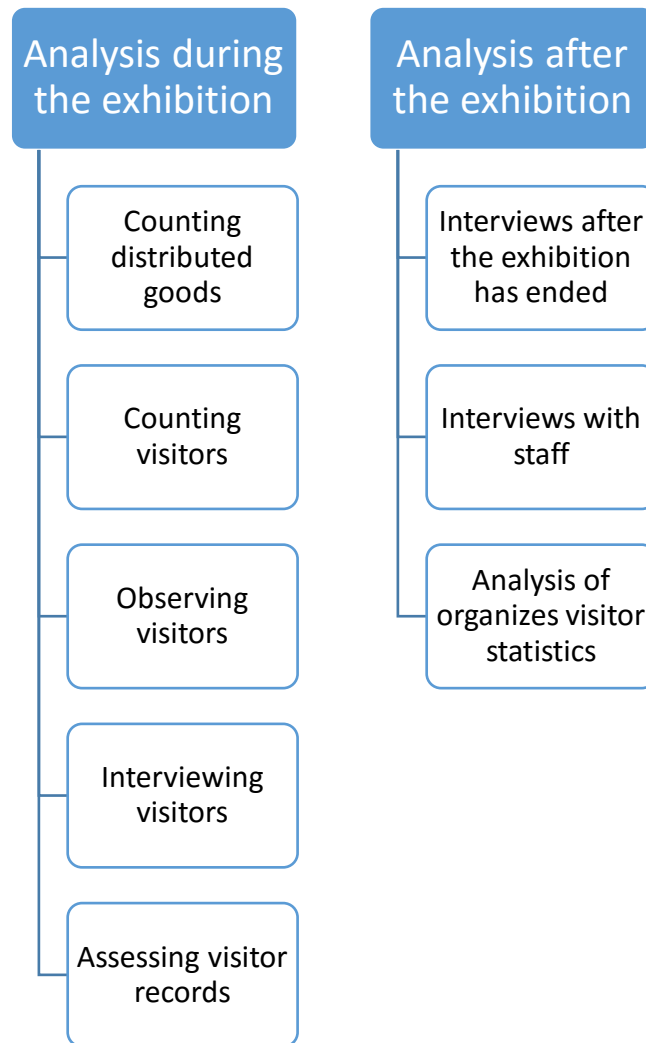


Figure 6b. Conceptualization framework (UFI)

Exhibitions

There are various types of exhibitions each with their own purpose and target audiences. It is vital to choose the correct type of exhibition or fair to participate in, in order to reach your target audience.

Types of fairs & exhibitions

As shown in Figure 7, there are many different types of Fairs, Expositions and Exhibitions each created to serve a different type of business or consumer interaction. Digiexpo can be categorized as a consumer show, but it also holds some aspects of a mixed show due to the special nature of being held along with multiple other exhibitions at the same time.

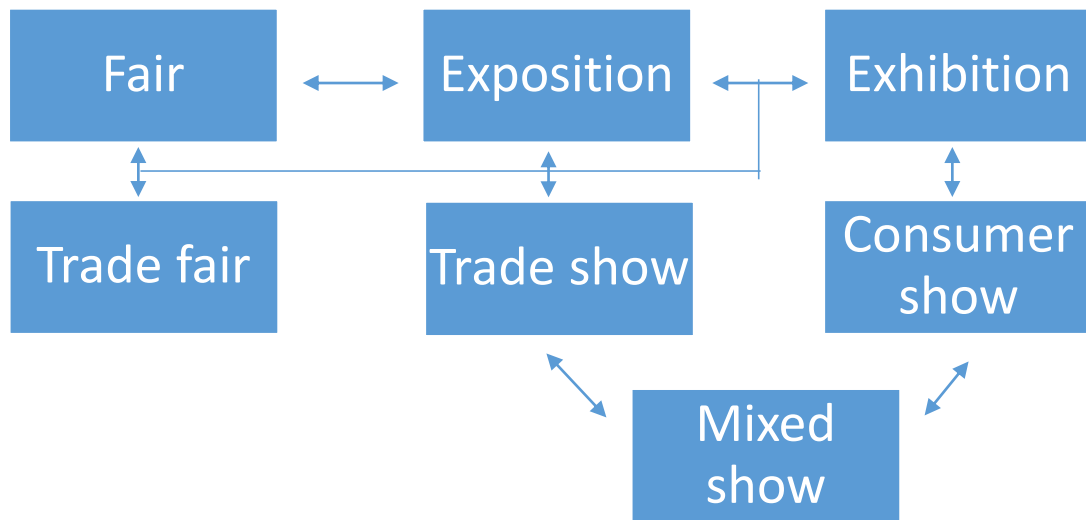


Figure 7. Types of Exhibitions (UFI)

Fairs

This is the oldest type of fair and refers to a periodic gathering for sale of goods, often with shows or entertainment, at a place and time fixed by custom, is taken. (Morrow 2002, 9).

Expositions & exhibitions

These are typically a combination of display both goods and services and differ from fairs in a number of ways (Morrow 2002, 10):

- Can happen only once
 - Some exhibitions happen only once, but can last for a very long period of time ranging from months to years.
- Fixed location
 - Exhibitions are usually run in purposefully created buildings
- Organized
 - Compared to fairs, exhibitions are highly organized events.
- Used to promote future sales
 - While some sales of goods can happen during exhibition, the main focus is in the promotion of goods and services to stimulate future sales.

Trade fairs

Trade Fairs are the main target of exporters and are typically confined to a specific industry or segment. (Morrow 2002, 14).

Trade shows

Trade shows are used in B2B to showcase new products and services. They are typically open for companies and the press, but in recent years consumer goods related trade shows have been opened to the public. (Morrow 2002, 13).

Consumer shows

Definition of a consumer exhibition by The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry is as follows:

“Consumer shows are events that are open to the general public. Exhibitors are typically retail outlets, manufacturers or service organizations looking to bring their goods and services directly to the end user. A consumer show, or public show, is an event that serves specific industries or interests, held for a particular duration of time (1 to 10 days). They include several shows: e.g. home shows, car shows, sportsman shows, computer and technology shows, and many others. The primary purpose of a consumer (public) show is direct selling. Buyers (consumers) are brought together with sellers of goods and services. Consumers benefit from a diverse product mix, expert advice, education and entertainment. Sellers benefit by immediate consumer purchases, product and brand awareness, public relations, research and development, and product testing.” (The Role of Exhibitions in the Marketing Mix)

Digiexpo belongs mainly in the consumer show category, but due to the small number of annual exhibitions in the same area of business held in Finland, it also functions as a trade show for the companies.

Mixed shows

“Mixed shows are a combination of trade and public shows. Exhibition organizers tend to open their trade shows to trade and to public visitors” (UFI)

Benefits

Participating in an exhibition is in itself customer relationship marketing (CRM), and as such the main benefits of participation are the chances to meet a large number of potential customers at a relatively low cost and the free attention gained from the media. In addition to these, other benefits of exhibitions include (UFI):

- Product launches; the possibility to introduce new products to a large number of people in an area and in a way where they can observe the reactions and gather immediate feedback from the consumers.
- Increasing brand awareness
- Finding potential customers
- Promoting existing products
- Reinforcing existing customer relationships
- Gathering competitors' information
- General market research.

Disadvantages

Participating in an exhibition brings with it certain disadvantages that must be taken into account during the planning stages. These can be identified as follows (UFI):

- Fixed date and location: an individual participant cannot influence when or where the exhibition is being held and has to fit any internal timelines to match with the exhibition.
- Relatively high cost of participation.
- Depending on the size of the company or a group of companies, the exhibition and their importance to one another there may be a power disparity that allows one side to create pressure and gain advantages over others. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Goals

Unlike many other forms of events, exhibitions offer a captive audience who are visiting specifically for the purpose of finding out about products and services related to the exhibitions theme. This provides the perfect platform to raise company profile and increase brand awareness. Exhibitions allow the company to (UFI):

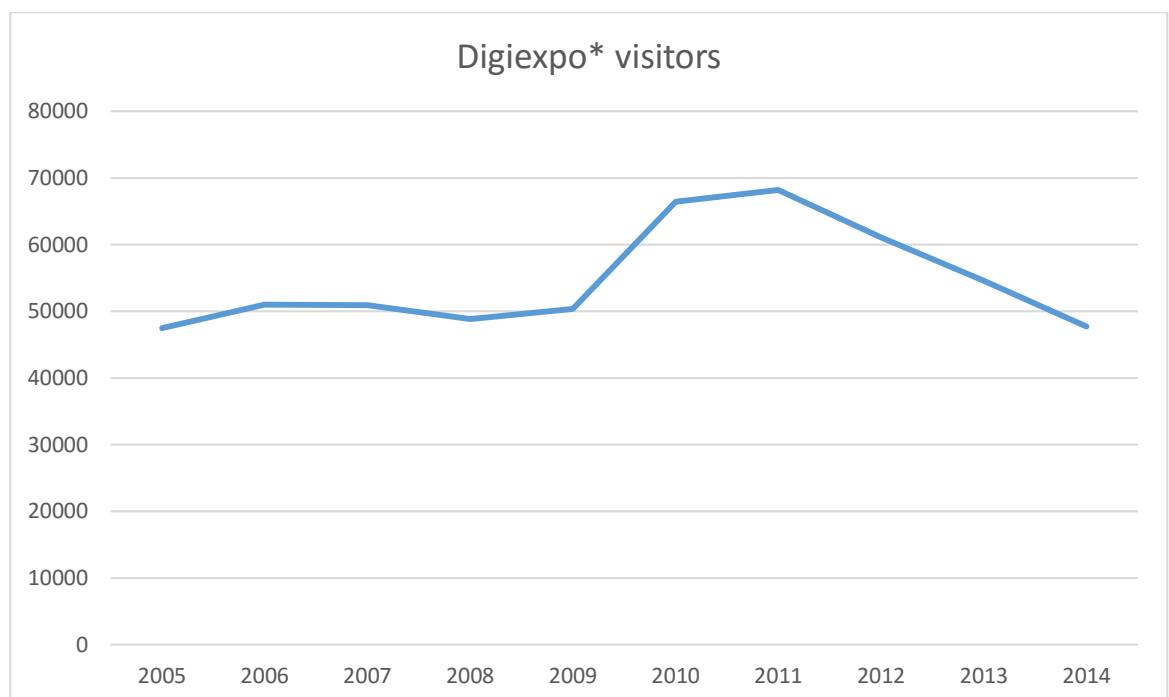
- Increase market penetration or enter new markets
- Reach the right target audience and generate genuine sales leads
- Launch new products/services and speed up their sales process
- Create memorable brand experiences and engage with customers
- Demonstrate products and services via live presentations
- Create publicity and media exposure
- Evaluate results and maximize your return on investment

3 Analysis of Digiexpo

This chapter analyses the 2013 and 2014 Digiexpo visitor data given by Messukeskus. Using this data we can look into the exhibitions development and see how the current situation fits the company's needs. Following this is an analyses of EA's participation of Digiexpo during years 2013 & 2014 based on the budget, booth location, content and other relevant factors.

Digiexpo is Finland's largest consumer electronic exhibition held at the Helsinki exhibition center every year alongside Skiexpo, BoardExpo, Ice Hockey & Floorball Expo and HifiExpo.

As shown in Figure 8 there has been a clear decline in the number of visitors from 2011 onwards. Due to the number of factors that could have affected this outcome there is no way to speculate whether this is a result of natural decline in interest to visit such exhibitions or if it has to do with the content of the exhibition itself.



*)Total number of visitors: DigExpo, HifiExpo, SkiExpo, BoardExpo, Lätkä&Säbä

Figure 8. Digiexpo visitors (Messukeskus)

3.1 Organizer visitor data

Based on the numbers presented in Table 3, Digiexpo visitor numbers have dropped over 14% between the years 2013 and 2014. Both the exhibitor area in sqm and the number of exhibitors has decreased, but the numbers shown in Table 3 are not entirely comparable due to 2014 data only showing Digiexpo specific numbers while the 2013 numbers include the entire exhibition (SkiExpo, BoardExpo, Ice Hockey & Floorball Expo and HifiExpo).

Table 3. Digiexpo visitor data (Messukeskus)

Visitor data		
	2013	2014
Visitors	55 920	47 999
Exhibition area (m²)	9 494	2 958*
Exhibitors	269	67*
Motive for visiting	Checking out new products	Overall experience
Main age groups	18-24 and -18	18-24 and -18
Visitor geographics	Mainly capital region	Mainly capital region

*Digiexpo only

3.2 Budget & costs

Table 4 shows EA's budgets for Digiexpo for years 2013 & 2014. After a major presence during 2013 partly due to Battlefield 4 launch EA took a more optimized approach which can be seen with costs down in all areas. This was done both by reducing the booth area and shipping booth items from another exhibition.

Table 4. Digiexpo 2013 & 2014 budgets (Actual numbers have been hidden)

Digiexpo 2013 & 2014 budget				
	Year	2013	2014	% -change
Participation				
	Rent	* €	* €	~-60 %
Staff				
	Salary	* €	* €	~-22 %
	Food	*	* €	NA
Stand				
	Planning	* €	* €	~-11 %
	Building	* €	* €	~-59 %
	Branding	* €	* €	~-39 %
Materials				
	Logistics	* €	* €	~-42 %
	Insurance	* €	* €	0
Services				
	Electricity	* €	* €	~-32 %
	Internet	* €	* €	0
	Cleaning	* €	* €	~-76 %
Other				
	Other	* €	* €	~-59 %
Total		* €	* €	~-45 %

3.3 Booth locations

In 2013 EA had a very large presence at the Digiexpo side, and even some presence in the Hockey expo, with a combination of 432m² booth & 226m² EA Sports tournament area in the Digiexpo side, and a 300m² NHL 14 & SM-liiga area in the Hockey expo hall. In 2014 the booth area was restricted into a single location at the Digiexpo side.

3.4 Content

The main portion of the booth area in both years was reserved for Battlefield 4 (2013) and Battlefield: Hardline (2014) both due to the number of PC's required, and the requirement of closed off space due to age ratings. NHL and FIFA –games had their own tournament area because of the annual tournament held during the exhibition, the use of demo pods for the games, and the number of gaming systems used.

Need for Speed Rivals designer Carola Beres and assistant designer Reza Hedayati visited Digiexpo 2013 to meet with the press and have a demo presentation on the main stage for the press and consumers

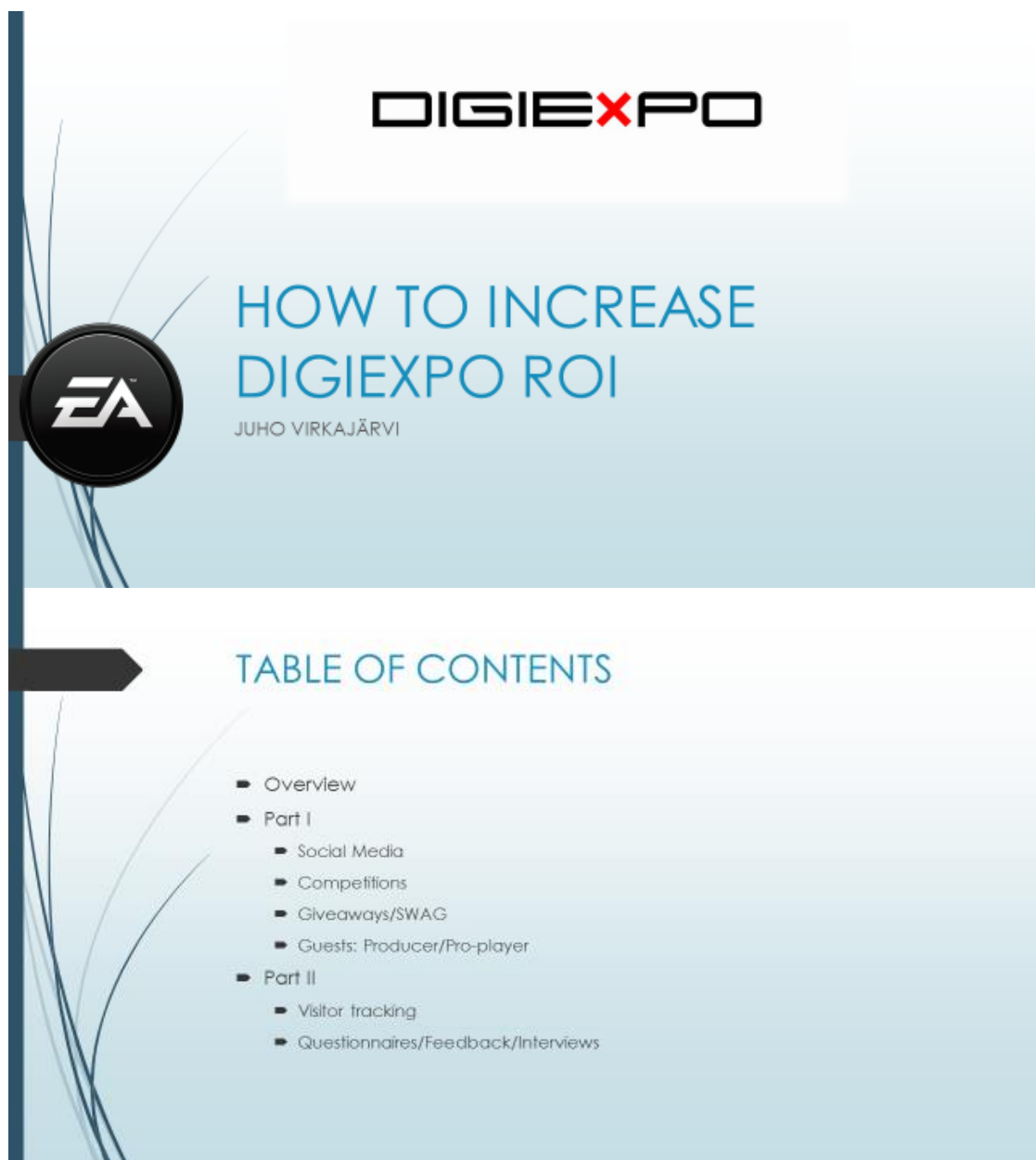
3.5 Results

Electronic Arts had two very different approaches to their participation of Digiexpo exhibition between years 2013 and 2014. The company had a very large presence with multiple areas in 2013 which was the result of a large promotional budget available due to important title launches that year. For 2014 EA took a more optimized approach, which resulted in a much better return on investment, due to maintaining a very visible presence while lowering the budget by nearly 45%.

4 Product

This guide was created with the intention of improving the return of investment for EA's participation at the annual Digiexpo exhibition. For this purpose, EA's participation at the exhibition was evaluated and additional research was conducted on the exhibition itself. The results of the evaluation indicated the need for more evaluation methods to be added. Based on the evaluation, different data collection methods have been added as suggestions.

The final product of this thesis is a Guide in how to improve EA's participation ROI for Digiexpo exhibition in the style of a PowerPoint presentation





Overview

- This guide is divided into two parts
- Part 1 includes suggestions of additional content added for the event before during and after
- Part 2 has the suggestions for added evaluation mechanics in order to be able to better calculate the ROI of participation.
- Some of the suggestions overlap both part I and II due to the benefit of combining them.

The guide is split into two parts to separate the two main thoughts processes behind it. Part I is the CRM side, with a call for a more interactive and experience driven exhibition participation, and Part II focuses on providing data to improve both the future exhibition experiences, and gain some market research data.

Overlapping some of the suggestions from both parts allows the improvement of visitor experience while also providing the company with important feedback.

Choosing to implement any suggestions from part I or part II will depend on what EA is looking to get from the exhibition participation.



Part I - Additional content

The 2013 and 2014 participations have been fairly passive with focus mainly on providing visitors with the chance to try out the games presented as much as possible.

- 2013
 - NHL 14 stage show (NHL 14 matches on stage)
 - Need for Speed Rivals producer visit (Interviews and stage presentation)
- 2014 exhibition
 - No additional content

Researching other gaming exhibitions and participating in the Gamex exhibition in Sweden has provided with a comparison to the 2013 and 2014 Digiexpo participations. Based on these findings there is a difference in the amount of “content” provided during Digiexpo outside of allowing visitors to try out the games.

While allowing as many visitors to try out as many upcoming or recently released games should remain a priority, it is also important to provide consumers with a memorable experience to both gather interest into visiting the exhibition/booth area, trying out the games and creating a positive association with the brand.

Most of the suggestions do require pre-planning and a budget, but combining them with data collection methods could justify the added expense.



Social Media

- Interaction with the local Facebook page and possibly Twitter
 - Before and during the exhibition, with competitions, giveaways and exhibition content.
 - Invitational messaging to get people to visit the exhibition, and especially the EA booth area.

The Finnish social media pages have been underutilized when it comes to Digiexpo promotion. Adding the exhibition as an event and notifying of its time is a simple enough reminder, but it should be improved by adding images of the booth once completed with a schedule of any special content, and when and where they are held.

A more personal touch could also be implemented with a welcoming post showcasing the staff present, pictures of the booth area during construction etc.

Another great way to promote both the exhibition participation and the Facebook pages would be to hold special competitions that interacted between the Facebook and the exhibition.



Competitions

Holding competitions during the exhibition is a great way to get people to actually come see the EA booth area

- Add competitions/raffles to specific game areas to promote the game and also gather visitor data.
- More complex game related competitions alongside the NHL and FIFA – tournaments
 - Tie in with a pro-player invite for a limited 1v1 or team match if applicable.

Competitions are time consuming, add extra preparations and costs and can require a dedicated staff to run them. They can also be a great way to get interested consumers to come to the exhibition from outside of the capital region which is something that would help both EA and Messukeskus. The annual NHL- and FIFA –tournaments are a great example of this.

One of the upcoming titles, Mirror's Edge, for instance would be an excellent time trial type competition, where there would be few computers/consoles to try the game on, and then doing a time trial challenge with the winner winning a prize such as the game once it ships (depending on release date and Digiexpo date). Time trial opportunities could be held continuously or at certain times of each date to both give visitors the chance to get a feel for the game beforehand, and to allow for easier planning of the event.

Battlefield –series and other fps titles are also a great competition games, but due to the age requirement limiting playability to the 18 –rated area and the player requirements it would have to be announced well beforehand to allow for team sign ups. This would be a very costly and time consuming option

Depending on the age rating of the games some of the competitions could also be held entirely as a stage show.



Giveaways/SWAG

Instead of simply giving away some of the more popular giveaways focus on specific times or reasons.

- Announce some of the giveaways or giveaway times in social media before and during the exhibition to create small buzz for the booth area.
- Add giveaways as prizes for completing a questionnaire.

Before any of the sponsor given materials or EA's own giveaways are given out, they should all be counted for. In the case of materials with a big quantity their distribution would be relatively free, but numbers given out should be calculated as accurately as possible. In the case of quality goods such as T-shirts, hats, caps, scarfs etc. they should be tied to competitions, raffles and questionnaires to leverage their desirability with research data.

Counting of goods distributed makes it easier to determine how much of each type of giveaway should be brought to the exhibition each year which would result in savings on procurement and logistics.



Guests: Producers / Pro-players

Invite producers and/or pro-players to Digiexpo

- Producer stage shows are always eye-catching.
- Invite a pro player(s) for a show match or a head on competition with prizes
 - Interest in E-sports has skyrocketed and promoting/getting Finnish pro-players more involved with Battlefield –series would be beneficial for both parties

Producers are a “hot commodity” when it comes to game launches and with numerous other big exhibitions held around the world at the same time as Digiexpo the logistics make it difficult to plan their appearance. Possible producer appearance should be utilized as much as possible, both with the typical press interviews, and a stage show as consumers interested in a title are often seeking reliable information about products to justify a purchase. Producer visits often also allow for showcasing of unreleased games, either with an exclusive video or a playable demo.

With E-sports on the rise for the past few years, pro-players are a great way to gather crowds and garner interest even from outside of the capital region. While EA does not have titles with huge e-sports background outside of NHL and FIFA, opportunities should be sought by inviting popular pro-players in the same game genre for a showcase of a selected EA title.

Pro-player show matches either against other pro-players or quick matches against signed up visitors would also be a great opportunity to promote the brand, gain visibility in the e-sports community and create buzz for the exhibition. This would require careful planning and additional budget.



Part II – Evaluation mechanics

Use the exhibition as a way to do market research and add methods to gain better evaluation of the success of the

- Participating in an exhibition is an excellent way to gain valuable research data if utilized correctly
- Data available include:
 - Various demographics (Age, Gaming system etc.)
 - Interest in upcoming games
 - Feedback from upcoming or recently released games
- Data collection inexpensive, but compiling data into a report would require time

While doing research for this thesis, it became apparent that there are currently very few evaluation mechanics in place for the Digiexpo participation, both for its effectiveness as a promotional tool and the evaluation of the participation itself.

The data available by adding various collection methods could help improve future exhibition participations, and give market research data which would help improve the participation ROI.



Visitor traffic

- Tracking the traffic in the open areas of the booth would be impossible unless RFID is implemented (costly), but the closed 18 rated area presents a great way to track traffic and gauge possible interest in the game(s) showcased inside.
- Requires 2-4 people present at every exit with tools (tally counter or a mobile version) to track people entering the area.
 - Implementation simple due to already set in place requirements to keep people under 18 from entering

Messukeskus gathers the total visitor numbers for the entire exhibition, but in order to get a more accurate number of visitors to EA's booth area, separate visitor traffic counting could be utilized. The open nature of the booth area would require RFID tracking which would be very costly and only provide an estimate due to re-visits and walk over traffic.

The 18 –rated closed area however provides a great entry point for visitor tracking to gauge interest in titles held inside due to limited entry ways, and the requirement of staff at all entrances to check for age. By adding clickers to the staff at the entrances, it would be possible to gather accurate visitor numbers for the selected titles.



Questionnaires/Feedback/Interviews

- Gather feedback from people who get to have a hands on experience with upcoming or recently released games
 - 1 page yes/no and scaling from 1 to 5 questionnaire with either a giveaway or a raffle attached to it would be the most time effective solution.
- Hold selected interviews with both visitors and staff to evaluate how the exhibition participation is going and if there's room for improvement.

Using questionnaires for feedback on the titles present at the exhibition and how the booth area feels like is a very typical method of data collection during exhibitions and it is currently not used by EA in Digiexpo. It is important to note that while adding a raffle to the questionnaire form helps increase the number filled forms, it can also warp the data due to visitors just wanting to participate in the raffle.

The questionnaire form should be a very simple and quick to fill with most questions using yes/no answer and/or a scaling from 1 to 5 with an open comment section at the end.

Staff should also be interviewed after the exhibition to find out any possible problem areas and possible improvement suggestions.

Selected staff members could also be provided with forms to fill out observations made during the exhibition.

5 Evaluation

The evaluation part of the thesis serves as an evaluation of the outcome and limitations of the project.

5.1 Outcome

The concept of this thesis came to be after other thesis topics having to be changed due to timing issues. The resulting outcome is a more general guide as opposed to a specific plan since timing and data limitations prevented a more thorough approach.

5.2 Limitations

The purpose of limitations for the thesis is explained so that the product is not used for a purpose it is not intended for. Due to some limitations of in obtaining detailed data as well as the topic itself, the final product is a general guide as opposed to a detailed step by step guide and should only be used as a guideline in the exhibition participation planning process.

5.3 Suggestions for further action

Accurate evaluation can only be done when enough data has been collected, and in regards to EA's participation at Digiexpo, there are not enough data collection methods implemented for this to happen. For this reason my main suggestion for further action would be to implement some of the steps, depending on the company's objectives, from the guide, and gather more data during the whole exhibition process in order to find out which parts could be improved for a better ROI.

5.4 Evaluation of the thesis process

I idea of this thesis is a fairly recent one due to many previous topics not being feasible due to various factors. The final version of this thesis topic came into my mind after participating the Digiexpo exhibition for the 2nd year in a row as a staff member for Electronic Arts.

Having worked first as a volunteer in the social media for the company and following that with a Internship with them I got to take part in the planning and implementation stages of the Digiexpo 2013 and 2014 participations. This gave me some insight into what mind set EA had in terms of the exhibition and how it the various factors of the gaming industry affected exhibition participation. During the exhibitions themselves I gained knowledge of

the actual proceedings and happenings while the exhibition was running and what the visitors did and did not enjoy. I also had some prior experience helping EA out during my volunteer time participating in GameX exhibition in Sweden in 2012 which gave me something to compare Digiexpo to.

After the Digiexpo 2014 I started brainstorming various ways in which the exhibition participation could be improved while also keeping mind the fact that all the improvements would have to bring with them value to the company.

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