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## Quote slide

I want to start off with the popular and regularly cited marketing quote by Hawkins *Hawkins, Mothersbaugh (mothersboh) & Best, 2007* confidently stating that

“All marketing decisions are based on assumptions and knowledge of consumer behaviour”

So why is consumer behaviour so important that all marketing decision are based on it?

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## Marketing overload slide

Consumers today are living in a highly commercialised, modern society, surrounded by a magnitude of logos, labels, and messages. It is now estimated in 2021, that the average person encounters between 6,000 to 10,000 ads every single day. Way more than the reported average of between 500 and 1600 ads in the 70's.

These marketing messages and initiatives are so integrated into our daily lives that many individuals hardly recognize them. And yet, the marketing strategies and budgets of many organisations and businesses remain focused on one central goal... to influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

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## Consumer mind slide

Marketers will tell you how important it is to understand their consumers behaviour if they are to reach them effectively. Part of that, is understanding the factors that influence their purchasing decisions. Without that understanding, it isn't possible to tailor an offering to the demands of potential buyers.

Over time, marketers have turned to the work of behavioural scientists, philosophers, economists, social psychologists, and others to help them understand consumer behaviour. As a result, there are many different theories and models used to explain why consumers act as they do.

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## Model slide

One particular consumer behaviour model is the stimulus-response or “black box” model. This model focusses on the consumer as a thinker and problem solver who responds to a range of external and internal factors when deciding whether or not to purchase.

In essence the model consists of 3 phases, ss illustrated in this figure. An input phase a process phase and an output phase.

(Explanation of model provided)

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## **Background slide**

So how does this apply to my journey? My career as an academic and researcher started in 2006 when I was permanently appointed as a junior lecturer and enrolled for my Masters degree. It is my love and appreciation for the arts and culture that initially sparked my interest to do not only my masters, but also my Phd research within the South African arts festivals industry. Both studies had a strong event marketing focus within the field of consumer profiling, behaviour and segmentation. The contribution of the PhD research resulted in the development of a ticket purchase behaviour measuring instrument and model for South African arts festivals.

My consumer behaviour research has since expanded, including different events contexts and types of consumers. In this research we predominantly determine which socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics/factors (and to what extent) influence and contribute to purchasing and engagement.

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## **Collaborators slide**

Some of events and festivals who we collaborated with and for whom we conducted this research included some of the largest arts festivals in South Africa, internationally acclaimed theatre events, as well as popular South African expo's and food events.

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## **Data analyses slide**

The data analyses predominantly used in this research included correspondence analyses, Cluster and Regression analyses, Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses, Anova's and t-tests, and Structural Equation Modelling, amongst others.

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## **Journals/Conferences/Media slide**

The findings of this research are published in various national and international accredited academic journals and was presented at various national and international conferences. Some findings were also shared on popular media platforms.

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## **Contributors slide**

However, it must be emphasised that this research was in many cases a team effort, consisting of colleagues and post-graduate students, and for whom I have much appreciation.

It is from these research outputs, that I have selected a few examples, to share with you some interesting profile and behavioural tit-bits of specific consumers at different events.

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## Typology slide

But before introducing the consumers, I want to provide some background to the different types of events in the industry by briefly referring to the Typology of planned events by Getz (2005). He proposes the following categories into which planned events can be divided. These include cultural celebrations, arts and entertainment, business and trade, sports competitions, recreational, educational and scientific, political and state, as well as private events.

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## Meet the consumers slide

And so it was from these event types that we have targeted certain consumers, or more specifically attendees, to better understand who they are and how they behave.

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## Arts festival productions slide

Based on the combined data of attendees to various South African arts festivals. We can conclude that they are 45 years of age and predominantly female. They usually travel in groups of four people and attend the festival for a duration of four days. Their main motives for visiting festivals such as these, are for relaxation and socializing with friends and family. Besides the festival serving predominantly as a leisure activity, attending the festival to specifically see quality productions are amongst the top three motives. Ensuring that the right quality productions are showcased at these events is important, not only to satisfy the needs of their attendees, but because ticket sales serve as one of the main income streams for festivals which in turn also contributes to the livelihood of artists. We therefore specifically looked into what the main contributors to ticket purchases are. And production credentials came out top. Interestingly though, is that the leisure time at hand and ability to schedule and book productions well in advance. This is a logistic aspect that should not be under-estimated by organizers. Festival dates should be full be carefully selected to best accommodate attendees, and user-friendly online booking systems to allow ticket purchasing well in advance is crucial. The third most important contributor comes as no surprise and that is the fact that these attendees our lovers and supporters of the arts, however specific genres are definitely more popular and should enjoy priority in festival programs. These include drama comedy and music theater. Least purchased are tickets for the genres word art, children's theater and jazz. Media types that best assist with ticket sales is the festival website and the festival guide, mostly because details about productions are conveyed well in advance, whilst festival newspapers are the least effective. When extracting the data of specifically big spenders, it was interesting to see that it is not necessarily high earners that do the big spending, but high spending is rather associated with attendees aged between 46 to 60 years and with attendees that travel from the Gauteng province.

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## Youth theatre slide

Also within the context of arts festivals productions, we have conducted research specifically on the children's theater market. Although our research has also covered the teenage and student markets, I want to specifically focus on the children's market. As reported in the previous slide, children's theater was one of the genres for which the least tickets were purchased by arts festival attendees, Accounting only for 3% of all ticket sales at art festivals in South Africa. But why is this particular segment so important? Besides the educational benefits such as developing social skills intelligence listening skills comprehension and the overall development in children, the literature tells us that childhood exposure to the arts significantly contributes to lifelong interest and involvement. So, in other words instilling a love for the arts at a young age will help secure future audiences and ultimately, they sustainability of arts festivals and the arts. this is especially necessary since we have noticed an increase in the average age of art festival attendees over the past few years. The main motives why parents attend these productions with their children is because of their love for the arts, the fact that it is considered a fun parent child activity, and because the parents appreciate its educational value. Although children's theater account only four the 3% of all ticket art festivals remain of popular platform for children's theater and these sales still help to contribute to the overall sales and thus the income of arts festivals. The good news is that 90% of festival attendees who attend with small children are indeed repeat visitors, and they spend a duration of four days at the festival. They are also satisfied with the amount of entertainment offered for children at these events. Not only do they purchase tickets for children's productions, but their love for the arts is evident in their overall ticket purchases, totaling an average of 16 tickets per family. Once again, festival programs are most effective to assist with ticket sales, and interestingly word of mouth or posters are amongst the least effective. Contrary To the ticket purchasers of regular productions Your production credentials play a major role, ticket purchases for children's theater is far more influenced by the title of the production or the character.

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## Artwork slide

since arts festivals aimed to ensure the sustainability of all art forms It only made sense to you also conduct research on the purchase behavior of visual artworks by festival attendees at various arts festivals in South Africa. the major aspects that encourage purchases is enough time to browse, the artwork must be of quality but ultimately, it's all about personal taste. In other words, the colors and techniques used The scene depicted The message and feeling evoked by looking at the artwork its ability to fit into the decor style Of the individuals home. What turns out not to be important aspects contributing to the purchasers of these artworks is buying the art for resale or investment purposes. Surprisingly it's also not about the reputability of the artist or dealer, and neither about the stigma or status attached to owning a particular artwork. These attendees purchase approximately 4 artworks every five years of which two of the artworks are purchased at arts festivals. Arts festivals prove to be a popular platform to purchase artwork, and although art galleries and private sales are more popular, The data shows that arts festivals is an especially favorable space in which to promote and sell more affordable and moderately priced art pieces. This is also evident in the amounts that purchasers

spend on an art piece. Almost half of all the artwork sold at these events, are priced at R5000 or less. And so, the question is what encourages more purchases? Overall, marketing including word of mouth contributes very little to purchase decisions. And it is rather the festival seating and atmosphere as well as the allure of the exhibition space that encourages purchases. One would think that individuals attending the festival for 3 to 4 days, are 2 time more likely to purchase art than individuals attending the festival for only 1 to 2 days. However, they are actually 3 times more likely to make a purchase, possibly Confirming the positive influence that the unique festival setting has on purchases. Another interesting insight for festival organisers, is that purchases of the visual arts are also fans of the performing arts. and hire qualified attendees, with postgraduate qualifications purchase 25% more art than other attendees.

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## **Live theatre slide**

Moving away from the festival setting for a brief moment but still remaining in the performing arts spotlight, I want to share with you some interesting findings regarding the ticket purchase behavior of attendees to live theater events, or more specifically internationally acclaimed productions at renowned theaters and venues in South Africa. These included none other than the phantom of the opera as well as internationally acclaimed cirque du Soleil. In this research we aimed to learn why these events are so successful, in order to direct future decisions when it comes to hosting these acclaimed productions in South Africa. These theater events serve very much as a family activity, thus also justifying the 4-5 members in the travel group. As expected, the motives for attending these events are the fact that it is an award-winning production, it's about the reputation of the creators or composers of the production, and the opportunity to experience an internationally renowned production. These attendees generally have a love and enjoyment of the performing arts, and they attend approximately 3 theater productions per year. 81% of these attendees also have a theater membership and they especially enjoy musical theatre and Comedy genres. Convenience is especially important to these attendees, and aspects such as the accessibility of the venue, efficient ticketing systems and a quality venue is especially important to them. The mediums that most effectively market these types of events is television and word of mouth. From a monetary point of view, we have learned that the average ticket price per person is R350, however the price category with the most sales is R250 per person. This is understandable, considering that the purchases are mostly four family outings and that's tickets need to be purchased for all 4 to 5 members in the travel group. These prices provide a good guideline for future ticket sales, especially since almost 3/4 of attendees consider the price for these productions to be value for money. A very interesting finding though, is that attendees want a variety of time slots to choose from, and they want these productions to have a long running time. This is perhaps not only for the sake to have convenient time slot options to fit into their busy schedules, but because a staggering 2/3 of all attendees indicated a desire to attend the same production again.

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## **Afr film theatre slide**

Attendees to Afrikaans film theater was yet another consumer market we researched. It was initially concerns about the quality of Afrikaans films that motivated us to have a more in depth look at the ticket purchase behavior of these individuals. Although the major reasons for

purchasing tickets for Afrikaans films was predominantly about being able to watch a film in one's own language and depicting one's own culture, and thus entertaining enough to support, more than half of attendees feel that the quality of Afrikaans films must improve. This is why 2/3 of attendees still prefer international English films to local Afrikaans films. Regardless, consumption patterns show that attendees purchase approximately 28 cinema tickets every year of which three to four or Afrikaans films. This is outstanding considering the much fewer Afrikaans film available in comparison to English films at the box office. Afrikaans film merchandise is also popular amongst attendees, and they purchased three to four soundtracks or DVD's per annum. Needless to say, the most popular media for marketing these films is indeed movie trailers, film views and word of mouth. To maximize the exposure of Afrikaans films in general, we proposed the showcasing of existing Afrikaans films at Afrikaans arts festivals, and 53% of attendees indicated that they would indeed support this idea, especially since they usually attend at least one Afrikaans arts festival per annum. We also extracted data from younger film theater attendees. and it was interesting to see that these younger markets or even more critical of the quality of Afrikaans films, where 3/4 of these attendees feel that the quality must improve. they are also not really supportive or festivals as a platform to showcase films. So what will count in favor of these Afrikaans films to secure sufficient ticket sales? Firstly, the genre. Attendees I prefer comedy and romance whilst drama proves to be unpopular. and secondly, the attendees want to see renowned actors and a film with a good storyline, they are not concerned about Who produced or directed the film.

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## **Wedding event slide**

Moving over to a completely different type of event and consumer. This research focused on the consumer behavior of brides and grooms, or more specifically their needs and preferences regarding the selection of an ideal wedding venue for their special day. The research focused predominantly on couples residing in the Gauteng and surrounding provinces. This research therefore allows wedding venue owners to better cater for the needs of this consumer market, by means of desirable wedding packages. Firstly it was evident that only one in five brides make use of personal wedding planners. It is therefore important to provide the services of in-house planners as part of the wedding package, since this is an expectation of 50% of the bridal couples. Standard services and facilities that should be incorporated in all packages is the venue and Chapel hire, Set-up services, and a dance floor. Extremely important aspects that are considered to be non-negotiable by bridal couples is firstly the ability of the venue to effectively continue with operations during load shedding as well as safe parking and security. This is followed by affordability and a beautiful premise. The average size of a wedding as indicated by a third of the wedding couples is a total of 76 to 100 guests. The average budget of wedding couples is R135,000, of which catering the venue and the wedding dress are the highest cost items. and when it comes to the financial contributions of the parents, it is evident that the parents of the bride contribute 30% to the wedding budget whereas parents of the groom contribute only half of that at 15%. An interesting fact is that couples spend more on photography and videography than on flowers and décor. In order to develop more package options that adapt to seasonality and quieter times of the week the following was learned. The most popular months of the year to get married in its December and September. January is the least popular month to get married in. it was also very interesting to learn that morning weddings account for a total of 13% of all weddings, and midweek weddings, in other words Mondays to Thursdays, account for 10% of all weddings. Packages that focus on these quieter

time slots, not only helps venue owners Two manage seasonality, but it offers more affordable options two brides and grooms with stringent budgets. However not all bridal couples are cash strapped, and when we extracted data of couples with higher incomes and budgets, we learned that a renowned venue associated with status, as well as on site accommodation for all wedding guests is a must for these consumers.

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## **Food expo slide**

Culinary events were yet another prominent parts of my research. One specific study together with a PhD student, that I and very proud of and want to refer to, is that what was initially a potential food Expo in Zimbabwe. This expo has since made its debut in 2019. We specifically looked at the consumer behavior of existing tourists to Zimbabwe, as well as the preferences of both tourists and industry role players regarding a food expo in order to develop a programme criterion for such an event. Consensus was reached amongst tourists and industry role players as to where to expo should be hosted, and this was indicated to be Harare. Both tourists and industry role players also vouched for the month of August to host the event. This selection could be ascribed to the fact that it is a holiday period for locals and also a popular month for internationals on vacation. It would further help with seasonality since August is a far quieter vacation season then the festive season. Both tourists as well as industry role players also agreed the duration of the event to be three days. 83% indicated that they would prefer tickets to be sold online in advance but also still available at the entrance to the Expo. We could also conclude that all activities needed to be included in the ticket price. However, it was determined that these tickets should be day passes and not tickets granting access for all three days. Very interestingly was that tourists are more willing to pay entrance fees for children under the age of 12, contrary to the opinion of industry role-players. The most prominent mediums selected to market the event, is the event website as well as TripAdvisor, followed by travel magazines and social media. Amongst various program activity options, the most desired activities indicated to be incorporated into the expo programme, were traditional Zimbabwean cuisine, hands-on workshops, open food theatre demonstrations, merchandise exhibits and sales, as well as live entertainment and music. Wine, beer and cocktail exhibitions and tasting also featured as potential program activity options, however wine and cocktail were far more popular options then beer. Although specific program activities for kids was not amongst the higher rated Options, international tourists do you consider incorporating children's activities into the programme to be very important.

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## **Wine festival slide**

Still within the scope of culinary events, I next want to share findings of research conducted at a popular multiple winery event in South Africa. This entails traveling on a wine route between various wine farms in the popular Robertson wine district. The profile of these attendees indicated an average age of 38 years, 59% are female and 41% male, half of the attendees are in professional or management occupations, they are predominantly Afrikaans speaking and from the Western Cape province. To socialize, relax and spend time with friends were amongst the top motives for attending the event, and given the nature of this event, the variety and quality of wines offered at these events was also considered an important motive. What was not considered to be important motives was to become a wine connoisseur or for status.

Their general travel behavior depicted a stay of two days and three nights, whilst visiting approximately 9 wine farms in groups of 7 people. From analyzing their spending behavior, it was interesting to note that food and wine expenditure was higher than their accommodation costs. We then looked more in depth at possible social demographic and behavioral differences between first timers or infrequent visitors as opposed to visitors who frequently visit this event. First timers or infrequent visitors we're definitely younger, they traveled further, stayed shorter, which obviously resulted in less wine farms being visited. These visitors are more effectively targeted by means of television advertisements and word of mouth. Frequent visitors however are older, mainly locals, who stayed longer, and visit more wine farms. Newspapers and email are more effective means to communicate with these attendees. Given the unique nature or format of this event, it made sense that visitors requested specifically shuttle services between wine farms and some even requested the size of the wine tasting glasses to be reduced!

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## **Food and craft markets slide**

Yet another culinary event type within the boundaries of South Africa, is that of food and craft markets. These events have particularly sparked my interest because of the role they play in generating income not only for the event organisers, but also because of the contribution that these markets make to the livelihoods of the many local and non-local entrepreneurs who sell their merchandise at the various food stations and craft stalls located at these events. We therefore focused on the consumer behavior of attendees to various food and craft markets across 3 provinces in South Africa. They were astonishing similarities between these different markets, and so based on a combined data set, we could shed some light on the consumer behavior of attendees to these events. Almost 2/3 of attendees are female. Most visitors attend these markets with their partners or with a friend. This was followed by visitors who attend the event and groups of 4. Only 27% of these visitors have children. A surprising 35% of these visitors are non-locals, and their main motives for attending these events, is to spend time with family and friends and to relax in a setting that offers a nice vibe and atmosphere. Almost half of these attendees spend a rather limited duration of time of 1-2 hours at these markets. And attending these markets is not a regular occurrence, as visitors attend these markets only about once every three months. When considering Attendee's interest in food and craft merchandise, it is evident that there is a greater interest in food and beverages and less of an interest in the arts and crafts. This is also confirmed in the purchase behavior of goods by these individuals, where 3/4 of visitor's total spend of R406, goes towards food and beverages, and only a quarter goes towards arts and craft products. And when we zoom in on the food items that attendees spent the most money on, we see that spending on alcoholic beverages is almost equal to that of prepared food. This is followed by other take-home food products, such as fresh produce, deli products, and preserves; as well as baked confectionaries, desserts and treats for a sweet tooth. Spending on cold, non-alcoholic beverages is almost equal to that of warm, non-alcoholic beverages such as coffee. The considerably lower spending on arts and crafts products can be a concern especially to still owners that sell these goods. Fortunately, we have learned that spending on these arts and crafts goods increases by 10% with every visit. However, 38% of these attendees are first timers, and visitors who attend these markets repeatedly do so non-occasionally, as previously reported by visits only taking place once every three months. It therefore remains a particular challenge for these food and craft markets to secure regular repeat attendees.

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## Green festivals slide

More recent research that I also find particularly interesting is yet again in the context of festivals. The focus was however on the green behavior of festival attendees at various arts festivals in South Africa. Realizing the tremendous environmental impact that these large events can have, we set out to explore attendees' attitudes and inclination towards supporting specific green practices at these events. Generally, attendees believe that festivals in South Africa are somewhat green in their management practices, and attendees also consider themselves to be somewhat green in their behavior. The green practices that attendees are most inclined to support include e-marketing, the use of hand sanitizers to lessen water usage, refundable bottle or cup systems, and recycling bins. The green practice that attendees are less likely to support include green transport alternatives such as bicycle rental or shuttle services, a small water levy for toilet usage, a green fee add it to the entrance fees, as well as more natural ventilation alternatives in the production venues. Needless to say, the research revealed that the practices that don't require much time, money or effort are favored by attendees; as well as practices that offer benefits or rewards. So, we conducted further research to better understand whether a green rewards programme would encourage attendees more to support these less favored green practices. Firstly, it was determined which types of green rewards are most favored by attendees. Green freebies such as a free eco shopping bag, a free hand sanitizer, and a free water bottle proves to be the most popular form of compensation. This is followed by consumeristic or monetary rewards such as discounts or vouchers at the festival itself as well as at general retailers. Egoistic rewards, such as the VIP skip the queue service, VIP seats, and backstage passes at the event, proved to be the least preferred type of award. On closer inspection of consumeristic or monetary rewards, it was found that the most preferred retail partners to reward green behavior included firstly pick up a smart shopper discount points or rewards, followed by clicks Clubcard Points or rewards; as well as dischem loyalty benefits. What we have further learned is that the utilization of rewards and freebies to encourage green behavior is a powerful tool. One such example that the research shows us, is that only 46% of attendees are willing to rent a bicycle, but this can be increased to 70% if bicycles are provided on a complementary basis. And should a free eco bag, bottle and hand sanitizer accompany this complimentary bicycle, this percentage is further upped to 80%. This specific research therefore assists with the more effective implementation of green practices at festivals and helps us to also find solutions regarding the implementation of practices that are not so easily supported.

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## Conclusion slide

It was a pleasure to share some quick and hopefully interesting insights into the consumer behavior of these different attendees in various events contexts. It is these insights that allow us to better understand consumer markets and to advise product owners in the industry to develop and adapt offering that better cater for the needs of their attendees.

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## Hot air balloon slide

To conclude... We know that the events industry has been hard hit by the pandemic, but we remain optimistic that this too shall pass. But these challenges, no matter in what form or shape, will always be with us; and change is inevitable. It is for this reason that we need to continue doing research of this nature. It keeps us informed and helps us better understand the impact on consumer's behaviour, so that we can adapt.

But perhaps a more personal reason why I will continue pursuing this research, is simply because consumer behaviour is just so interesting, and it will always remain an interest of mine. And I can share the sentiment of Jon Miller who quoted the following...

“Knowing who your customers are, is great, but knowing how they behave is even better.”

Jon Miller