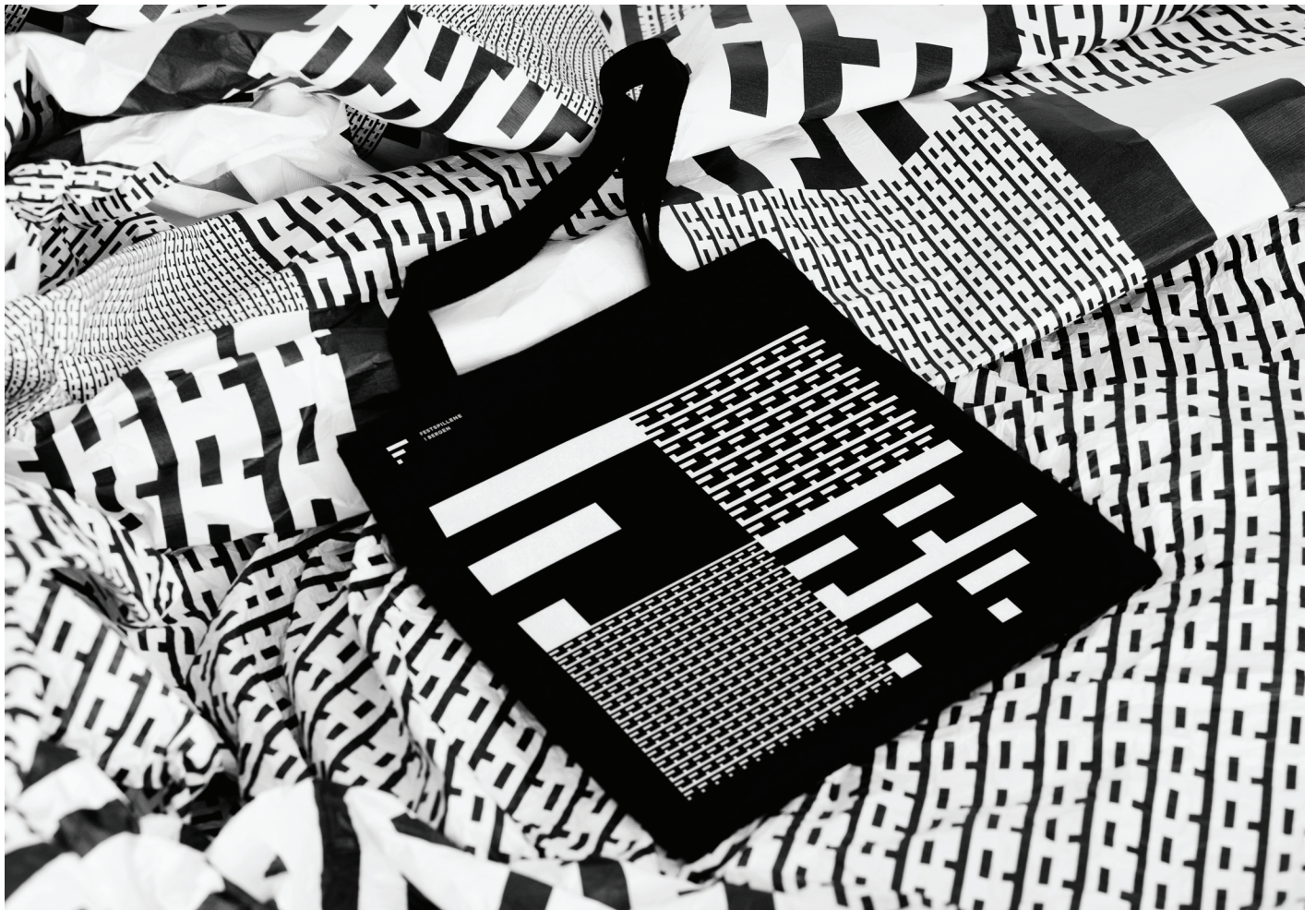


Bergen International Festival

Brand Campaign
2013 — 2016



1. Summary

Total Communication Design; a brand identity with such visual frequency & dynamism that it is advertising, product & performance. A sustainable cost effective & engaging design solution, that reimagined the presentation of the classical & avantgarde genres. The total number & first-time attendees exploded the year the identity was released; exceeding targets ever since.



Objectives

- Increase overall audience numbers, ticket sales & first time visitors
- Maintain strong patronage from existing attendees
- Present the genres of classical & avantgarde performances in a radical & attractive new light
- Generate a sustainable, cost effective identity

Solution

The strategic concept and brand identity balances inbuilt agility with consistency of identity, opening worlds of possibilities.

See the case film here:
<https://vimeo.com/79884188>

Result

The rebrand has contributed to a 57% rise in ticket sales and 59% rise in sponsorship and private donations, resulting in a 32% rise in total income (2012 - 2016).

The first year of the new festival identity saw a 100% increase of first time visitors, leading to the highest volume of ticket sales in the history of the festival. Increasing year on year, with public attendants rising from 60 026 in 2012 to 84 494 in 2013; at the same time the total number of visitors to the theatre in Bergen was falling by 8,4%. From 2012 to 2016 the number of visitors grew to over 125 000 — an increase of 108%. Resulting in a 27% increased efficiency use of public funds in the first year alone — evidence of the public value of design investment

In 2014, for the strategic rebranding of Bergen International Festival, ANTI Bergen was awarded the Cannes Lions Grand Prix in Design, the Grand Prix in Brand Identity at Red Dot, 2 Golds in ADC Global, Gold Pencil in One Show and Best of Show at the European Design Awards, as well as several national awards.

2. Client Objectives = Design Strategy

The need for a sustainable, cost-effective, engaging & impactful brand identity for an annual festival. A design-led approach that changes perceptions while enhances existing relationships to the genres of classical & avantgarde theatre & music.



Bergen International Festival

Established in 1953, under Royal patronage, Bergen International Festival [Festspillene i Bergen / FiB] is the largest classical and avantgarde music and theatre festival in the Nordic countries.

The festival is a not-for-profit foundation, receiving public funding in addition to corporate sponsorships and private donations.

By 2012 the festival was consistently in decline and struggling to stay relevant.

Too often we see organisations only allow an agency limited freedom when it comes to rebranding and visual design. I decided to give ANTI the greatest possible degree of freedom and thus create the possibility of changes; changes that I could not have imagined.

The successful rebranding of the festival was based on a thorough strategy process. Founded on the ambition to change content with communication design, and the total trust of the festival in ANTI to, as far as possible, have the freedom to create something entirely new.

Anders Beyer (2017)
Chief Executive & Artistic Director

From Clinet Brief

Core customers are fading and the festival is invisible to the young. FiB has little contact with subcultural conditions.

Our biggest competitor is indifference: People stopped caring and FiB is not important anymore.

[there are] more actors who take focus, the cultural offerings in Bergen and around have grown.

Public relationship, interest in classical music is waning. A bit old-fashioned compared to younger audience.

Something stands in the way of our image. They think it's ladies with grey hair.

At the heart of the rebrand was to challenge public attitudes and behaviours, around not just the festival, but the genres of classical and avantgarde performance.

As a cultural organisation the increase of total audience numbers is intrinsically connected to widening the value of public expenditure. The festival had foresight of the growing consensus for austere funding cuts to the culture sector;

Do not take for granted that the economic privileges will continue. Europe will cut culture budgets.

The project was access-all-areas, given high ambition; non prescriptive, built of trust and vision — setting the client/agency relationship as a strategic partnership. The objectives were broad, but direct —

The question should be how to engage a new generation, the recruitment element.

Be less apologetic about being what the festival is. Let the design express that.

The design investment of NOK 972 571 (€124 720) — covered the new identity, design of festival programme, advertising effects, ads, web and app design, photo, 3D +++. This was also matched with a limited media spend of under 3 million NOK [2013] (€384 000), which had to be used efficiently, with no media agency involved. The identity was launched April 2013.

The 'F' Concept: A Note & A Pixel

Visualising music through modular systems created an identity that is strong and flexible — with endless possibilities — yet never loses brand recognition. A logo that is both a traditional logo, and a living identity.

As the identity is founded on a simple element a 'pixel or note' it can in effect be applied onto, or found anywhere. Therefore in addition to traditional festival materials, ANTI used the visual concept to challenge the 'value' of a logo.

Audience focus

The carefully considered presentation of the festival was between retaining and strengthening brand equity for existing patrons, while introducing the relevance of the festival to attract a younger fast-paced, and time-poor audiences.

This was achieved through both the 'volume' of the identity's application and the context of its use. From the cityscape to merchandise, performances to tickets, analogue to digital, static to interactive. As such the dynamics of the brand's context demanded communication that worked subtly to a high intensity and everything in between. ANTI coined this the 'volume knob'.

The identity is designed for boundless visibility, without fatigue, defining the character of the city. Allowing for variations of visual textures to come alive, when the 'volume knob' principle is applied, the festival can 'own a space'; temporarily marking a location, while also fading back to become a platform, promoting and complementing public space and performances — identity as advertising, product, and performance.

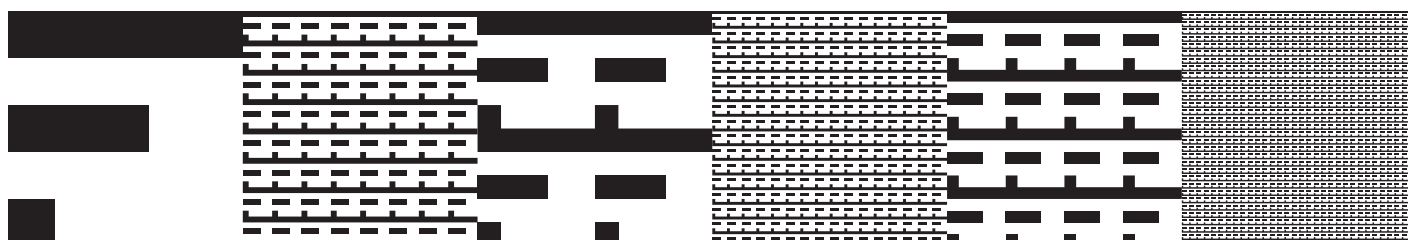
Systems Thinking = Sustainable Brand-Campaign

In response to the budgetary constraints the identity supports all internal and external communication. It simply isn't possible to invest in a campaign to come and go, the festival identity had to be communicative enough to be used year on year, in lieu of campaigns.

As an annual 15 day festival the frequency and volume of marketing required an identity that could generate momentum in its application and build anticipation to a crescendo; defining these two weeks in May, year on year.

Democratic Functionality

Breaking from the austere character traditionally associated with the genre and festival, the design creates a shift from the top-down conservative culture, considering the ability for performers, partners and sponsors, and festival goers alike, to take on and use an open visual system — brand visibility without the increases in hard expenditure.



3. Design Solution

The synergy of creativity and strategy — where constraints inform opportunities & design generates impact. A creative solution that is communicative enough to cover the totality of the festival's promotion.

This mutual trust between client and agency meant ANTI was able to experiment and through a dialogue with us as the client harness all of ANTI's institutional creativity to develop something unique.

In a very inspiring process ANTI was able to translate the strategic vision of the festival into the design and planning of the brand communications, which overall has meant that we have changed our very way of thinking about the festival; a whole new way of involving the audience.

Anders Beyer (2017)
Chief Executive & Artistic Director

Festival Marketing

Festival marketing included; posters, festival guide, tickets, advertising templates for web and print, and all essential material for the festival's public operations. Each of the defined 3 target groups having a distinct volume set and style of presentation, yet remaining brand consistent across the festival.

Design for Performance & Public Interaction

Supplying a visual tool box, to performers and partners, allowed the brand to become a part of the live festival experience; facilitating the artistic development of the identity.

During the opening performances of 2013 — 30 drones flew in the formation of the 'F' Logo over the city. Outside the defined and traditional; bringing performers and partners into the fold to blur the lines between brand and culture, establishing a temporary symbiotic relationship between performance and brand.



Marking the cityscape

Marking the cityscape included festival flags to the 'F' logo applied within pedestrian crossings, to turning the lights on/off to find the 'F' within the windows of City Hall. Aimed at lowering the threshold for audience participation and elevate public ownership.



Merchandise

Merchandise became a powerful communication asset for the festival from t-shirts and tote bags to rain ponchos worn by the Prime Minister to school children and from internationally renowned pop artists to serious classical enthusiasts. All with a clear line-of-sight toward the specific audiences, enhancing brand coherence and experience.

The 'ANTI-traditional' Norwegian sweater is an example of the playful use of the identity making the familiar unfamiliar through a twist of context. Drawing on the quintessential Norwegian sweater and pattern style ANTI played on the relevance of classical culture.



Digital Website & Sequencer

The sequencer was created as the synthesis of the 'festival experience' with the 'new identity' and the medium of 'music'. A contemporarily relevant brand interface for the younger target group. An online app allowing participants to create their own musical score by playing with elements of the identity.



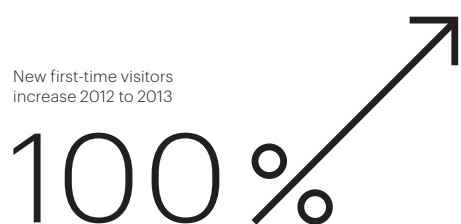
Organisational Use

In 2013 the new identity was permanently applied as decor and wayfinding into the FiB work environment.



4. Design Effectiveness

The design solution was developed, & has continued to function, in simpatico with the client's operations; from application & media purchasing to the festival programming & public engagement. Contributing to a rise of 100% of first time visitors in its first year & total rise of 108% attendees from 2012 to 2016.



Ticket Sales Income
2012 – 2016

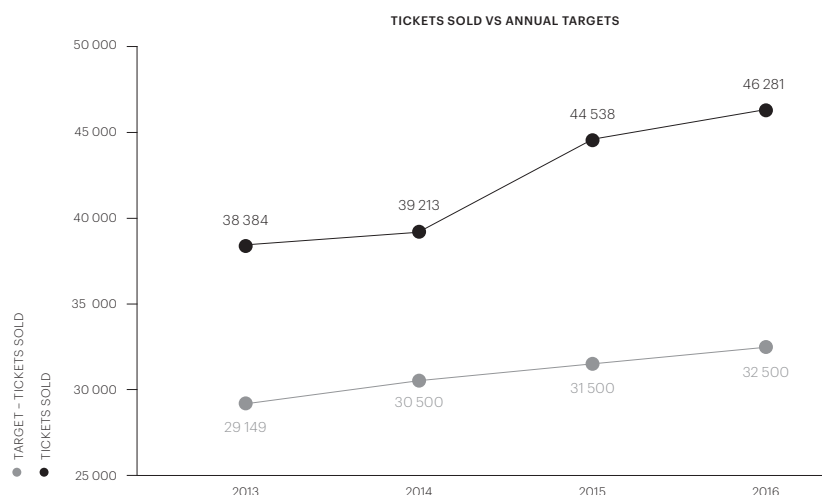
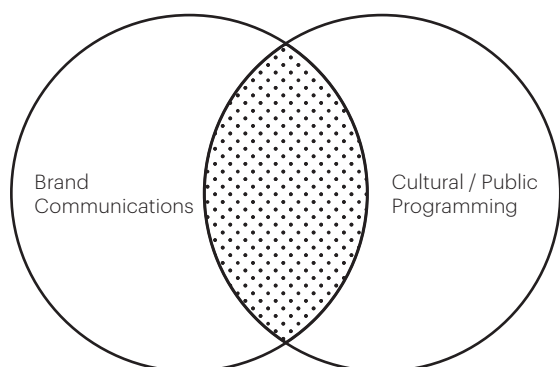
57%
↑

Sponsorship & Private
Contributions Income
2012 – 2016

59%
↑

Total Income
2012 – 2016

32%
↑



With ANTI's help we have managed to create a new festival, a modern festival, which each year from 2013 to 2016 resulting in record ticket sales, while enjoying brilliant criticism in the national and through international press.

This growth strategy, with a significant increase in audience inflow over four years, has been made possible through ANTI's innovative practices and exceptional understanding of public engagement. The visual design has had lasting influence on both the 'product and packaging' of the festival.

ANTI has quickened the ambition to create a culture of disruptive innovation in the festival, which in turn has led to sensational bottomline figures.

Without ANTI's creative efforts it had not been possible to redeem the vision of a creative and modern, future-oriented festival for such large audiences.

Anders Beyer (2017)
Chief Executive & Artistic Director

Moving from the bald and grey, towards the young and dynamic.

Festival Attendee (2014)

Since the rebrand FIB has gained a 57% rise in ticket sales from the year before the rebrand (2012) up to 2016, and 59% rise in sponsorship and private contributions, resulting in a 32% rise in total income.

The result in the first year (2013) alone saw an increase by 100% in new first-time visitors and an all-time high of ticket sales of 29 589, far exceeding the target for that year.

Growth has continued since the successful rebrand launch in 2013, with ticket sales exceeding annual targets constantly.

Attendance

While ticket sales increased and exceeded targets, the number of overall attendees to events also rose to all-time high levels. The average number of festival attendees between 2008 and 2012, under the previous brand identity, was 70 795. However, since the new identity, between 2013 to 2016, this has risen to an average of 99 345; an increase of 40%.

Public Perception

In 2016 research was conducted into the public perception of the festival, set against the 2012 vision for the 2016 festival. The keys words from the vision being — ‘Energetic’, ‘Joy of life / Exuberance’, ‘Exploratory’, ‘Fearless’, ‘Accessible to everyone’, and ‘Open’.

The vast majority of the public sampled in the study, agreeing that the festival has become what it set out to be.

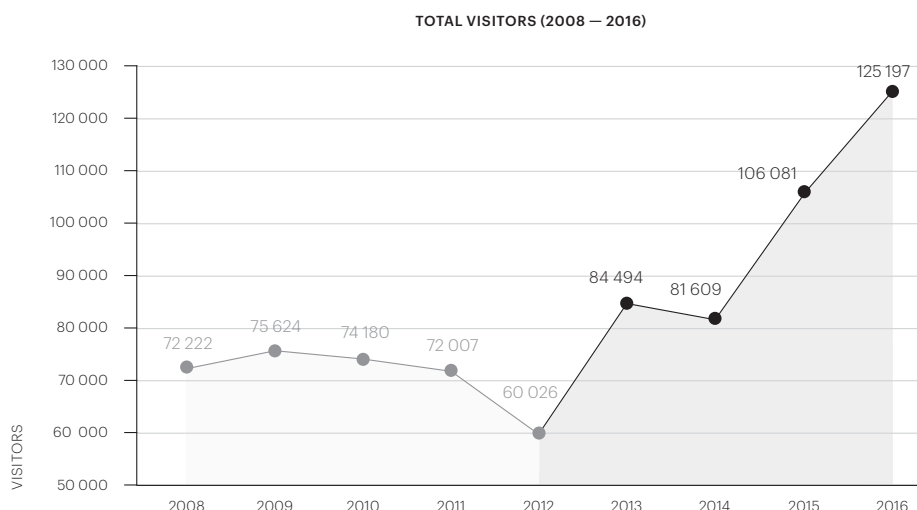
With ‘Joy of life / Exuberance’, and ‘Accessible to everyone’ having the strongest agreement from the public. This is a major departure from the festival’s presentation of negative public perception in 2012.

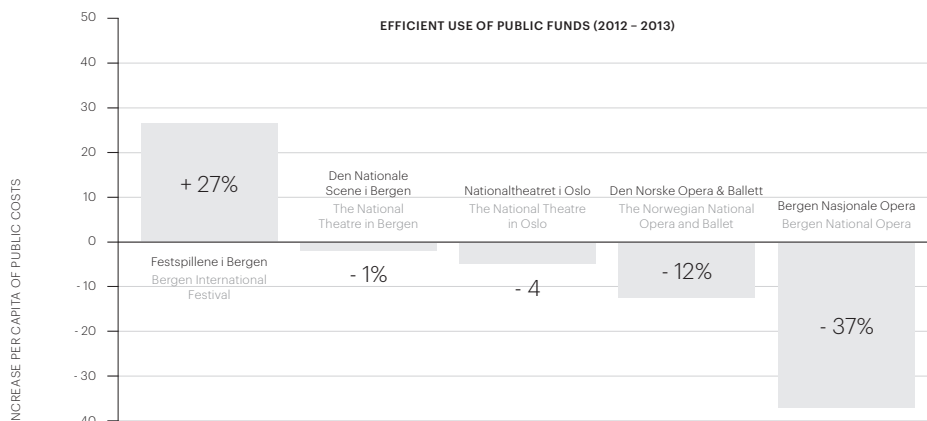
Staff Pride

In October 2015 PwC was commissioned to evaluate staff satisfaction with the new working environment. Following the 2013 application of the identity in the festival’s office space the staff response was positive. Noting that the new identity in the work environment was ‘according to the festival’s profile’, ‘stylish’, and filled them with ‘pride and professionalism’.

Rise in festival attendees under the new brand (2012 to 2016)

108%





Increased Value of
Public Investment
2012 — 2013

27%↑

MEDIA SPEND PER CAPITA OF TOTAL AUDIENCE



The Public Value of Design Investment

In both 2012 and 2013 the public funding for the festival remained consistent at NOK 31 126 000 [€3 991 598]. In the brand launch year of 2013 the successful rise in total audience numbers resulted in a fall of public cost of NOK 139 for every audience member; from NOK 519 in 2012, to NOK 380 in 2013. A reduction of public cost for each audience member by 27%, has result of which, the festival now stands alone to generate wider social benefit from public funds.

The festival has subsequently seen an increase in public investment over the subsequent years from 2013; against the political trend. Clear evidence into the value of design investment from public funded organisations.

Sustainable & Cost Effective Solution

The additive potential, through the flexibility of the identity, generated mass exposure without the need to meticulously plan, rollout, or control, opened up low cost high volume brand exposure.

The objective of such 'guerrilla marketing' methods, and programme+brand synthesising, was to draw in the younger fast-paced, and time-poor audiences — introducing them to the festival in a new light, positioning the content with relevance.

The festival's annual rise in media expenditure has been inline with the growth of festival.

Reaching the limits

Bergen has a population of 278 951 (Q3 2016), with 90 918 adults (16+) with higher education. In 2015 & 2016 84% attendees at the festival had higher education, with 95,5% of the 2016 attendees, to a ticketed event, being Norwegian. This draws the conclusion that the festival's 108% growth in audience, under the new brand, has reached a peak of local visitors; emphasising the huge social benefits of this City-defining festival.

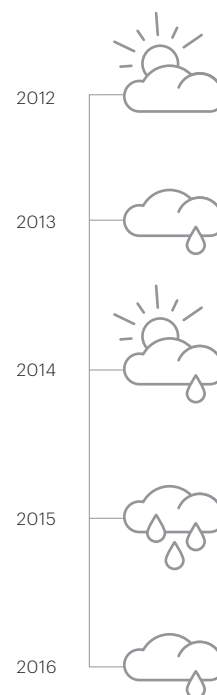
This phenomenal success lays forth exciting new ambitions for the festival brand's audience engagement, into 2017 and beyond.

5. Other Influencing Factors

Creative Leadership is needed on both sides of the table.

Programming for 2013 reflected what was possible with a very short planning period — as nothing had been planned in the transition from my predecessor. This meant we had to take quick decisions, with only one year's planning many artists and big scale productions were impossible to produce. Requiring us to build up a new way of planning several years ahead.

Anders Beyer (2017)
Chief Executive & Artistic Director



New Chief Executive & Artistic Director 2012 & Festival Programming 2013

In 2012, the festival appointed a new Chief Executive & Artistic Director, Anders Beyer. The visionary leadership by the new Director, and the festival's wider leadership team, forged out a bold strategy for the future.

2013: Isolating Creative Effectiveness

The launch of the new identity was the discernible impact for 2013.

The communications had to promote the festival where famous artists and big scale productions couldn't.

While the research covers the five festivals of 2012 to 2016, by making a comparative study of 2013 with the previous years isolates the impact of the 'redesign and communication strategy' from 'festival programming'.

Festival Programming 2014 — 2016

The Artistic Director's programme curation is a major contribution to the success of the festival. Increasing free public performances and widening the scope of the festival programme, defining the responsibility of the communications to attract and engage new audiences.

Promotional sales

In 2015 a maximum ticket price of 150 Kr (€19.24) was set for those under 30 years old. The promotion was intrinsically connected to the F3 programming.

Weather

Reviewing the weather during festival periods against annual attendants, before and after the rebrand, it is evident that the success cannot be connected to good weather conditions.

PR / Press

Cutbacks in the media industry impacted on news coverage. In 2013 there were 42 Norwegian journalists covering the festival, by 2015 the number had reduced to 26.

Although PR was managed by the festival, the communication void generated the essential need for stronger brand exposure in the market, picking up the slack from less and less traditional media coverage.

Since the launch of the rebrand, a gearshift has occurred in cultural institutions, focused on linking brand awareness with public engagement (not just public programming) with FiB pioneering this trend in the Nordics.

7. Research Resources

Bergen City - Adults with higher educations
Bergen National Opera Yearly Report 2012
Bergen National Opera Yearly Report 2013
City of Bergen yearly report 2013 - Culture
FiB annual accounts 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
FiB audience research 2014 & 2016
FiB Media spend 2013 to 2016
FiB Media spend 2013 to 2016 (Placements print & web)
FiB Strategy Process October 2012
FiB yearly report 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016
LG Samling 16.09.13
National Theatre yearly report 2012, 2013
Norwegian Ministry of Culture, report of audience numbers, 2008 to 2016
Population Bergen 2012 SSB
PwC Report Evaluating Move Project FiB 2013
Statistics Norway Bergen, Q3 2016
The National Stage in Bergen yearly report 2012 & 2013
The Norwegian Opera & Ballet yearly report 2012 & 2013
Weather Report 2012 - 2016 (www.yr.no)

Case tile

Bergen International Festival
Brand Campaign
2013 — 2016

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