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Case Study: “From structural sponsorship to integrated artistic collaboration”

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Outline of the case study: Looking at how the partnership between Bozar and Sony developed to allow a multi-disciplinary artistic establishment to reduce the intrinsic risks linked to fixed-term, temporary partnerships.

BOZAR is the brand name for each department that is housed in the arts centre: the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, and celebrates its 80th anniversary this coming year. Sony is an established, large, international brand for image and sound equipment.



Bozar’s background and motivations

The structural partnership initiated between Bozar and Sony offered the possibility for the multi-disciplinary artistic house to reduce the risk of finding new partners by working longterm with certain sponsors. With this strategic orientation Bozar has developed 4 other structural partnerships with the telecom, automotive, energy and technology sectors, in order to supplement it’s funding from the Belgian National Lottery.

Sony’s needs

Sony, in this partnership, wanted product visibility and corporate events at Bozar facilities. Collaborating with Bozar was part of Sony’s communication strategy, based on their three principles: create added value through communication, be “like.no.other” and position the sub-brands under the appropriate segment of the overall Sony brand (Playstation, Sony Ericsson, Sony BMG, Sony Electronics, Sony Pictures).

What Sony brought:

In the first year, Sony brought mainly:

1. cash support – 60% approximately
2. equipment – 40% for the improvement of the infrastructure

In the second year, Sony mainly lent equipment and expertise.

The partnership: an integrated partnership with common goals

Both parties were able to be fully integrated in the partnership thanks to their full and joint participation in an artistic project focused on photography. Whilst Bozar was organising the “Summer of Photography”, Sony, was putting together the “Sony World Photography Awards” in Cannes. Such an event allowed Sony, for which the digital camera market is crucial, to communicate on the launch of their



new “Alpha” Digital Camera. The Awards took place in Cannes, and celebrated the selected finalists (chosen by an honorary committee) by putting them in a touring exhibition, launched at Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles.

What the partnership brought to Sony

Steven De Smet highlighted Sony's main goals and expectations regarding such a partnership:

- to build awareness for the Alpha brand within a key target group (photo enthusiasts)
- to establish the credentials of the ‘newcomer’ Alpha digital camera in a niche market dominated currently by two main players (Nikon and Canon)
- to position the global Sony World Photography Awards event on a regional and local level whilst exploring a new form of artistic collaboration with a cultural organisation to see what possibilities such a partnership could offer up

The collaboration between Sony and Bozar took shape during the “Summer of Photography” in 2008, Sony supporting the project with 50% of the funding. Sony's benefits included having its logo integrated into the heart of Bozar's communication plan – at the entrance to the exhibition, on the tickets, etc.

Such an event enabled Sony to reach out and contact it's target market four times more efficiently than if Sony had continued with it's current niche-market communication campaign. This was done by establishing a clear link between the value of Sony products and a high quality artistic message.



Conclusion – a “win-win” partnership :

Above all, the partnership corresponded, and answered, the fundamental needs of both parties: for Bozar, it brought infrastructural support; for Sony, it put them in touch with a key target market.

1. in this sense, the partnership between Bozar and Sony was a success by the **choice of a structural and long-term partnership**, with a solid base.
2. the partnership made **a mutual enhancement of values** possible. Bozar and Sony were able to mix, share and promote common values. When there is a conflict of values or brand image, partnerships between companies and cultural institutions are difficult to implement, and it becomes difficult for both parties to succeed.
3. this partnership was also a success because it created an **interpersonal collaboration beyond obligation**. Therefore there were real human relationships in this partnership, which were mostly based on transparency and trust.



4. finally, the alliance between Sony and Bozar **allowed them to promote, on several levels** and towards a combined larger audience, the brand Sony, a Sony product (the Alpha digital camera) and a cultural institution, Bozar.

