



# GUIDE TO FESTIVALS

In the first in a series of perspectives on important issues in brand experience and live events, BD Network turns its eye to festivals – the backbone of the British Summer.

BD Network has a long history of working with festivals. The nights may now be drawing in, but that just means that the country's brand managers are now turning their eyes to the results from this past summer, and looking to shape creative concepts for summer 2018.

For attendees, well-run festival executions should look like a well-oiled machine. The brands will be relevant and fun for festival goers, the brand ambassadors knowledgeable and inclusive, and giveaways meaningful, creating long lasting positive impressions for the brand. Brand managers themselves will know that this end result is the work of hard graft; from concept and creation planning,

through to talent sourcing, logistics, live bar sourcing/management, production management on the ground, liaison with festival owners, artist liaison, collaborating with other agency partners, third party supplier management, legal and health and safety, insurance and all important budget management.

This can all seem like a lot of hassle – but the end results can be transformative for a brand, and BD Network are specialists in making sure this long list of requirements is juggled effectively to allow the brand to shine. This summer alone, we attended and facilitated 12 different festival executions for household name brands, from mainstream events to the more specialist. Here are our top five tips when reviewing your summer's success, and looking ahead to live festival events in 2018:

1

**FESTIVAL DIVERSIFICATION.** We're seeing two types of festivals emerge; very large and commercialised events such as Coachella or V Festival, where brands and sponsorships are heavily embedded in the events, and the audience is typically defined by a focus on fashion and the latest food and drinks trends. On the other hand we have very boutique events, like The Farr Festival or Festival No.6, which are typically independent and do not allow brands within the festival space. With the demise of Secret Garden Party, Glastonbury taking a fallow year before moving location and new festivals popping up all the time to deliver unique and curated experiences to adventurous and eager audiences, this diversification looks set to continue.

2

**THINK BEYOND THE FESTIVAL FENCE.** While many events either do not allow commercial activity within their boundaries, or it is strictly controlled, there are opportunities for brands to engage with guests well before the tickets are punched. Many festivalgoers are willing to travel long distances for their event experience, and that journey, and the towns hosting them, can all provide opportunities for companies seeking to capitalize on that experience. Sponsored taxi rides, travel deals, even reaching out to local councils to ensure relations with local residents are kept cordial – all of these can provide ways for companies and products to round off a festival experience for attendees beyond stands and giveaways within the events space.

3

**OWN THE MOMENT.** For the bigger commercial festivals, brands can find themselves competing for attention not only with bands and stands, but also other brands seeking to standout. One way to make a brand distinct is to connect it to a specific moment in time – for example, our work with Corona and its Sunset Stage at Boardmasters and Lovebox. Now regular events-within-the-events, the Sunset Stage pairs carefully curated DJ sets with the audience and the environment to create a branded experience which peaks at the moment when the sun goes down.

4

**KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.** While most commercial festivals focus on the core target market of 18-34 year olds, the diversification and many different themes of smaller boutique events coming through offer amazing potential to be relevant to different groups. If you are led by the audience of each event, creative concepts will not only be highly effective at capturing attention at the event and afterwards, the care a brand shows to that audience will also create a strong connection.

5

**LET THE EXPERIENCE LINGER.** Festivals are focused experiences, where brands can loom large in an audience's memory, but that's far from the only opportunity to engage. For the Corona Sunset Stage at Lovebox, festival goers were encouraged to engage on social with the brand through branded facepainters and a wish arch. However, a partnership with Amazon also meant that Londoners could order a cubo of cold beer, served with a wedge of lime, delivered to their home to continue that festival feeling long after the final act.

2018's festival season is already on our minds at BD Network. Is it also on yours? If you'd like to talk over ideas or just hear from our years of experience running these events for some of the nation's best loved brands, please contact us on 0207 749 5500 or email [zoe.brown@thisisbd.com](mailto:zoe.brown@thisisbd.com)