

Communicating to Visitors *about* and *for* Sustainability in the Music Festival Sector

Recommendations for a Dutch Case



(Buiting, 2019a)

Ylva Arjuna Luijten

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Nijmegen School of Management

Radboud University

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Summary

Background: Due to the growth of the event and festival industry, paying attention to environmental sustainability has become an important aspect for event managers, just as communicating about this. Communication can be *about* sustainability (informative) or *for* sustainability (educational). In this research, a typology on visitor communication *for* and *about* sustainability is generated. This typology is helpful for the music festival sector regarding what communication elements are needed to overcome barriers and seize opportunities in sustainability communication to visitors.

Purpose: The aim is to give recommendations to the music festival sector on visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability.

Method: To generate rich recommendations, the research has the design of an embedded single case study with a mixed methods approach. First, semi-structured interviews are used to describe three mini cases on their communication on sustainability and what barriers and opportunities to reinforce communication they encounter. Second, a quantitative questionnaire is used to generate an image of what (potential) visitors find important regarding sustainability in general and sustainable events specifically. This is done as festivals want their communication to resonate with their audience. Third, a festival initiative, a system with a deposit on plastic softcups, is piloted on the 2019 edition of a Dutch festival (Drift Festival). With the use of action research, this system is described and evaluated. Fourth and last, considered is a 'community of practice', where best practices and drivers and barriers for sustainable event production are discussed amongst festivals located in Nijmegen.

Results: For business to consumer sustainability communication, understandability, transparency, openness and knowledge sharing are essential. In the eyes of the interviewees, sustainability communication reaches its goals when awareness is raised under visitors as well as that there is some education involved. Additionally, sustainability communication can be used to strengthen the brand of a festival and position it as a trendsetter. Consequently, such a festival can have a competitive advantage over others.

Recommendations: The intrinsic motivation to green a festival should advance into a drive to spread the sustainability vision amongst visitors; communication *about* sustainability. This vision can then educate the people on sustainability along with generating awareness about the impact the festival industry has on the environment; communication *for* sustainability. With this, the festival brand can be strengthened, and the festival can position itself as an example for other festivals. It is important that the communication on sustainability creates content and depth to the festival. Therefore, it is a good idea to communicate easily understandable messages to the general public, yet have more background information available for those interested. This also builds to the elements of transparency and openness, as a means for meaningful communication, while at the same time avoiding the misleading of consumers regarding the environmental practices of a festival.

Keywords: *Music festivals, greening, sustainability, event management, communication.*

Colophon

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Student

Author: Ylva Luijten

Student number: 4310691

Education: Master Environment and Society Studies

Specialization: Corporate Sustainability

Phone number: 0631697866

E-mail: ylvaluyten@hotmail.com

Employer

Employer: Drift om te Dansen BV

Address: Winselingseweg 41
6541 AH Nijmegen

Supervisor: Diede van Overbeek

E-mail: diede@driftomtedansen.nl

Phone number: +31638630477

**DRIFT
OMTED
ANSEN**

Educational Institution

Institution: Radboud University Nijmegen (RU)

Supervisor: Daan Boezeman
d.boezeman@fm.ru.nl

Second reader: Mark Wiering
m.wiering@fm.ru.nl

E-mail:



Preface

This research stemmed from my passion for dance music festivals on the one hand and sustainability on the other. In the summer, I enjoy visiting various dance music festivals, yet as I got older, I started to notice the impact all these festivals have on the environment. I started to wonder whether there is something we can do about this environmental impact, so my research topic was born.

Of course, I could not have done the research project without my support system. First, I am thankful that the dance music festival I have been going to for several years, Drift om te dansen, was able to offer me an internship to bring my research topic to life. It was a pleasant and educative internship. I would like to thank the whole team from Drift and especially Diede van Overbeek, Stef Steffens and Mauke Rodermond for having confidence in me and making my research project a success. Second, Daan Boezeman, my thesis supervisor also deserves my gratitude. His guidance and support throughout the research project were invaluable, including that extra push that I sometimes needed. Third, Sanne Verhoeven deserves recognition, she is also researching sustainability at festivals and we held a lot of productive brainstorming sessions together. Finally, this project would not be there without the 'Convenant Duurzame Evenementen', the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with me and discuss the topic of sustainable event production. So, I would also like to thank them sincerely.

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Chapter I. Introduction

I.I Sustainable events on the rise

“Gatherings of people for a purpose always have and always will be a part of the human story. Those staging these events have a social and environmental responsibility to manage their impacts and enhance their positive lasting legacies.”

Meegan Jones, event professional

The events and festival sector first gained the interest of the industry and academics in the 1970s and this attention grew further in the 1990s. Since the introduction of social media, growth of festivals and events accelerated, to a point at which they cannot be seen as separate of people's lifestyles anymore (Getz & Page, 2016). With this growth, also came the growth of the sector on management of these events and festivals (Draper, Young Thomas & Fenich, 2018). In the management of events, it is important to take sustainability into account, as the introductory quote shows. The quote further points to a dual purpose for event managers. On the one hand, (environmental) impacts from the event have to be managed. On the other hand, organisers should strive for positive lasting legacies in the form of a lasting learning effect with their visitors regarding sustainability.

Sustainability is a broad term, often described with the concepts of the *triple bottom line*: social, economic and environmental sustainability (Elkington, 1994). The focus of this research is on the environmental and economic dimension of sustainability in the event sector in general and the music festival sector specifically.

As for environmental sustainability, Getz (2010) indicates in his review that up until that point in time, research on sustainability in events had been limited. About eight years later, more and more data and information are accumulated on this subject. The initial focus was on recycling, quickly followed by counting up greenhouse gas emissions (Jones, 2018, p. 17-19). Other sustainability issues relate to venue, supply chain, energy, transport and water. Last on the list is engagement and communication (Jones, 2018, p. 41). Besides the necessary element of implementing sustainable measures into events, indicated by the increasing number of regulations, it can also be seen as a good management opportunity (Kiron, Kruschwitz, Haanaes & van Streng Velken, 2012). Thus, besides environmental awareness that is pushing events towards environmental sustainability, managers also see the possibility to become a frontrunner on this subject (Mair & Laing, 2012; Covenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, November 27, 2018). DGTL Festival in Amsterdam is an excellent example of a frontrunner. They are impeding their goal of becoming the first circular festival in the world (DGTL, n.d.). Their 2018 edition was set up in such a way, that DGTL claimed attending the festival was more sustainable than staying at home (Verwoerdt, 2018).

This leaves the explanation of economic sustainability, which refers to “*practices that support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community*” (University of Mary Washington, n.d.). Of this, DGTL is also a good example, as they turn investment in environmental sustainability into a profit. For instance, their efforts in 2018 gained a lot of media-attention, leading to more brand visibility and higher visitor numbers.

Of course, DGTL is an example from Amsterdam, where a ‘covenant sustainable events’ was signed as early as in 2013 (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.). So, from 2013 onwards, all events happening in Amsterdam were stimulated towards environmental sustainability. This might be one of the reasons for DGTL being so far ahead on issues of this type of sustainability, causing them to also be more economically sustainable as a company.

I.2 Communication about and for sustainability

The best way to generate recognition for issues such as sustainability is through communication (Jones, 2018, p. 64). There are different types of communication in the event sector, such as communication within the organisation itself, communication from the organisation to a level of government and communication from the organisation to consumers, i.e. festival visitors. *Business to consumer (B2C)* communication is the focus of this research, because this type has the largest effect on brand visibility, causing to sell out the festival (earlier), as well as that tickets might be made more expensive, with the result of having more budget available (for example to implement sustainable measures at the festival). B2C communication is thus communication from the festival to their visitors. B2C communication can be divided into a few subtypes. The first involves communication through social media, using for example Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. The second uses the festival website to pass on information to visitors. The third and last subtype uses offline media, such as flyers, stickers and posters. These three subtypes of B2C communication are aimed at providing information. There is also B2C communication aimed at education. Here, something is communicated at the festival itself, and often people have to do or experience something in combination with the communication. This causes people to remember the information better, while also creating awareness (Jones, 2018, p. 64-83; M. Rodermond, personal communication, May 10, 2019).

In the context of sustainability communication, the same division between communication aimed at providing information and communication aimed at education exists, respectively communication *about* and *for* sustainability. This division is in agreement with the last sentence of the introductory quote: “*Those staging these events have a social and environmental responsibility to manage their impacts and enhance their positive lasting legacies*”. When ‘managing their impacts’, it is important to know how to do that and how to communicate *about* that. When ‘enhancing their positive lasting legacies’, the festival has to be communicating *for* sustainability; they aim to learn their visitors something that has a positive effect on sustainability.

Mair and Laing (2012) researched drivers and barriers for *corporate greening* practices in the festival sector. Corporate greening is defined as follows by them: “*investment in environmentally friendly facilities and practices*”. This research will look into drivers (or opportunities) and barriers for communicating about these greening practices. It is interesting to discover similarities and differences in drivers and barriers for the greening process and communicating about this.

At the moment, there is limited understanding amongst marketing practitioners on how to design sustainability messages that motivate sustainable consumer behaviour, communication *for* sustainability (Wehrli et al., 2014). Furthermore, a recent literature review on sustainability communication in the tourism sector, a sector of which events are a part of, has the following conclusion. Extant research on sustainability communication is dominated by a focus on hotel contexts and environmental sustainability (Tölkes, 2018). Therefore, this research will contribute to filling the gap of research on sustainability communication in the event sector in general and music festivals specifically, regarding environmental and economic sustainability. Questions addressed are: what type of sustainability communication reaches the big masses? What type of sustainability communication do visitors themselves prefer? What are barriers regarding sustainability communication? Do opportunities exist to reinforce sustainability communication, i.e. drivers for communication?

1.3 Research problem statement

The contemporary phenomenon sustainability communication is researched empirically in a real-life context, in other words, the phenomenon is explored with a case study (Yin, 1981). This case study will therefore contribute to filling the knowledge gap on sustainability communication in the event sector in general and music festival sector specifically, as well as on its opportunities and barriers.

In this research, the Dutch ‘Drift – om te dansen’ is studied as a case for music festivals. In the electronic dance music scene in Nijmegen, Drift is well known. Drift was founded sixteen-and-a-half years ago and in the spring of 2019, the ninth edition of Drift Festival took place. The number of visitors has increased from two thousand to ten thousand in these nine years. As a result of this success, the 2019 festival was extended to last two days for the first time and they expected to have twenty thousand visitors in total (D. van Overbeek, personal communication, December 18, 2018). Unfortunately, due to extreme weather conditions, the festival was only allowed to continue on Sunday, and a little over nine thousand people visited.

Drift Festival has already taken measures to become more sustainable. One of them has to do with social sustainability. During the Four Day Marches Week, Drift collaborates with ‘Het Danspaleis’ to set up a dance evening especially for the elderly (van den Boogaard, 2017). The other measures have to do mostly with environmental sustainability, but also with economic sustainability. First and foremost, Drift has been working together with Alfen to green their energy use (fig. 1). Instead of using diesel powered generators, Drift Festival uses a large battery charged with solar energy from the solar panels that lay on top of the venue they use for their festival, ‘De Vasim’ (Alfen, 2018). Second, Drift partnered

with Bar-Le-Duc for the 2019 spring edition. Their polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles are made from 100% recycled plastic (Bar-Le-Duc, n.d.). During the festival, visitors paid a deposit for a water bottle, giving them a good incentive to return it after use. This deposit ensures that the waste can be collected as a monostream, making the recycling process easier. This is a good example of where environmental and economic sustainability meet (D. van Overbeek, personal communication, November 22, 2018).

Of course, implementing measures is one thing, but the available information on them can often only be found on external websites at the moment of writing. This is exactly what Drift - om te Dansen could improve; communicating their story on sustainability in a consistent and logical manner to their visitors.



Figure 1. In 2018, Drift festival ran on green electricity for the first time, with the use of a battery from Alfen, put in clear sight of the festival visitors (Alfen, 2018).

To find possible improvements, festivals that do communicate on sustainability were studied. Besides that, visitor perspectives on sustainability and sustainable festivals were taken into account to make sure that communication resonates with the audience. Furthermore, a sustainability practice tested at Drift Festival 2019 was evaluated amongst visitors and the organisation. Lastly, the local

equivalent of the Amsterdam covenant was studied. This covenant was set up in Nijmegen in 2018, in the context of European Green Capital, and was signed by 27 local events. This covenant commits events to improving their sustainability in the upcoming year and beyond (Green Capital Challenges, 2017). In this project, opportunities and failures are shared during meetings, to help event managers learn from each other and take the right steps towards reaching a sustainable festival (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, November 27, 2018). This covenant is a community of practice and therefore of value for this research. From combining these four elements, valuable lessons on sustainability communication can be learnt, and Drift could use the influence they have on (young) people as a music festival, by setting an example these people will want to follow.

The findings can be used to communicate sustainability to visitors, while overcoming barriers and seizing opportunities in communication. Both communication *about* and *for* sustainability is taken into account. Also, being a trendsetter when it comes to greening practices is a good thing, both for business and for the environment. Thus, communicating about them is essential, so this competitive advantage for business and environment can be obtained. Of further societal relevance is raising policy attention for events. Rules and regulations about sustainable event production will accelerate the process of making events as sustainable as possible.

1.4 Research aim & research questions

The most important aim of this research is to understand the different elements of sustainability communication. I.e. what barriers are there to overcome, what opportunities are there to reinforce communication and how can the difference between communication *about* and *for* sustainability be understood and used in communication. This results in recommendations for music festivals in general and Drift Festival specifically on how to communicate *about* and *for* sustainability to their visitors. An additional objective is to raise policy attention for festival greening as there is little at the moment.

This leads to the following main research question: (1) “What elements are needed to overcome barriers and seize opportunities in communication about and for sustainability in the festival sector?”. This question is answered with the use of the following sub questions: (2) “What is the opinion of other festivals on sustainability communication?”; (3) “What is the opinion of festival visitors on sustainability communication?”; (4) “What problems and experiences do you encounter in practice?”. The answers to these research questions are then used to give concrete and concise recommendations on sustainability communication to music festivals in general and Drift Festival specifically.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainability in general

Sustainability has become quite the buzzword over the years, but that is not surprising as it is an important term. Reaching a sustainable world could be perceived as the ultimate goal, and the way to get there is through sustainable development (Jones, 2018, p. 5). The Brundtland Commission first defined sustainable development as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (WCED, 1987). From this definition came many more, all based on the *three-pillar* or *triple bottom line* concept, mentioned in the introduction. This model assumes the concept of sustainability has three elements, namely environmental, economic and societal (Pope, Annandale & Morrison-Saunders, 2004).

Figure 2 provides a nested version of the *triple bottom line* model. It presumes that economic and social sustainability are contained by the limits of the biophysical environment and thus that they can never grow beyond the environmental boundaries (Goodland, 1995). As a consequence, humanity must learn to live and develop within these limits. The common description of economic sustainability takes the environmental limits into account, since it is mostly focused on efficient resource use and it dictates that economic growth should not negatively impact environmental sustainability (University of Mary Washington, n.d.).

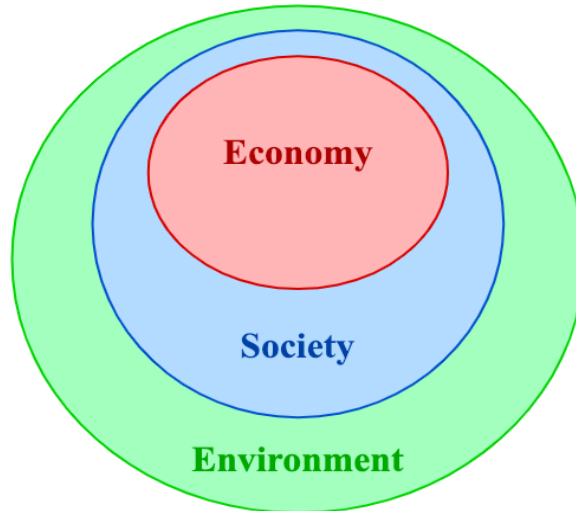


Figure 2. Nested Triple Bottom Line diagram (Tucker, n.d.).

Companies are at the axis where environmental and economic sustainability meet. The main focus is on making profits, even though environmental issues have become increasingly important over the years. This trend is at least in part caused by consumer demand of environmentally sustainable products, which has risen recently (Kiron et al., 2012). As a consequence, *Corporate Social Responsibility*

(CSR) has become increasingly important, which has the main goal to make companies take responsibility for societal problems like air pollution or climate change (MVO Nederland, 2017).

As a form of private governance, non-binding regulations for CSR are brought into being. The International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO) is an example of this. They issued a report in 2010, ISO 26000, providing guidelines that are used worldwide. It has a large support base, since very diverse stakeholders from 94 countries compiled the document together (ISO, n.d.; MVO Nederland, 2015).

In conclusion, sustainability and sustainable development have become quite important over the years. The economy and the society are developing, while they have to stay within the boundaries the environment poses. For companies, environmental sustainability has also become increasingly important, especially because of consumer demand. Therefore, more and more companies are taking responsibility for societal problems by implementing CSR in their management.

2.2 Sustainability in festivals

Above, I discussed sustainability in general. Now, I will narrow the subject of sustainability down to sustainability in festivals specifically. In this thesis, two threads of literature on festival sustainability are examined: trends in festival greening and trends in communication on greening. During this examination, both the environmental and economic side of sustainability are taken into account. These threads provide a conceptual basis upon which a conceptual framework is built.

2.2.1 Trends in festival greening

Festival greening is a process that runs on multiple stakeholder levels. Stakeholders that have an interest in festival greening are suppliers, sponsors, government, festival management and festival visitors. Suppliers and sponsors are not in the scope of this research, as the focus is on B2C communication, so they are left out of consideration. The festival management, government and visitors will be discussed in succession.

At the level of festival management, *corporate greening* is an important concept. The definition of *greening* used in this report is the one proposed by Mair and Jago (2010), 'investment in environmentally friendly facilities and practices'. These authors provide examples of greening practices as being changes to products, processes and policies.

Corporate greening depends on the commitment of the festival management, along with a wide range of other factors. Mair and Jago (2010) created a conceptual model that revolves around the drivers and barriers that influence event managers in the business event tourism sector. This model was used by Mair and Laing (2012) to further identify which factors influence the managers of festivals specifically in the greening process. They found that, amongst others, available time and money hindered festival greening whereas influence from stakeholders and the desire to educate improved festival greening.

Another so-called driver that was identified by both Mair and Jago (2010) and Mair and Laing (2012) is competitive advantage. This concept is best explained by a quote from an interviewee from Mair and Laing (2012): *“I think that there is a distinct marketing advantage for us because currently, what we’re doing and how we’re doing it, it feels like we are leading the charge for the kind of festival we are and that’s a good position to be in”* (p. 692). From this quote, it is clear that festivals want to be leading the charge, as was also discussed in the introduction. Ludema, Laszlo, and Lynch (2012, as cited in Tinnish & Mangal, 2012), also mention sustainable value creation as becoming a key driver of competitive advantage for organisations. They suggest that organisational leaders are shifting their perspective on sustainability from seeing it as an obligation to seeing it as an opportunity. Related to this driver, is the drive for an improved image or reputation compared to other festivals. The interviewees were realistic, stating that festivals generally have to be run as a business, which is why greening can be used as a business decision (Mair & Laing, 2012).

At the level of the government, legislation can be designed for festivals to keep to a promise of greening. At the moment, binding legislation to drive festivals to green their practices does not exist in the Dutch national law or in the city of Nijmegen (D. van Overbeek, personal communication, February 26, 2018). A partnership between the private and the public sector does exist in Nijmegen at the moment, this is the ‘Covenant Duurzame Evenementen’ that was already discussed in the introduction. On the initiative of the municipality, participating events form a partnership amongst each other and with the municipality, committing to greening their events. The covenant in Amsterdam is an additional example of a private-public partnership. In 2013, the Amsterdam covenant set the ambition of a 10% reduction in energy consumption and CO₂ emissions in 3 years. Whether this ambition has been achieved remains a question. These two covenants are examples of a community of practice, which aims to share information on practices with the purpose of learning (Hoadley, 2012).

Since March 2018, the municipality of Amsterdam has guidelines for sustainable events. The criteria are introduced in phases between 2018 and 2020. There are five themes: organisation and communication, energy, water, waste, mobility. For each theme is indicated what will become compulsory in which year to get a permit. For example, regarding theme organisation and communication, the organisation has appointed a sustainability manager for the event in 2019, so that there is a central point of contact for sustainability. Regarding the energy theme, the criteria is that events run on 100% green electricity in 2020 (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). This is an example of a government initiative to green events hosted in Amsterdam.

In 2017, a Green Deal was signed by frontrunners in the festival sector, NederlandSchoon and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure & Environment. This Green Deal is aimed specifically at reducing the waste per visitor, increasing waste separation, as well as more and better recycling. There are no quantified goals to map progress (Green Events, n.d.). This is an example of a tripartite partnership where the government works together with festivals and the foundation NederlandSchoon towards greening the events sector.

At the level of visitors, *willingness to pay* is an important concept in festival greening. Research done by Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer (2005) shows that consumer satisfaction and willingness to pay are closely linked. The level of satisfaction the consumer has with the paid-for service, determines the amount of money they are willing to pay for the service. In the context of this research, this is useful information. Often, festival managers think greening measures are expensive. Although this is not always the case, the measures that are costlier can still be implemented if consumer satisfaction stays the same or is enhanced. With enhanced satisfaction, chances are that visitors are willing to pay more for the greener festival, thereby releasing the pressure of the costs for these greening measures that can now be shared between the festival management and the visitors.

Concluding, in this research, the stakeholders of relevance for corporate greening are the festival management, the government and the visitors. Festival management needs to be committed to greening and needs to see the competitive advantage of greening. Government has to design legislation regarding festival greening, causing sustainable event management to really take off. Visitors should continue to demand sustainable products and services and be willing to pay for sustainability.

2.2.2 Trends in communication on greening

According to Jones (2018, p. 64), communication is one of the most powerful and essential tools for a sustainability manager. B2C communications can be *about* sustainability, meaning giving out the right information. It can also be *for* sustainability, creating a drive for enduring change. These concepts are discussed in succession. A typology of the B2C communication on sustainability is given in table 1 and explained below.

Communication *about* sustainability can be process-oriented, in which case it is targeted to internal stakeholders (Jones, 2018, p. 67). It can also be promotional, which is more relevant given the focus on B2C communication. Sustainability efforts that are communicated publicly can be a means to differentiate from others, just like it can be a way to build a stronger brand (Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). Jones (2018, p. 66) defines this as well, but with other words: B2C communication is useful to position the event and have a competitive advantage over other events.

One way to communicate *about* sustainability is through the use of (social) media. Events that take significant sustainability efforts should provide information about these efforts on the internet. This can be done with a stand-alone website or on the main website of the event (Jones, 2018, p. 81).

When using these methods of communication *about* sustainability, it is important to avoid greenwashing. Greenwashing has been defined as “*the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service*” (The Sins of Greenwashing, n.d.). Examples of greenwashing are: making claims that are very difficult to substantiate, being vague about environmental claims, or exaggerating the environmental benefits of products or services (Mair & Laing, 2012). Avoiding greenwashing is essential, as people can otherwise start to think that sustainability efforts never mean anything, because everyone can assert empty claims. The drive for establishing an improved image with festival greening (Jones, 2018; Mair & Jago,

2010; Tinnish & Mangal, 2012) discussed above, poses a risk for greenwashing, for example. Regulations, such as the ISO 26000 (ISO, n.d.) mentioned before, help with avoiding greenwashing.

Often, communication *for* sustainability stems with the transmitter (organisation) from a desire to create awareness and even a desire to educate the receiver (visitor). Events possess unique capabilities to create awareness, educate, and model behaviour. Thereby, sustainable events offer the opportunity to help drive societal change (Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). When driving for change, it is important to keep the following aspects in mind. First, you need to tailor your communications to your audience. Namely, what communications and engagement techniques will be effective in creating behavioural change depends strongly on the person or group you are trying to influence. Therefore, knowing your audience is essential (Jones, 2018, p. 82). Second, having knowledge about change theory is of importance. For example, when motivating people to change familiar behaviour, inducing feelings is necessary (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Thus, your communication has to be tailored to your audience in a way that it elicits some kind of emotion.

One way to communicate *for* sustainability, is by the setup of an ‘eco-zone’ at the festival. By using an eco-zone, festivals want to create positive engagement that lasts beyond the days of the event (de Brito & Terzieva, 2016; Jones, 2018, p. 69). An example of an eco-zone that was set up at Drift Festival 2019 is the project by Kuyichi. Kuyichi is a sustainable clothing brand that works with organic cotton only and has recently started to collect and recycle used jeans. At Drift Festival, Kuyichi held a call to action; people were asked to bring their old jeans to the festival in exchange for a coupon code for Kuyichi clothing. These jeans could go into recycling. Additionally, in the eco-zone, visitors could craft with discarded clothes, while staff from Kuyichi was available to answer all questions visitors might have. The call to action and the new life given to discarded clothes were used to create awareness for the pressure the fashion industry has on the environment (S. Dubbeldam, personal communication, March 6, 2019).

Thus, sustainability communication is two-sided, communication *about* and *for* sustainability. In the case of B2C communication in the music festival sector, this communication can be further divided into subtypes. These subtypes are social media communication (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter), communication via the website and offline communication (posters, flyers, stickers, at the festival itself).

Table 1. Typology of business to consumer communication on sustainability.

| Business to consumer communication on sustainability | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Communication <i>about</i> sustainability | Communication <i>for</i> sustainability |
| Communication type | Social media | Eco-zone |
| | Website | |
| | Offline media | |

Capabilities to communicate encompass this typology of B2C sustainability communication. These are resources, awareness, knowledge and skill. First, an example of a resource is a communication budget needed to create brand awareness on social media platforms (Heggestuen & Danova, 2013). Second, there is a growing awareness among employees regarding sustainability caused by companies taking sustainability into consideration when developing their (communication) strategies (Galpin, Whittington & Bell, 2015). Third, communication employees need knowledge and understanding of the communication process (Fill, 1999 as cited in Holm, 2006) as well as of sustainability (Villarino & Font, 2015). Fourth, communication is handled by professionally skilled employees (Holm, 2006), and over time these employees acquired better skills and tactics in managing social media (Kwok & Yu, 2013).

Surely, the communications fit into theories on communications. Regarding communication theories, framing is the most relevant for this research, as people always interpret information and situations within a certain frame (Michels, 2016). It is the job of the festival to change the frames of their visitors in such a way, that they are steered towards becoming more environmentally conscious.

Framing used specifically to convey meaning and to focus audience attention on particular aspects of a topic in order to gain a favourable response is called strategic framing. This type of framing prompts people to think in particular, desired ways about a topic and to use only a portion of their knowledge stored in memory (Hallahan, 2008). Strategic framing can be used both when communicating *about* and *for* sustainability. Festivals need to choose a storyline when communicating on sustainability at different (social) media or at the festival site. Examples of storylines are motivational-oriented or sacrifice-oriented message frames. Central in motivational-oriented message frames are solutions, values and visions. The idea is to connect positivity to the message. Central in sacrifice-oriented message frames is the danger when sacrifices are not made. The idea is to elicit fear with the message (Gifford & Comeau, 2011; G. Plat, personal communication, February 21, 2019). In their research, Gifford and Comeau (2011) found that the use of motivational frames is preferred over the use of sacrifice frames to increase climate-related engagement and activation.

In conclusion, we know that for delivering a sustainability vision, multiple subtypes of B2C communication exist. Communicating informatively *about* sustainability can be done by using social media, the website and offline media. Communicating educationally *for* sustainability can be done with the setup of an eco-zone at the festival. Motives for communicating *about* and *for* sustainability include desire to educate, desire to create awareness and achieving a competitive advantage over other festivals by building a stronger brand and differentiating your festival from others, i.e. trendsetting

Mair and Jago (2010) mention that it comes down to committed employees and management driving for change for the greening of an organisation. This research explores if these committed people are not only essential for the greening of an organisation, but also for communicating this greening process. Furthermore, Tölkes (2018) identified in her literature review a lack on research on sustainability in the event sector in general and the music festival sector specifically, this research will contribute to filling this knowledge gap.

2.3 Conceptual framework

After having discussed the trends in festival greening and communication theories, a proposed conceptual framework is built, which can be found in figure 3. This model is a composition of the concepts discussed above and will help with understanding the subject of visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability. The concepts are also used as sensitizing in my data analysis.

This conceptual model is made up of four main elements. The most important element is the end goal, with other words visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability. Then there is the element of the internal context, meaning within the organisation. Furthermore, the external context is also relevant. Lastly, organisational drivers are also essential to take into account. The elements will now be discussed in more detail.

Regarding the internal context, intrinsic motivation of the festival management and other employees is needed to green a festival (Jones, 2018; Mair & Jago, 2010). Communicating B2C about this greening process stems from a desire to educate and a desire to create awareness under visitors (Mair & Laing, 2012; Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). Furthermore, specific capabilities are needed to get the sustainability message across, such as: resources (Heggestuen & Danova, 2013), awareness (Galpin, Whittington & Bell, 2015), knowledge (Fill, 1999 as cited in Holm, 2006; Villarino & Font, 2015) and skills (Holm, 2006; Kwok & Yu, 2013).

Concerning the external context, on the one hand visitor pressures should be taken into account, and on the other hand institutional pressures. Visitor pressures take the form of willingness to pay more for products and services when the consumers are satisfied (Homburg et al., 2005). There is a trend for consumers to demand sustainability in products and services (Kiron et al., 2012), meaning they are probably willing to pay more if sustainability is considered. Furthermore, greenwashing should be avoided, otherwise there is a risk of losing consumer trust (Mair & Laing, 2012). Institutional pressures exist of public-, private- and civil society partnerships and government initiatives to push festivals towards greening (e.g. covenant sustainable events, Green Deal, guidelines municipality of Amsterdam).

The overarching organisational driver is the wish to have a competitive advantage over other festivals (Jones, 2018). This advantage is on the one hand obtained by building a stronger festival brand by communicating about the greening process. On the other hand, it is achieved by posing as an example for other festivals with regard to greening, that is setting a trend (Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). The organisational drivers link together the internal and external context. All components (intrinsic motivation, capabilities, visitor pressures, institutional pressures) are associated in one way or another to the drivers. These drivers eventually lead to visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability.

As discussed above, strategic framing is the communication theory relevant for this research (Michels, 2016). This theory is used in the end goal, visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability. With visitor communication, people are prompted to think in particular, desired ways about sustainability (Hallahan, 2008). To increase climate-related engagement and activation, it is best to

formulate communication in a motivational frame (Gifford & Comeau, 2011). Thus, this regards specifically the content of the message to be communicated.

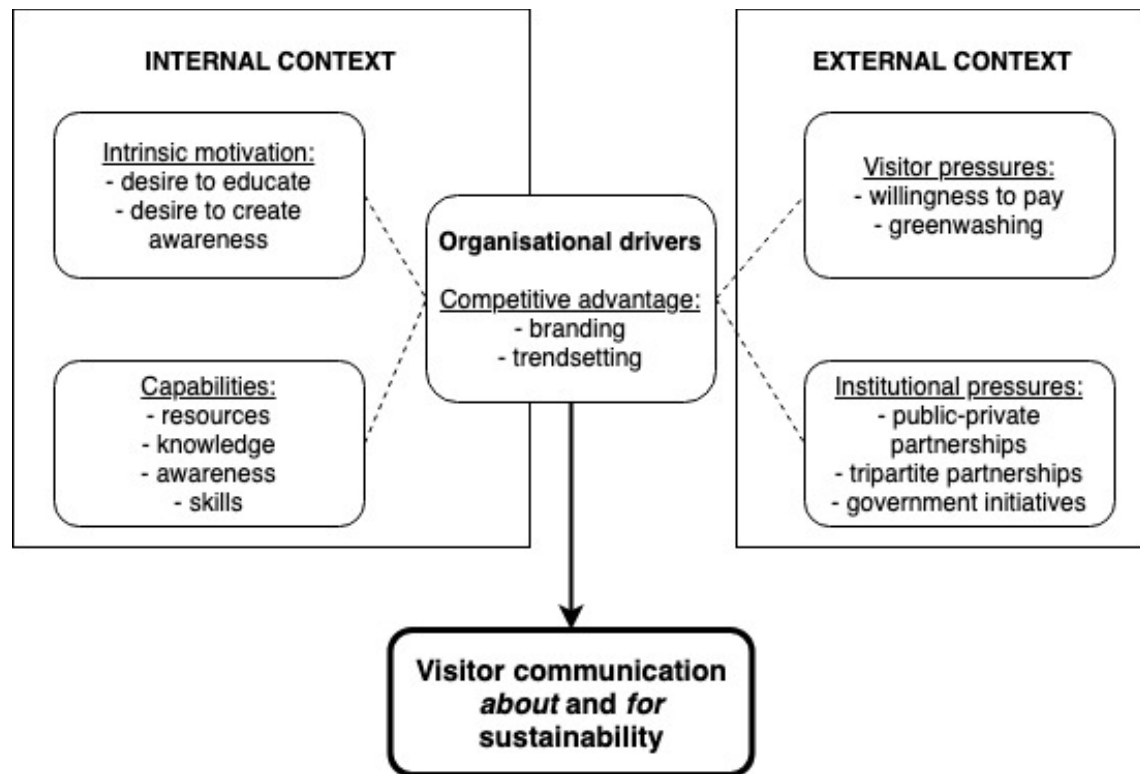


Figure 3. Proposed Conceptual Framework.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Overview

The main aim of this research is to give practical recommendations to Drift on how to communicate sustainability to their festival visitors. To come to these recommendations, I used multiple data collection methods, both qualitative and quantitative (fig. 4). Therefore, the research has the form of an embedded single-case study design with a mixed methods approach. This leads to recommendations for the case, Drift, that are as rich as possible.

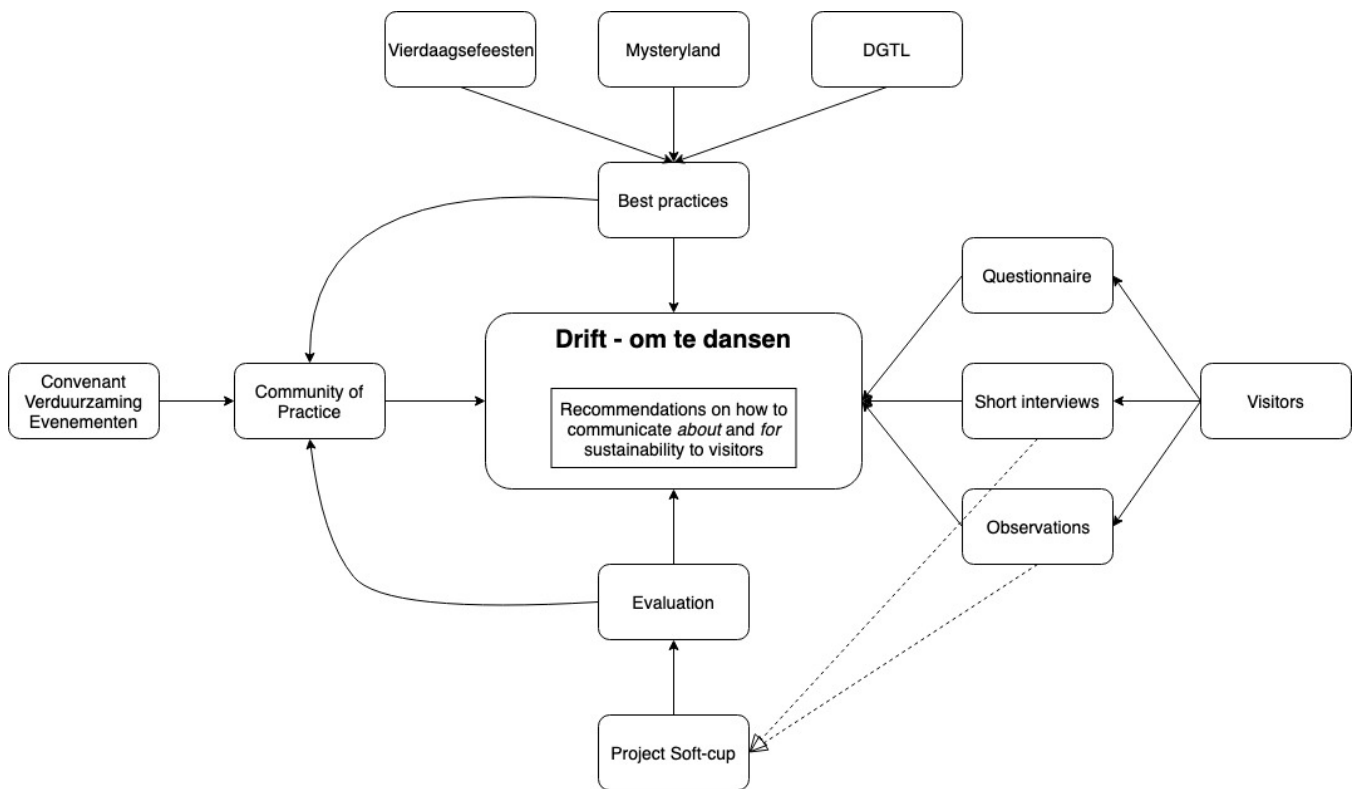


Figure 4. Visualization of the embedded single-case study design with mixed methods approach.

To enable greater confidence in findings and grounded recommendations, I triangulated four types of data for my case study (Bryman, 2016, p. 386). First, to understand best practices in sustainable event production and communication, I did qualitative interviews with other festivals. Second, to get a notion on what the average visitor finds important regarding sustainability, in their daily life as well as at the festival, a quantitative questionnaire was distributed amongst potential Drift Festival visitors. Third, the covenant ‘Duurzame Evenementen’ was studied as a community of practice. The objectives of this covenant are to share insights and to learn from each other’s drivers and barriers concerning greening practices. This covenant is included as a qualitative data source. Lastly, a festival

initiative, a system with a deposit on plastic softcups, was tested at Drift Festival on June 9 of 2019. During the festival, short interviews were held with visitors on their opinions about the system and observations were collected on the behaviour of the visitors. After the festival, that initiative was also evaluated with the organisation.

In the following paragraphs, these methods are discussed with regard to the research strategy, research design, research methods, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research strategy & design

In my case study, Drift is analysed in much detail as a case for music festivals in general and dance music festivals specifically (Bryman, 2016, p. 60). With my understanding of sustainability communication, I will give recommendations to Drift on how they can communicate best. Following my conceptual approach and the need to get a holistic understanding of the case, the approach consisted of four sub-units and combined qualitative and qualitative methods, making my research an embedded single-case study design with a mixed methods approach (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). The sub-units are explained in detail below.

The mixed methods approach was chosen because the quantitative survey, used as sub-unit to get an idea of what potential Drift visitors see as important regarding sustainability and sustainable festivals, was added. I preferred a quantitative survey over the use of qualitative focus groups, as the group of potential visitors is large and heterogenous. A survey filled out by a large group yields results that are generalizable to this potential visitor group, whereas results derived from focus groups are not generalizable in the same sense (Bryman, 2016, p. 399). Thus, the survey results are more valuable to Drift to characterize 'the visitor'.

A single-case study design is appropriate because Drift serves as a *representative* case for other festivals in the dance music festival sector (Yin, 2003). The objective here is to capture circumstances and conditions for communication about sustainability to festival visitors. The resultant lessons learned are informative about the experiences of average festival organisations.

3.3 Description sub-units

3.3.1 Festivals

The first sub-unit are best practices derived from interviewing other festivals than Drift. These interviewed festivals were sampled purposively, and they are typical cases exemplifying a common dimension of interest (communicating about their greening practices, in this case) (Bryman, 2016, p. 62). Still, I sampled every festival for a slightly different reason, which I will explain below.

The *Vierdaagsefeesten* was sampled because it is an event also hosted in Nijmegen, as is Drift Festival. It has to deal with, for example, the same municipality and therefore the same rules and regulations. Thus, Drift can learn relevant location-bound lessons from this case.

Mysteryland was sampled because it has the same music genre as Drift Festival (electronic dance music) and thus attracts the same kinds of people. This means valuable lessons can be learned by Drift about the best practices *Mysteryland* uses, that are specifically tailored to their audience.

DGTL was sampled for multiple reasons. First, as with *Mysteryland*, it has the same music genre and thus the same kind of audience as Drift Festival. Second, *DGTL* really stands out in the festival sector regarding their sustainability practices. This makes it an optimal typical case to collect best practices from, so valuable lessons can be learned. Third, *DGTL* is an event hosted in Amsterdam. Amsterdam has requirements regarding sustainability at events hosted in their city. It is interesting to see what these requirements mean for the best practices a festival has in place.

3.3.2 Visitor perspectives

The second sub-unit is the collective opinion of potential Drift visitors on sustainability; what they think is important with respect to sustainability, in their daily life as well as at the festival site. Understanding this is important because as a festival, you want your communication to resonate with your audience. I obtained this opinion with the use of a survey, to generate an opinion that is generalizable to 'the' potential visitor. To make sure that the respondents were potential Drift visitors, the target group, we raffled two weekend tickets for the upcoming festival under the respondents. I distributed the survey in multiple ways, via Facebook, via the Drift e-mail newsletter, via WhatsApp, and I also asked people to distribute the survey further.

3.3.3 Assessing softcups in action

In the third sub-unit, I studied how visitors dealt with a specific festival initiative, the deposit system. I will explain the exact workings of the initiative in chapter four (results). This system was set up because of the belief that we, Drift, had to reduce the plastic use during the festival. Besides that, we wanted to create awareness and achieve some sort of behavioural change. It was my job to study how visitors handled the system and what they thought of it, with the use of short interviews and observations.

The festival initiative was also evaluated within the organisation. Our objectives were to combat plastic use, create awareness and cause behavioural change. Were these objectives achieved? To evaluate this, my short interviews and observations were helpful. Additionally, the deposit system was discussed in the general evaluation of the festival. This gives an idea of what the organisation thinks of the system and whether there are points of improvement and if so, what they are.

3.3.4 Community of practice

The fourth sub-unit is a community of practice. This community originated in the covenant 'Duurzame Evenementen' set up in Nijmegen, when the city was European Green Capital in 2018. In this community, events hosted in Nijmegen discuss greening practices they have experimented with. In 2019, the covenant proceeded in a thinktank setting, with participants from the following events:

Vierdaagsefeesten, Het Nest, events hosted by Radboud University and Drift. The DAR, local waste processor, and Lentekracht, a company for sustainability advice, were also part of the thinktank. The objectives are to share insights and to learn from each other, with the end goal to set up greening guidelines for events in and around Nijmegen.

3.4 Research methods & data collection

As discussed, the data needed for this research were collected using different methods, meaning assumptions are relevant for this case-study research. The assumptions relate to construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2003). I use the terms developed by Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Bryman, 2016). The first assumption is *credibility*, equivalent to internal validity. Findings are credible when the research method is set up properly. Second is *transferability*, paralleling external validity. A detailed description of the case is necessary, so judgements about the possible transferability of the findings to another context can be made by the reader. Third is *dependability*, equalling reliability. If all research data is accessible, researchers can judge whether conclusions by the original researcher were valid. Fourth and last is *confirmability*, matching objectivity. It is concerned with an objective viewpoint of the researcher (Bryman, 2016, p. 384-86). Below I will explain the research methods I used, and how I dealt with the assumptions in these methods.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Because detailed and informative data is needed to gain proper insight into the best practices, I used semi-structured interviews to gain knowledge on communication about greening practices used by festivals. An interview guide, with themes and important questions is used as guideline (appendix 1), but the interviewee is allowed to speak freely, and the interviewer is allowed to ask spontaneous questions that arise from the answers (Bryman, 2016, p. 468).

For the best practices, the goal was to interview two persons from each subcase, preferably the person responsible for sustainability and the communication/marketing manager. These interviewees are the representatives of the subcases selected for this study. This goal did not work due to time constraints caused by the preparations for the start of the festival season. As the person responsible for sustainability is the most important person to interview, it is a good thing that I did manage to speak to them for all three best practice examples. It would have been of added value to also interview the person responsible for marketing and communication, but this was impossible for the Vierdaagsefeesten. At Mysteryland and DGTL I got an alternative to an interview. The department Marketing & Communication of Mysteryland provided written answers to my questions. At the DGTL office, I could speak briefly to the Social Media Manager (table 2). The interviewees were informed that they would be identified by name and position in the report.

Table 2. Schematic representations of conducted interviews.

| Festival | Interviewee | Position | Interview |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Vierdaagsefeesten</i> | Marit Veeneman | Production manager | Face to face |
| <i>Mysteryland</i> | Deborah Pinas | Manager Event Operations | By phone |
| | Department Marketing & Communication | Managing Marketing & Communication | Written |
| <i>DGTL</i> | Xander Kotvis | Revolution Manager | Face to face |
| | Sophie Hansson | Social Media Manager | Face to face (short) |

The topics that were covered in the interview included amongst others: their view of sustainability, attention for sustainability at the office and at the festival, sustainability initiatives at their festival, drivers and barriers of the greening process and important stakeholders in the greening process. Other questions were more focused on their own experiences and motivations, as well as perceptions in relation to sustainability at their festival. The interview guide can be found in appendix 1.

The interviews lasted between 6 and 62 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Dutch, the native language of the interviewees and researcher. Only the short interview with Hansson (DGTL) was in English as she did not speak Dutch. Prior to the interview, permission for audio-recording was asked and given. This made it possible to transcribe the interviews later, increasing transferability and dependability. The transcripts were sent back to the interviewees to be checked for accuracy and possible withdrawal of statements. This is a process known as *respondent validation* (Bryman, 2016, p. 385) and demonstrates credibility and trustworthiness, while diminishing concerns surrounding the validity of the data and thus the research. The transcripts are not included in this thesis, considering the size and language. The transcripts are available on request.

3.4.2 Survey

As mentioned before, a survey was used to map what potential Drift visitors see as important regarding sustainability and regarding a sustainable festival. The questionnaire was in Dutch, as most visitors of Drift Festival are Dutch. This means that some people were excluded from answering the questionnaire. Still, the choice for a Dutch questionnaire was most logic, because otherwise there would be the problem that it is not the native language of most respondents, with the possibility that questions were not understood correctly. Completing the questionnaire took between five and ten minutes and 298 responses were recorded. The questionnaire can be found in appendix 2. To boost response rate, as well as ensure the right target group, two weekend tickets for Drift Festival 2019 were raffled. These tickets could be won by filling in one's email address at the end of the questionnaire. With a random selection program, two email addresses were selected, and the winners were informed.

With a self-administered questionnaire, respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire privately. The self-administered questionnaire for this research was a web survey, which

operates by inviting prospective respondents to visit a website on which the questionnaire can be found and completed (Bryman, 2016, p. 221-30).

There are some advantages to self-administered questionnaires over other research methods, such as the structured interview. Of importance for this research is the lack of social desirability bias, as responses are completely anonymous. Furthermore, they are convenient for respondents, because they can complete the questionnaire when they want and at their own speed (Bryman, 2016, p. 222).

Disadvantages of the self-administered questionnaire also exist. The one relevant for this research is the fact that there is no one present to help the respondents if they struggle to answer the question. Therefore, it is essential that the questions are easy to follow, and instructions are clear (Bryman, 2016, p. 223).

3.4.3 Assessing softcups in action

In this study, I used action research to gather information on a festival initiative tested at Drift Festival, a system with a deposit on the plastic softcups. Action research can broadly be defined as *“an approach in which the action researcher and members of a social setting collaborate in the diagnosis of a problem and in the development of a solution based on the diagnoses”* (Bryman, 2016, p. 387). Therefore, during the festival, short interviews were held with visitors asking them for their opinions on the system. Observations were also made of visitor behaviour when it comes to dealing with the new system.

After the festival, an evaluation session was held with staff members of Drift. Together we evaluated the project, identified problems and possible solutions for better implementation during the next edition. Results from the interviews and observations were shared and included in the evaluation. In this way, people of the organisation are involved in the diagnosis of and solution to problems, rather than imposing solutions to predefined problems on them (Bryman, 2016, p. 387).

3.4.4 Community of practice

During the period the research was conducted, three meetings with a community of practice took place (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen). The main goal of this community of practice is to share information on practices with the purpose of learning (Hoadley, 2012). These meetings were also used to validate my research findings with people from the same context as my mini cases, namely music festivals in general and dance festivals specifically (Guba & Lincoln, as cited Bryman, 2016).

During the meetings, greening practices were shared amongst events hosted in Nijmegen. In a thinktank setting, possible barriers were identified, researched and discussed together. This community of practice is analysed on value and on communication. I did this using the notes I took during the meetings, as well as with the minutes, sent to us afterwards by Lagerweij (leading the thinktank).

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Coding

Data analysis of the qualitative interviews was done using *coding* with the help of the computer software Atlas.ti. I used Charmaz' (2006) approach to progressive elaboration of concepts and theories. This process starts by adding simple descriptive terms to the transcripts, to create an initial index of important concepts (initial coding). These codes are then grouped into categories, using the apparent relationships between them (focused coding). The last step involves identifying themes from the categories, which can be used to develop theory from the data (theoretical coding). These different steps make coding an iterative process (as cited in Bryman, 2016, p. 574). During coding, I used the concepts from my conceptual framework as sensitizing concepts; these were used as points of departure from which to study the data (Charmaz, 2008).

Table 3. Main themes identified with coding.

| | Code | Explanation |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Communication barriers</i> | Experience visitor | A visitor comes to a festival to have fun and escape the reality of daily life |
| | Being preachy | Tell people what they should do or what is the best way to live their life in a sustainable manner |
| | Being too explicit | Labelling things (e.g. food or the festival) very clearly as sustainable |
| | Understandability | Information that is clear and understandable for everyone |
| | Greenwashing | Misleading consumers regarding environmental practices or environmental benefits of a product or service |
| <i>Opportunities to reinforce communication</i> | Transparency | Being open about steps you take and results from these steps (also negative results); having no secrets |
| | Openness | Being open about everything you do; related to transparency |
| | Knowledge sharing | Have no secrets for others; willingness to share what you know to help others; related to transparency |
| | Intrinsic motivation | Motivation for sustainable event production that comes from within people working at the company |
| | Desire to create awareness | Having a wish to create awareness about sustainability amongst festival visitors; related to intrinsic motivation |
| | Desire to educate | Having a wish to educate festival visitors about sustainability; related to intrinsic motivation |
| | Branding/marketing | Activities of the festival to advertise sustainability initiatives, therefore branding the festival as one that cares about sustainability (without it being greenwashing) |

Categories identified were *communication, marketing, drivers and barriers, behavioural change, festival specifics, innovation, investment, and institutional perspectives*. As I am researching communication, out of this category, main themes were identified, see table 3. Every code has a short explanation tracked by giving the codes memos in Atlas.ti, helping with the reliability of my research (Guba & Lincoln, as cited Bryman, 2016). I identified main themes with a combination of deductive and inductive theory. Deductive in the sense that relevant concepts regarding sustainability communication were identified in the literature, forming a theory. With interviews, this theory was tested. Inductive in the sense that new concepts were discovered, building to the theory on sustainability communication.

3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis

The first step in the analysis of the self-administered questionnaire is the univariate analysis of the separate questions, meant to describe the average answers of the respondents. The second step is calculating correlations between the questions. Noteworthy correlations were further explored. For these analyses, I used the program IBM SPSS Statistics.

3.5.3 Analysis action research

The short interviews with visitors were recorded with permission and lasted between one and six minutes. Therefore, I did not transcribe and code these interviews in the same way I did my semi-structured interviews. I listened to the recordings and listed notable elements, being attentive to codes I had identified before. From my observations at the festival I made short notes in my phone as a reminder. I used the list and my notes to assess the softcups in action. This assessment was first used during the evaluation meeting at Drift and then to discuss, evaluation taken into account, with the community of practice.

Chapter 4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the embedded-single case study are discussed. My research questions cover the barriers for communicating *about* and *for* sustainability and opportunities to reinforce sustainability communication in the festival sector, meaning that these barriers and opportunities will form the common thread throughout this chapter. First, I review the other festivals as mini cases on sustainability (communication). Second, I will examine the visitor perspectives on sustainability and a sustainable festival. Third, the deposit system in action is evaluated with short interviews, observations and an evaluation with the Drift organisation. Last, I will discuss the community of practice which Drift is part of. This community explores drivers and barriers for sustainable event production, this gives perspective to differences between organisations, meaning that lessons from the first three steps might be sharpened. Combining all this information will lead to the lessons that Drift can learn from other festivals, with regard to communicating *about* and *for* sustainability.

4.1 Communicating sustainability: three mini cases

First, I will outline a context for the three mini cases. I will describe the kind of festivals we are talking about and characterize what and how they communicate sustainability to the general public (via their websites and social media for example). Furthermore, I will illustrate what the interviewees said about the sustainability initiatives from the festival. Secondly, I will put the cases side by side, in order to juxtapose them. In doing this, I will show similarities as well as (remarkable) differences between the cases.

4.1.1 Vierdaagsefeesten

The Vierdaagsefeesten is a yearly celebration held during the Four-Day Marches in Nijmegen in July (fig. 5). In the days surrounding this march, the entire city centre turns into one giant festival. They have an exceptionally large audience, in 2018 around 1.615.000 people visited the celebrations in Nijmegen during this week (Vierdaagsefeesten, 2018). It is an open event, meaning that everybody can go to the celebration squares, parks and so on.

Regarding communication, there is a noteworthy development going on with the Vierdaagsefeesten. In March of this year (2019) there is a general blogpost on their webpage regarding their ambitions. This blogpost links to a separate website, where the steps (to be) taken to work on these ambitions are discussed in more detail, in a light-hearted, activating way (Party into the future, n.d.). This website is mostly about sustainability, yet the word ‘sustainable’ is only mentioned once. Party into the future thus frames sustainability in a way that the word itself and the weight associated with it is avoided. Yet, in June of this year (2019) under the header ‘Information’ there is a sub header ‘Doe maar duurzaam’ i.e. ‘Do it sustainable’ (Vierdaagsefeesten, n.d.). Here, sustainability is framed

explicitly and not avoided at all. This can mean that the Vierdaagsefeesten has changed its sustainability communication strategy this year.



Figure 5. Vierdaagsefeesten 2018.

Veeneman: “As production manager, sustainability was added to my list. Because we have signed the Plastic Pact from Green Events (Rijksoverheid, 2019), our pilot for the next five years is how to make the plastic cup circular, so figure out how the plastic cup can return as plastic cup.” (M. Veeneman, personal communication, April 3, 2019). The plastic they use for their cups is polypropylene (PP) and they chose this for three reasons. First, it is recyclable, as is polyethylene terephthalate (PET). Second, because a lot of events are now working with PET, Vierdaagsefeesten wants to find out the positives and negatives from PP. Third, PP is the only plastic that is heat resistant, so it can eventually also be used for coffee, soups and food, overcoming the issue of monostreams. At the moment recycled PP has one big issue, it has no FSA-label, meaning that it is not food-approved.

The biggest hurdle before the plastic cups can become circular is front stage waste separation by the visitors (fig. 6). The cups have to be very clean (99%), otherwise the recycling company will not accept it for high-quality recycling. This year, Vierdaagsefeesten is doing four pilots on different celebration squares. On each square green teams will be walking around to pick up trash and separate it

immediately. Furthermore, they will use signing to encourage people to put their waste in the correct bins. They pilot on squares that are diverse in the public they attract, so that they can see which types of people separate correctly and which types of people need extra help. Hopefully after this year's edition, Vierdaagsefeesten can see what worked best, meaning they can share their findings with events from around the city.



Figure 6. Signing waste separation at Vierdaagsefeesten: residual and plastic (Vierdaagsefeesten, n.d.).

Furthermore, *Vierdaagsefeesten* (M. Veeneman, personal communication, April 3, 2019) is researching solar energy in combination with battery packs to replace diesel fuelled aggregates. Their event is so large, that all the access points to the electricity grid throughout the city can never generate enough energy. If they want to replace all aggregates with solar panels, a second city would be needed because of the scale of the event and the room solar panels take up. So, the energy challenge is big for the Vierdaagsefeesten, but still, they are thinking about how to deal with this challenge in the best possible way.

Veeneman also mentioned that last year, when Nijmegen was European Green Capital, Vierdaagsefeesten did a lot of different projects. This caused many projects to be only half finished in the end. A quote from Veeneman below describes how she thinks about that: *“I think it is best to focus on*

two or three things that we can actually tackle, with which we can achieve something. This will have more effect than many projects half done.”

4.1.2 Mysteryland

Mysteryland is part of the Dutch entertainment enterprise ID&T. It is a three-day electronic dance festival held yearly in August (fig. 7). It is located in Haarlemmermeer near Amsterdam and attracts more than 100.000 visitors during the weekend. The camping attached to the festival hosts 15.000 visitors (Het Parool, 2017).



Figure 7. Mysteryland 2018.

Research from Wentzel (2015) indicates that Mysteryland has three pillars regarding their sustainability policy: ‘Nature’, ‘Unity’ and ‘Talent’. The pillars seem strongly sourced from the Triple

Bottom Line Theory (two of the three P's) from Elkington (1994). 'We celebrate nature' upholds the vision to organise a festival that is environmentally enhancing (Planet). 'We celebrate unity' promotes the feeling of unity between people (People). 'We celebrate talent' represents young talent to which Mysteryland provides a platform on the festival (People). These pillars provide public insight into the sustainability policy of the festival. Moreover, the pillars make it easier to communicate the festival's goals.

Information on the topic of sustainability can also be found on their website. It is not a big button on their home page, but under 'Info' there is a header 'Green Festival Soul' explaining the six components of their sustainability program: green festival (awards they have won), water program, 10.000 hours, save energy, never give up on your cup and leave no trace (Mysteryland, n.d.).



Figure 8. Water bar at Mysteryland. Signing with 'water is water' and a pun that cannot be translated into English: 'Als je een baas bent, neem je de leiding' (Wagemans, 2015).

Pinas: "As manager event operations, sustainability has also become my responsibility. This starts already with production" (D. Pinas, personal communication, April 11, 2019). Mysteryland has a few ideas on how to become more sustainable. First, Mysteryland strives to eventually have access to the electricity grid, meaning that they only need aggregates or batteries for peak moments. Second, they

have green teams walking around front stage to collect and separate waste. That way, the festival is kept as clean as possible, stimulating visitors to throw away their waste in trashcans. These green teams are implemented because of the 'leave no trace' policy Mysteryland has in place. Third, on the campsite there is a place where you can buy second hand camping gear left at other festivals. At the end of the festival, you can also leave the gear you do not need any longer. Fourth, they work with a water program. Visitors can buy a collapsible water pouch which can be refilled during the festival for free at the water bars (fig. 8).

Mysteryland recently joined the Plastic Promise. This is a platform of events pioneering in responsible plastic use (Plastic Promise, n.d.). They are looking into ways to reduce the plastic use at the festival, together with partners such as beverage suppliers. The focus is, as with the Vierdaagsefeesten, on how to develop a circular system for the plastic festival cup: *"At the moment you buy your drink, it is actually made of a plastic which, ideally, after its use becomes a plastic cup again. That is our ambition"* (D. Pinas, personal communication, April 11, 2019).

These findings were checked with the marketing and communication department via email, due to time constraints at the festival organisation. I was able to send them my written questions, receiving written answers back (personal communication, May 20, 2019). These answers corroborated what Pinas told me.

4.1.3 DGTL

DGTL is part of the Dutch event organising body Apenkooi. DGTL is a three-day electronic dance festival held yearly during the Easter weekend (fig. 9). It is located at the NDSM terrain in Amsterdam and attracts 45.000 visitors.

With regards to communication about sustainability, a lot of attention is given to the subject on their website. There is a button 'sustainability' on the homepage and besides that it is ingrained in the positioning of the festival, surfacing at different places on the website. For example, in 'our story' their mission is explained: *"to become the first circular, climate neutral event by 2020"* (DGTL, n.d.). On the page 'sustainability' all initiatives are explained in a direct and informing way with the use of text, photo's, video's and an infographic. DGTL's focus is on innovation: *"Innovation is an important factor to the festival. We want to surprise visitors with our progressive projects and create awareness to them but then, of course, in a cool way"* (DGTL, 2015).

DGTL has developed a platform offering sustainable and circular systems to festivals and events, called the Revolution Foundation. This foundation works together with events, businesses and governments to implement sustainable and circular blueprints first developed for DGTL at other festivals. In this sense, DGTL is functioning as a living lab: since a festival is comparable to a village, it is a useful place to test if innovations would work in the "real world". With this, the transition to a sustainable economy is accelerated (DGTL, 2015).



Figure 9. DGTL Amsterdam (Brada, 2019).

Kotvis immediately started describing that DGTL works with innovative ideas, causing sustainability to spread under co-workers, suppliers and visitors: *“I try to involve the whole company to our zero-emission goal by presenting cool ideas once in a while. This causes sustainability to spread under co-workers and suppliers”* (X. Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). He is most proud of the zero-emission goal for 2020 and how they are working towards this. In 2018 they started to draw up a material flow analysis of everything that came into and went out of the festival. For 2019, they included the emissions caused by the construction and dismantling of the festival, as well as all transport movements from suppliers, artists and visitors. This is done to understand exactly how large these emissions are, since only then you can do something about it. To find out more about emissions caused by transport, an emission tool was developed. Suppliers, artists and visitors could fill in their point of departure as well as the means with which they would travel to the site. People were given the choice to compensate for the emissions by paying a fee.

Furthermore, DGTL set up a new kind of food court for their 2019 edition. Instead of working with food trucks, like most of the festivals do, their food court was a sort of strip inside a greenhouse. They worked with biodegradable disposables and a composting machine, just as in 2018. What was new though, was the fact that they made use of ‘rescued food’. For example, grilled cheese sandwiches made of old bread that would have been wasted otherwise.

Moreover, DGTL works with reusable plastic cups (hardcups) and a deposit system. This is what Kotvis said about why they implemented this: *“In fact, that is primarily a step that we have made to make people realize that a cup is also material and that it should not simply be thrown away on the ground. So primarily, it is a kind of behavioural change measure”*. Besides that, the hardcups are also a method to keep the festival terrain as clean as possible (fig. 10).



Figure 10. Hardcups at DGTL Festival Amsterdam 2018. They reuse the same cups year after year (DGTL, n.d.).

According to Kotvis, the motive for producing DGTL in the most sustainable way possible: *“the intention to create a festival with a bit more depth, to keep it interesting, and the realization that there is a lot of material left after the festival, with which we want to do something”*.

To confirm these findings, I had a short conversation with the social media manager of DGTL. *“It is really important that people understand what we're doing, but that they also understand that it is not just greenwashing”* (S. Hansson, personal communication, May 9, 2019). Hansson mentions that sustainability is, besides music and art, one of the three festival pillars, so at the core of the DGTL brand. This corroborates my analysis of their online content regarding sustainability.

4.1.4 Similarities and differences in communication

Barriers for communicating on sustainability

With regards to barriers for communicating on sustainability, DGTL and Mysteryland mention the experience of their visitors as most important. People still come to the festival as a means to sort of escape reality, enjoy the music and be amongst friends. It is not desirable that sustainability is at the expense of the experience, both Mysteryland and DGTL clearly state: *“We want to produce sustainable, we want high-quality recycling, and everyone has to contribute to it, but it must not be at the expense of the visitor's experience”* (D. Pinas, personal communication, April 11, 2019). This visitors' experience is not studied systematically. The festivals do send out a survey after the event, but this is for the general experience and the evaluation of the festival. It does not ask specifically about the experience in relation to sustainability: *“We just got the result of the survey filled out by 1000 people and everyone is just very positive, and people just love everything about the festival”* (X. Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). So, it is more of a gut feeling that the festivals see their visitors' experience as a barrier to communicate sustainability. They anticipate the motives of their visitors and act accordingly; the sustainability communication is not too much. Interestingly, the Vierdaagsefeesten does not mention the experience of the visitors as a barrier. This might be caused by the openness of the event. They do not have to sell tickets to get visitors, people come to Nijmegen anyway during the Four-Day Marches.

Related to this barrier, is being preachy about sustainability. This barrier is mentioned by all three festivals (Vierdaagsefeesten, Mysteryland and DGTL). In this sense, being preachy means imposing things on people, for example how they should live their life in a sustainable manner. Kotvis: *“It [sustainability] must never be something that we want to force down people's throats”*. Veeneman also does not want to be preachy and finger point: *“Some people already think that they are doing very well on the sustainability department, but that is just not always the case. Then you should not be the one who comes in to say what they do wrong, you can also look into how you can improve it together”*. Regarding front stage waste separation, Pinas states that in the end, the visitors also have to make their contribution, otherwise it will not work. Yet, *“you have to be careful with that, because you do not want to come across too preachy, the visitors come for fun, and that is the most important thing for us”*, she continues. You could say that being preachy is about how you communicate (form); imposing things on people is unproductive for creating awareness about sustainability.

Another associated barrier is being too explicit about sustainability. In this context, being too explicit means, for example, labelling vegetarian food very explicitly as vegetarian or sustainable. This is counterproductive according to Kotvis from DGTL: *“If you really start to put a label on it, that people are constantly confronted with it, then you evoke the wrong feeling in a lot of people. If you want to win over the masses, you have to be smart”*. It is just good food, which is coincidentally also vegetarian, according to Kotvis. You could say that being too explicit is about what you communicate (topic); labelling explicitly can be counterproductive for creating awareness about sustainability.

A further possible barrier is that your messages need to be understandable for everyone who might read them, mentioned by both DGTL and the Vierdaagsefeesten. Not everyone that comes to your festival or reads your content online has the same background and thus prior knowledge. This is something you need to anticipate, by making your messages understandable to everyone that reads them. *“For me it is really important that the communication is transparent, but also not too hard to understand, because I don't think everybody knows what circularity is, for example. So, I feel like it needs to be easy to reach a big mass, but still informative”* (S. Hansson, personal communication, May 9, 2019). This balance between communicating on a level that reaches the big masses, while still being informative, is a challenge to find, especially because it also has to be in the DGTL tone of voice. This is also a challenge for Vierdaagsefeesten, since the event is open, and they have a very large audience, representing a lot of different nationalities. According to Veeneman (Vierdaagsefeesten), it would be best to deal with this by spreading measures through the entire city, instead of something different at every square: *“Otherwise, it is just not clear to every visitor”*.

Fear for your initiatives being portrayed as greenwashing can also be a barrier for communicating about sustainability. Greenwashing is defined as follows by Kotvis from DGTL: *“It is really greenwashing if you are going to sell the facts as if they work to your advantage while they are not, that is a big problem”*. When communicating excessively about how sustainable your festival is, people can start to mistrust your statements.

Opportunities to reinforce sustainability communication

There are also opportunities to reinforce sustainability communication, for example to overcome greenwashing. Sustainability communication primarily needs to be transparent. *“You need to record what you do and what your measures are, that way you can constantly benchmark your performance. I think, without this, you cannot report what your results are. And also, daring to communicate honestly about the results, even if they are disappointing”* (X. Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). This is something DGTL always does, according to Kotvis. Part of being transparent is being open, as Kotvis explains with communicating honestly, even if you are disappointed. Veeneman, from the Vierdaagsefeesten, points out that they are in an experimental phase regarding their circular plastic cup: *“We are just going to try it out [front stage waste separation] and we will see how it works. We open things up about this attempt, so that everyone can see how it works”*. Another part of being transparent is being willing to share your knowledge: *“Let us sit down together and see how we do it, and how do you do it, and where can we come together to teach each other something”* (M. Veeneman, personal communication, April 3, 2019). This corresponds with the viewpoint DGTL has of knowledge sharing: *“Knowledge sharing is also an item with which we achieve transparency. So, we don't keep all the information to ourselves, but we also help other festivals to become more sustainable”* (S. Hansson, personal communication, May 9, 2019).

The festivals all mention intrinsic motivation as a driver for sustainable event production. Pinas (Mysteryland): *“It [sustainable event production] has always been from within”*. Although it is not

mentioned explicitly by any of the interviewees, this intrinsic motivation can also be seen as an opportunity to reinforce communication *about* and *for* sustainability. On the one hand, this could manifest itself as a desire to create awareness, which shows in this quote by Pinas (Mysteryland): *“Sustainability is an important pillar within our company and creating awareness by communicating about our sustainability initiatives is important here”*. On the other hand, Kotvis (DGTL) explains that one of their motives for communicating sustainability is their desire to educate their audience. This is also grounded in the intrinsic motivation to produce events in a sustainable manner. *“You try to teach people about sustainability by just talking about it, making cool videos and showing it well, then people are just very enthusiastic about it [sustainability]”* (X. Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). This desire to educate thus creates opportunities to reinforce sustainability communication. An example of this desire to create awareness and to educate was the main theme of the 2019 edition of DGTL Amsterdam: *reflect & refract*. *Reflect* is about making people aware of their current behaviour and thus impact (e.g. with the use of the emission tool). *Refract* is about perspective change (e.g. framing waste as resource) and thereby achieving a change in behaviour.

Related to this is the opportunity to position and brand your festival with the use of sustainability communication. In this sense, sustainability communication is used as a marketing tool. *“I also want to emphasise that it [sustainability] is partly marketing. That is not a problem, I think, because you have to dare to set an example”* (X. Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). This corresponds with the view Mysteryland has: *“Of course, it is also good for visitors to see that we are doing something about it [sustainability]”* (D. Pinas, personal communication, April 11, 2019). Interestingly, the Vierdaagsefeesten mentions that they do not do it [sustainability] for *“look at how well we are doing”*, yet they would like to *“set an example which makes the world a better place”* (M. Veeneman, personal communication, April 3, 2019).

Table 4. Summary of barriers and opportunities identified in the mini cases.

| | Vierdaagsefeesten | Mysteryland | DGTL |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Barrier</i> | | Experience visitor | Experience visitor |
| | Being preachy | Being preachy | Being preachy |
| | | Being too explicit | Being too explicit |
| | Understandability | | Understandability |
| | | | Greenwashing |
| <i>Opportunities</i> | Intrinsic motivation | Intrinsic motivation | Intrinsic motivation |
| | | | Transparency |
| | Openness | | Openness |
| | Knowledge sharing | | Knowledge sharing |
| | | | Desire to educate |
| | | Branding/marketing | Branding/marketing |

In table 4, I summarized the barriers as well as the opportunities identified in the mini cases. It gives a schematic overview of what is discussed above. Now it is clearly noticeable that not every festival mentions the same barriers and opportunities. There is also a colour gradient to indicate the number of barriers and opportunities that are mentioned.

The barriers and opportunities identified are used as sensitizing concepts when analysing the data from the assessment of the deposit system and the community of practice. Furthermore, the concepts are used in the second version of my conceptual framework depicted in chapter five.

Capabilities for communicating on sustainability

There are also capabilities needed for sustainable production and communicating about this. The first capability needed is awareness about sustainability among everyone involved with the festival. Without awareness on sustainability, you cannot communicate about it. A quote from Pinas (Mysteryland) shows this nicely: *“To create awareness, we hand over scripts to our supplies with information, for example that they need to switch off their engine while waiting, use a reusable water bottle, separate waste”*.

Second, there are certain resources needed. The resources we discussed during the interviews are money and time; Kotvis (DGTL): *“Something new always takes time and money, as does communicating about it”*. A remarkable difference here is that DGTL sees a monetary value in some sustainability projects, Kotvis: *“Some projects pay off immediately: savings in energy, savings in machines, reducing materials. If you need less, you also pay less. That are just those quick wins that earn you money”*. Whereas Mysteryland and Vierdaagsefeesten both only see value other than money in these sustainability measures, Pinas (Mysteryland): *“If we look at distributing free water from our water bars, we noticed that in our revenue from water we were no longer selling at the regular bars. But we have seen that free water is important for our visitors, and for us too, so we want to invest in it”*.

Third, there is some information needed, provided by knowledgeable people. For example, before the team of marketing can use something in their communication, they need the right information: *“Then it is really a matter of giving some kind of structure, give a few fact sheets in terms of content. Marketing can then use this information in their own expression”* (Kotvis, personal communication, May 9, 2019). A quote from Veeneman (Vierdaagsefeesten) further illustrates this: *“I mainly deliver information to marketing, for example with the fireworks. Where do we get sustainable fireworks, how can fireworks be sustainable and how do we weigh that? Marketing is then the department that communicates that marketing wise”*. It is furthermore important that people know what works regarding sustainability communication, i.e. it needs to be understandable, not too preachy and not too explicit.

The fourth and last capability that is of importance is skill. Skills can for instance originate from a study done by employees. This is for example the case for Kotvis (DGTL), with his master Environmental Resource Management: *“You learn to deal with all the different resources, how to transform the economy and how to take into account certain impacts we have”*. These skills are very important for sustainable

event production and communicating about this. Additionally, there are skills needed when translating the knowledge on what works regarding sustainability communication to actual communication.

Institutional perspectives and communication on sustainability

Institutional contexts have an effect on all three festivals regarding sustainable event production. First, Vierdaagsefeesten and DGTL are part of the tripartite partnership Plastic Pact from Green Events (Rijksoverheid, 2019). Second, Mysteryland, Vierdaagsefeesten and DGTL all joined the private-public partnership Plastic Promise. The campaign 'Never give up on your cup' is an initiative of Plastic Promise and both Vierdaagsefeesten and Mysteryland work with this campaign during their festival to make high-quality recycling a possibility (Plastic Promise, n.d.). Third, Vierdaagsefeesten is, just as Drift, part of the covenant on sustainable events in Nijmegen, which is also a private-public partnership. Fourth, DGTL Festival Amsterdam must adhere to guidelines set up by the municipality of Amsterdam, which is a government initiative (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019).

It is striking that only Mysteryland mentions their commitment to agreements (Plastic Pact, Plastic Promise, Never give up on your cup) as a means to get their message about sustainability across. Pinas: *"To the outside world we communicate that we have joined the Plastic Pact and Plastic Promise. That is how we communicate about sustainability"* (personal communication, April 11, 2019). Vierdaagsefeesten does communicate about their commitments on their website (Vierdaagsefeesten, n.d.), yet Veeneman does not mention these agreements as a means to get their sustainability message across.

4.2 Visitor perspectives

Because a festival wants its communication to resonate with its audience, it is important to also know what these visitors find important, with regard to sustainability and a sustainable festival. The survey that questioned this was filled out by 298 respondents, on average 24 years old, of which 61% was female, 39% male. More than half of this group (59%) is well educated (university study completed or currently studying at university). The majority of respondents have attended a Drift event before (78%). All respondents were potential visitors of Drift Festival 2019, as the incentive for filling out the questionnaire was the chance of winning a weekend ticket.

As for personal interest in sustainability, the majority of respondents completely or somewhat agrees with the statement: "Sustainability is in general important to me". This means that visitors are definitely engaged with the topic of sustainability (fig. 11). It is noteworthy that the aspects of sustainability that are chosen most often (waste and energy) as important to focus on, are the aspects which Drift is working on at the moment (fig. 12). The problem of waste is tackled with the deposit system, and that of energy with the battery charged with green electricity.

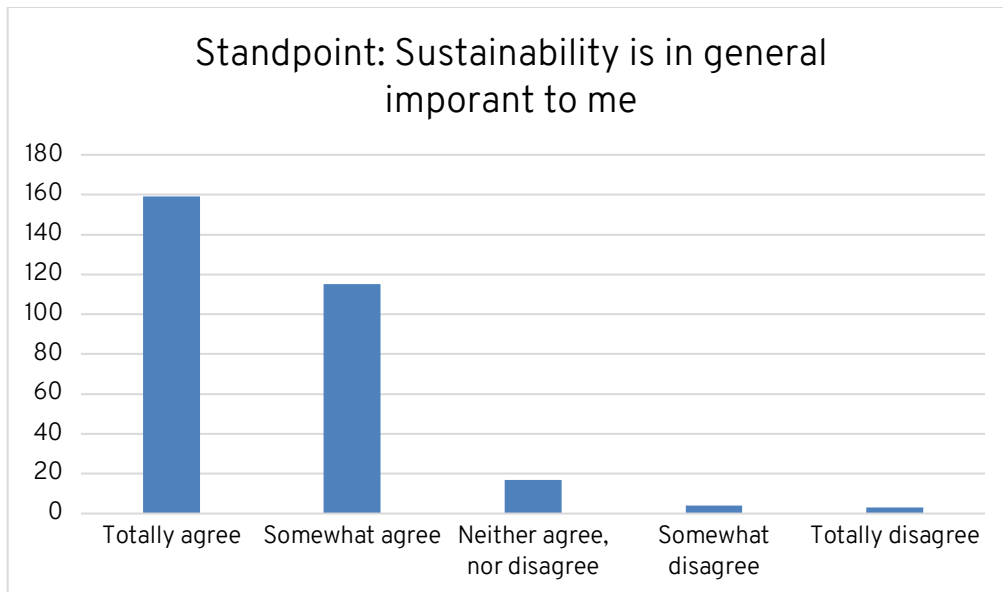


Figure 11. Agreeableness 'Sustainability is in general important to me'.

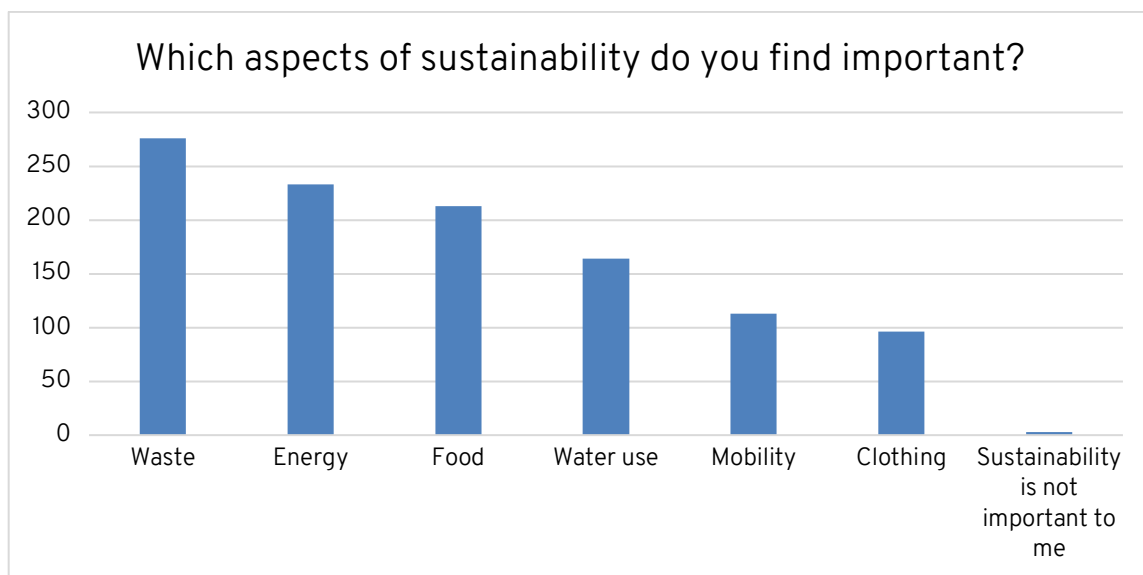


Figure 12. Aspects of importance to respondents; multiple answers possible.

Regarding the visitors' view of sustainability at Drift, respondents gave the festival on average a score of 5.5 (on a scale from 0 to 10). A lot of respondents (111) indicated the large amount of waste and especially plastic generated by the festival as unsustainable. Knowing that respondents see waste as most troublesome, this was a good incentive to continue with the idea for a system with a deposit on the plastic softcups.

Because food is a theme Drift wants to deal with in the near future, this subject was highlighted in the survey. It is good to know what your (potential) visitors find important with regards to food, ensuring you focus on the right aspects. First, we wanted to know the eating habits of the respondents.

The majority of respondents (69%) indicated themselves as flexitarian (eating vegetarian one or more days per week), vegetarian or vegan. This is a valuable result, as it means that the majority of respondents is fine with eating vegetarian, maybe even vegan at the festival. Second, we wanted to know what respondents find important regarding food and sustainability at the festival. Almost all respondents pointed out that they think sustainability is (very, fairly, somewhat) important in the food offer at Drift Festival. More than half (53%) found it important to very important. For this, less and recyclable disposables, sustainable food trucks and vegetarian food are indicated as most important aspects. Third, the promotion and costs of sustainable food were questioned. The majority of respondents were positive about the promotion of sustainable food at the festival (88%) and of the 55% that would be willing to pay more for a sustainable meal, they would, on average pay 24% more.

In relation to the communication about sustainability, a lot of respondents would like or would like it a lot to learn about how Drift is concerned with sustainability. On the question how they would like to be approached on this subject (multiple answers possible), 62% chose Facebook, 48% chose Instagram and 46% chose on the festival itself. Via the Drift newsletter and on the website is also worth mentioning as approaching options.

Regarding communication, I was interested in the answer respondents gave to the question whether they would like to get to know more about how Drift is concerned with sustainability, in relation to whether respondents have attended a Drift event before (fig. 13). There are some differences in the figure, yet these differences are not significant as determined with a Chi-square test ($p=.185$). This means that people that have attended a Drift event before are generally at the same level interested in the sustainability steps Drift takes (or not) as people that have not attended one before.

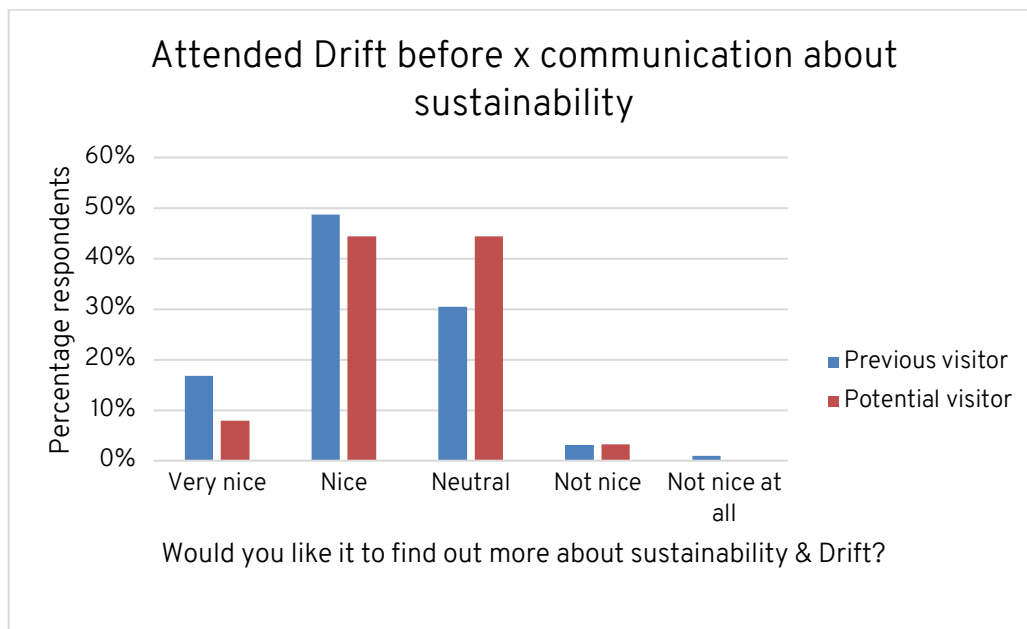


Figure 13. Previous and potential visitor willingness to know more about Drift's sustainability strategy.

Furthermore, I was interested in the association between respondents' standpoint regarding sustainability and their interest in Drift's sustainability steps (table 5). The differences you see in the cross table are significant as determined with a Chi-square test ($p=.000$). This means that the answer respondents give to the question whether they would be interested to find out more about Drift's sustainability initiatives depends on the answer they gave to the question if sustainability is important to respondents in general.

Table 5. Sustainability orientation and willingness to know more about Drift's sustainability strategy.

| Standpoint: Sustainability is in general important to me | Would you like it find out more about Drift's sustainability strategy? | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| | | Very nice | Nice | Neutral | Not nice | Not nice at all |
| | Totally agree | 36 | 83 | 35 | 1 | 0 |
| | Somewhat agree | 6 | 51 | 50 | 4 | 2 |
| | Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| | Somewhat disagree | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| | Totally disagree | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

At the end of the questionnaire, an open question asked respondents for ideas on how Drift could become more sustainable (table 6).

Table 6. Respondents' ideas for Drift's sustainability initiatives.

| Common ideas | Unique ideas |
|--|--|
| Deposit system for the plastic cups | Compensating CO ₂ emissions |
| Reusable water bottles | Energy generating floors |
| Sustainable lighting | Poles for cigarette butts |
| Sustainable catering | Coloured garbage bins (with lights) |
| Facilitate or stimulate sustainable mobility | |
| Local suppliers | |
| Green electricity | |

All in all, potential Drift visitors find sustainability important and they think that Drift's sustainability could improve, especially regarding the plastic waste. Concerning food, the majority of respondents eat a vegetarian meal at least once a week. Most of the respondents also indicate that they would like to learn more about Drift's sustainability strategy. This opinion does not depend on whether respondents have attended a Drift event before. What does matter, is to what extent respondents agree

with the statement that sustainability is in general important to them. The more they agree, the more they would like to know about the sustainability strategy.

4.3 Assessing softcups in action

The visitors' perspectives are all rather positive about sustainability being a part of their lives and of festivals such as Drift. The question is whether this positive perspective holds when a sustainable measure becomes embedded in the festival, disturbing visitors' practices. This measure was the new deposit system of Drift Festival 2019, and it was evaluated with the use of action research. The goal was to get a viewpoint from the visitors and to observe whether they were acting accordingly. This viewpoint and the observations were discussed with the organisation to evaluate the system as a whole and the ambition to create awareness.

This deposit system was a new and ambitious project for Drift. Visitors received a wooden coin at the entrance of the festival; this wooden coin was equal to the deposit amount for one softcup. At the bar, you could exchange your wooden coin and a token for, for example, one beer. After finishing your beer, you had to hold on to your softcup, until you got a new drink at the bar, or exchanged your softcup for a wooden coin at the bar, or at a mobile exchange point. If you lost your softcup or wooden coin, you had to pay ½ token as deposit. The reason that the first token was gifted to the visitors by Drift, was to make the deposit system work for everyone. If you handled your cup with care, it did not have to cost you any extra money. The deposit of ½ token if you did lose your softcup (or wooden coin), was to create an incentive to indeed handle the softcup with care. See figure 14 for an infographic about the deposit system (in Dutch). All softcups collected at the bar were brought to Morssinkhof, which is a waste collector company specialized in plastic recycling (Morssinkhof Rymoplast, 2010). The softcups were unprinted, and bar staff had control over what went into the recycling bags. This makes high-quality recycling a possibility, so that next year, visitors might be drinking out of the same plastic as the year before.

The interviewed visitors all said similar things. To the question, 'What is your opinion on the new deposit system?' most of them said something in the lines of *"I think it is annoying, but better for the environment"*. People also indicated that when they were used to the system, it was not such a hassle anymore. Almost every one of them noticed that there were no plastic cups or bottles on the ground, which was pleasant for their festival experience. To the question, 'Do you think the system changes your behaviour?' the response was that they became much more aware of their cup, how they used it and how much plastic you actually throw away. Considering that creating awareness was one of the main reasons for implementing the deposit system, this was a favourable result. It was also mentioned by two interviewees that they noticed they threw other garbage, like cigarette butts and beer trays, in the garbage bins instead of on the ground, because there was so little waste on the ground. This is the *social proof* principle from Cialdini (1987) at work; what you see other people do, you do yourself.



Figure 14. Infographic New Deposit System at Drift Festival 2019 (Drift om te dansen, 2019).

The last question addressed system improvements that people could think of. Four out of twelve participants mentioned that they would prefer the system with hardcups, as they felt that now, a lot of plastic would still be thrown away. One of them said that in a system with hardcups, it might be a good idea to hand out cupholders at the entrance, instead of a wooden coin. Two people mentioned another solution, they would like to see cups that you can just throw on the ground and that start to decompose in a short amount of time. This solution would overcome the issue of forcing your visitors to do something, which can come at the expense of their festival experience (although they did like that the terrain was so clean). Yet, these kinds of cups are still a long way off and then there is again the problem of a dirty terrain, inviting people to throw other, not easily composing, kinds of waste on the ground. The last tip an interviewee gave as possible improvement, was cup to token exchange points near the stages, so you can keep enjoying the music, but can get rid of your cup.

During the interviews, it became clear that a few things regarding the communication of the system could have been better. Interviewees understood the system, but it was not clear that they could also exchange their cup back for a wooden coin instead of buying new drinks all the time. Also, the fact that there were seven people walking around the festival who would exchange your cup for a wooden coin, was not known to the interviewees (part of the problem here is of course that people did not know that this exchange was possible in the first place). Furthermore, we assumed that people would flatten the softcup and put it in their bags or pockets, an advantage of softcups over hardcups. People did not think of this solution or did not think this would be allowed to do with the cups.



Figure 15. Drift festival terrain; there's hardly any waste on the ground (Buiting, 2019b).

As a researcher, you are, in a way, always researching. So, of course I also made some observations during the festival. First and foremost, the festival grounds were unusually clean (fig. 15). As two interviewees also mentioned, it was really apparent that people were more likely to also throw other waste items in the garbage bins, as they saw so little waste laying on the ground. At night, when the festival ended, the terrain was not as clean as it was during the daytime anymore. This was because there was no real incentive to return the last cup. Drift worked together with volunteers from an NGO, called 'Schone Rivieren' or clean rivers (Schone Rivieren, n.d.), which received a donation from Drift for

helping to collect this last cup. This did not work as well as intended, since a lot of cups were already thrown on the ground when visitors passed these volunteers on their way to the exits. Unfortunately, these dirty last cups could not go to high-quality recycling.

After the festival, the deposit system was also evaluated amongst the organisers of Drift. Overall, the project manager and the rest of the organisation saw the system as a success. The desire was to create awareness amongst visitors regarding plastic waste, and this desire was fulfilled. Furthermore, everyone liked the cleanliness of the festival terrain during the day. Regarding the last cup, visitors still need some additional education. The incentive to return this cup needs to be further devised. The bars also had feedback; there were no complaints from visitors, yet it created a delay in the sales of drinks. This was caused by the time it took to separate cups from bottles, extra calculation time with orders and less room to move behind the bars causing congestions. Furthermore, Drift's beer supplier (Kornuit) was not happy about the last-minute change from plastic cups printed with their logo, to unprinted cups. Their brand was a lot less visible during the festival.

With regards to the recycling, there are also some points of improvement. First, during peak hours, correct separation behind the bars was difficult, meaning the recycling bags had to be sifted through afterwards. Bottles and cups had to be in separate bags and other polluting waste (e.g. limes, caps) was picked out, causing extra time investment. Second, even though the recycling bags were sifted through afterwards, some bags were still rejected for recycling, as they were too polluted. Satisfyingly, the majority of bags was accepted, and this plastic could thus go into high-quality recycling.

Everything that could be improved (handling at the bar, brand visibility of Kornuit, recycling) would have been helped by better internal communication. The decision that the project would go through was rather short before the start of the festival, just as the details of the project. When the project was officially approved, everyone was very busy, meaning that there was too little time to explain the project well enough to all people involved. Also, as every part of the festival has its own manager (e.g. project, production, crew, partnerships) there are a lot of different people involved. It would have been good to have a general meeting beforehand with all these managers, to clarify who is responsible for which part and which questions are to be asked to whom.

All in all, the following can be concluded of this new deposit system in action: overall it was a success, but it worked better front end than back end. Front end was good, as people's perceptions were in general positive regarding the system, it created awareness as intended and the festival grounds were (the majority of the day) clean, as proposed. Considering the back end situation, the most important lessons to be learnt are regarding internal communication; make your decisions on time, inform everyone involved and make sure that people know who they should ask if they have questions. Still, as said, overall it was successful, especially taking into account that it was a new and ambitious project.

4.4 Community of practice

As of now, I have discussed what Drift can learn from other festivals, what their visitors find important regarding sustainability and a sustainable festival, what Drift's visitors think of the deposit system and what the organisation's opinion is regarding the system. Yet, sustainable event production is not something you do as an isolated event, but in participation with, amongst others, the municipality, other events in the area and waste processors. That is why, in this research, a community of practice is taken into account as data source (fig. 16).



Figure 16. Signing of the covenant sustainable events Nijmegen (Verschooten, 2017).

This community originated from a covenant signed by 27 events hosted in Nijmegen, amongst which is Drift (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen). The covenant was started as an initiative of the municipality of Nijmegen, when Nijmegen was European Green Capital (EGC) in 2018. During the meetings of this community, drivers and barriers were shared, to help event managers learn from each other and take the right steps towards reaching a sustainable festival (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, November 27, 2018). Events affiliated with this covenant, and thus with EGC, should give the ultimate example of sustainable events (Buisse, 2017).

In 2019, Nijmegen was not EGC anymore. To ensure the work done and the community created in 2018 would not go to waste, the covenant continued in a thinktank setting. The following stakeholders are part of this thinktank: Vierdaagsefeesten, Het Nest Festival, events hosted by Radboud University, Drift, DAR (local waste processor), and Lentekracht (sustainability advice company). The thinktank is led by Lagerweij, who is a sustainability advisor hired by the municipality.

The thinktank is a useful data source for my aim to understand sustainability communication to festival visitors for two reasons. First, it provided me with an opportunity to have peers reflect on my concepts from previous data sources, and to sharpen the concepts when necessary. Second, it gave insight into how different organisations view sustainable event production and what their drivers and barriers are. This contributes to the eventual advice to Drift on sustainability communication. The community discussed the subjects waste, energy, food, mobility and social sustainability. Nevertheless, in the thinktank two subjects were highlighted, in particular waste and to a lesser extent energy. Waste was highlighted as this is to the visitors the most visible aspect of sustainability from an event. It is also an important aspect for my research as the deposit system is assessed in-depth as data source and this system deals with waste also. Energy was highlighted because Drift is a good example of how to deal with the energy issue, as well as that regarding energy there are good chances for the municipality to facilitate sustainable event production.

4.4.1 Waste

The community identified that there have been a lot of attempts at waste separation by various events in Nijmegen. These attempts have not always been successful, they depend on the behaviour of the visitors as well as on the exact agreements with the waste collectors on what will be accepted and what not. Clear signing helps visitors separate their waste, but generating 100% pure waste streams front stage is impossible for a lot of events, with the result that the collected waste is rejected for (high-quality) recycling by the waste processing companies (Lagerweij, 2018a).

As a thinktank, we established that there was a lot to be gained from a properly functioning collection system for the plastic cups. Drift's wooden coin deposit system was a perfect pilot for a such a system. It was discussed in the thinktank before, during and after the festival. Beforehand, the discussion focussed in particular on (possible) barriers, discussed below. During the festival, we did a tour with Lagerweij (advisor), Woudenberg (DAR), Weterings (Vierdaagsefeesten) and Van Overbeek (Drift). This tour offered a behind-the-scenes look at the deposit system in working. Everyone immediately noticed how clean the festival grounds were, and that the system was explained well at the entrance next to the clear signing on the terrain. Afterwards, the outcomes of the system were discussed with the thinktank, meaning the results from my action research. I was speaking the majority of the time, but there was some feedback from the other attendees. For example, they mentioned that a discount system would be kinder to the visitors, e.g. you pay €3.00 for your first drink and then €2.80 for your next drink, if you return your empty cup. Still, this system is only possible with a cashless

festival which Drift is not (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, June 26, 2019).

The possible barriers we identified during our meetings are now discussed. The first barrier is that existing contracts can hinder progress, which is for example the case with Het Nest and Coca Cola. Het Nest would prefer serving post mix at the festival instead of regular bottled soda, since then you only have to transport the syrup. Water and carbonic acid can be added on site, reducing both CO₂ emissions of transport, and the plastic needed to create bottles. Coca Cola did however not comply with this request, as bottled soda is their 'best product'. Here, the supplier stops you from producing your event in a more sustainable manner in favour of their own needs.

The second barrier is that being sustainable means finding the right balance between sustainability and the festival experience of your visitor. Sustainability cannot be more important than this experience, as otherwise people will not visit anymore; the last thing you want as event organiser.

The third issue is that there are few rules and regulations from the municipality regarding sustainable event production. Right now, there are only rules and regulations regarding for example safety, permits and noise levels. There are no rules that events should separate waste or have a certain share of green electricity in their energy supply, to name a few ideas.

Last and related to the third point, it was debated whether events should have the responsibility of fixing a societal problem, e.g. plastic waste. We came to the conclusion that events are not owners of these problems, therefore they do not have the (sole) responsibility of fixing it. Municipalities and other stakeholders should also participate. But still, events are a good place to experiment with new systems and innovative products, i.e. function as living lab (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, June 9, 2019).

4.4.2 Energy

With regard to energy, the community of practice identified that a lot of events already have access to the electricity grid and with that, green electricity facilitated by the municipality of Nijmegen. Most of the times these access points cannot provide enough power on their own, so generators are still necessary. These generators can be used in a more sustainable manner when fuelled with bio diesel. Of course, the better option is then to use a green battery, preferably charged with sustainable energy (Lagerweij, 2018b). This best practice is practiced by Drift Festival, with their green battery being charged with solar panels on top of their festival venue. Certainly, this best practice is location dependent. There has to be an access point to the electricity grid available, as well as a way to charge the battery with green electricity (whether with solar panels or a contract for purchasing green electricity from the grid) (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, April 24, 2019).

Interestingly, although Drift Festival has now used a green battery for the second year in a row, there had not been any communication about this greening practice yet. Even this year, the message that the festival runs on green power was published through Drift communication channels only a week

before the event took place. Drift is a leader with regards to their energy plan and supply in the event sector, so it would have been worthwhile to show this earlier.

With the discussion of the energy subject, we once again came across the responsibilities of the municipality. They should facilitate fixed power outlets with a large capacity at all event locations in Nijmegen. Furthermore, they should be responsible for providing a solution to the cases where the electricity from the grid is not enough. For example, if the municipality would invest in a green battery all events in Nijmegen would be able to rent and use it (Convenant Duurzame Evenementen, personal communication, May 13, 2019).

4.4.3 Conclusion community of practice

It was a good thing that I was able to share Drift's experiences with the deposit system with the rest of the event managers; this is valuable information for them and helps attacking the plastic problem in a wider context. Further, it is valuable to see that the other events also experience suppliers and the visitors' experience as a barrier. The result that we collectively think the municipality has too few rules and regulations regarding sustainable event production, just like that the municipality should facilitate greening is also noteworthy. Maybe if multiple events say this, they can start developing guidelines for sustainable event production in Nijmegen, just as they did in Amsterdam.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The aim of this research is to understand the different elements of sustainability communication. These elements are: possible barriers that need to be overcome, potential opportunities to reinforce communication and the difference between communication *about* and *for* sustainability and how this can be understood and used in communication. From this follow recommendations for music festivals in general and Drift Festival specifically on how to communicate *about* and *for* sustainability to visitors. I further aim to raise policy attention for festival greening. In this discussion, I start with the interpretation of my results in relation to my research questions. Subsequently, I reflect on my findings by drawing on the literature discussed in chapter one and two. After that, I give concrete and practical recommendations on sustainability communication. To conclude this thesis, I consider limitations to my research and give suggestions for future research.

5.1 Interpretation results

When interpreting my results, my main research question is leading: What elements are needed to overcome barriers and seize opportunities in communication *about* and *for* sustainability in the festival sector? The concepts from my conceptual framework are used to structure the interpretation.

5.1.1 Elements needed to overcome barriers

Visitor pressures

For festival greening and communicating to visitors about this greening process, the (perceived) experience of the visitor is seen as an important barrier. This concept was new to me, since it was not identified in the literature I read beforehand. However, the interviewees from both Mysteryland and DGTI mention this barrier, and it also came to the forefront in the community of practice and during my meetings with Van Overbeek (Drift). Festival greening cannot come at the cost of the visitors' experience during the festival. Visitors come to enjoy themselves, and that is the most important aspect of a festival. This barrier is especially relevant when communicating *for* sustainability, because then you want to create awareness or educate visitors in one way or another, having the greatest risk of affecting their experience.

For example, Van Overbeek mentions that he does not want to force his visitors to eat vegetarian food, by offering no other options at Drift Festival, as this could cause them to enjoy the festival less. However, it is always decided for visitors what they can and cannot eat at a festival, as the decision which food trucks will be there lies with the organisation and not with the visitors, whether there is meat available or not. Furthermore, when researching visitor perspectives with a questionnaire, I found that more than two thirds of the respondents identified themselves as a vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian, meaning that these people eat a vegetarian meal at least once a week. Therefore, I conclude

that a vegetarian-only food offer would be accepted by Drift visitors. In this example, it is actually the perceived perception of the visitors that is a barrier for the greening process. Hence, taking into account visitor perspectives with the use a survey is proved to be important.

Another example is the deposit system. At the beginning, we thought it would be a strain on visitors' experience as they are so used to throw their cups on the ground during a festival. Yet, the results of the survey on visitors' perspectives indicated that respondents saw the amount of plastic use and waste at Drift Festival as the main negative point regarding their judgement of Drift on sustainability. This was a good incentive to continue developing the idea for a deposit system on the plastic cups. During the evaluation of the system with action research, people stated that at first, they found it annoying, but once they got used to it, they were completely okay with the system. Furthermore, visitors explicitly stated they liked how clean the festival grounds were, so you could say that this actually enhanced their festival experience. These two examples show that the experience of the visitor is not per se negatively influenced by implementing greening measures. Therefore, festivals that aim to communicate for sustainability should use actual visitors' perspectives to overcome the visitor experience barrier.

Greenwashing is mentioned as a barrier for communication on sustainability by DGTL. It can be a barrier in the sense that people can start distrusting your claims if you claim too much. Therefore, it is important to strategize what you will communicate when and why, just as ground your claims with evidence. For example, the material flow analysis performed by DGTL is available on their website, for everyone to see, meaning that people can look up the evidence for the claims they make about being circular. There are certain communication characteristics which can be applied to overcome the allegation of greenwashing; these are discussed below under 'communication characteristics'. The topic of greenwashing was only relevant in the mini cases. In the survey on visitor perspectives and during the evaluation of the deposit system, I asked for the opinion of visitors regarding certain topics, without making claims about how green Drift is as a festival. In the community of practice, greenwashing is left out of consideration, as it is common sense that when discussing drivers and barriers regarding the greening process in a safe environment, you do not let your festival appear greener than it is.

Capabilities

When communicating to visitors *about* and *for* sustainability you need certain capabilities: resources, awareness, knowledge and skills. These capabilities are needed to overcome the barriers that hinder visitor communication. The obvious resources are time and money, mentioned in all three mini cases. Awareness is also mentioned by the cases as important for sustainable event production and communicating about this greening process. During the meetings with the community of practice it was also discussed that more and more people become aware of the need to green events and communicate about the steps they take.

When communicating *about* and *for* sustainability, you need knowledge of what works and what not. From my interviews with DGTL and Vierdaagsefeesten, it became apparent that they know how

important it is that your communication is understandable. A lot of different people see messages communicated by festivals. In the ideal world, you want everyone to understand these messages, even if background and prior knowledge of people differs. This can be both a barrier for communication and an opportunity to reinforce communication. It is a barrier in the sense that it can be difficult to find a balance between understandability and the tone of voice of the festival, while still being informative in your message on sustainability. It is an opportunity because it forces you to only communicate understandable information of value, therefore it demands you to have a deep understanding of the information you want to get across.

Understandability also relates to a general barrier for communication, whether it is about sustainability or not. Namely, as a festival you cannot think of everything your visitors will and will not think of, even if you employ a good communication manager. This became evident during my action research about the deposit system, for example. First, as Drift we thought that it was logical that you could exchange your empty cup also for a wooden coin, instead of only for a new, filled cup. Yet, during my interviews it became clear that people did not know this was possible. Second, we thought it was an advantage of the softcup over the hardcup that it can be flattened to easily fit in a bag or a pocket, until you go to the bar to get a new drink. However, visitors did not think of this by themselves.

Furthermore, knowledge is needed on what form and topic you need to avoid when communicating *about* and *for* sustainability. The form cannot be too preachy, that is, telling people what to do or how to live. Kotvis (DGTL) explains preachy communication as follows: *“Sustainability must never be something that we want to push through peoples’ throats or that we say, this how you should live”*. Both Mysteryland and Vierdaagsefeesten also mention that being preachy is unproductive when communicating *about* and *for* sustainability. The interviewees mention that the topic also cannot be too explicit, that is, labelling something very explicitly as sustainable. For example, advertising a vegetarian burger as ‘veggie burger’ will probably only attract people interested in vegetarian food and/or sustainability. However, it is interesting to note that the majority of respondents from my survey are positive about the promotion of sustainable food at the festival. This might thus be another example of the festival organisation underestimating the visitors’ willingness to go along with greening measures. The final capability that was mentioned is skill. Festival organisers need the skill of knowing what is needed to make their communication understandable, not too explicit and not too preachy. That is why festivals have a person or department responsible for the communication, these people have specific knowledge and skills regarding communication.

5.1.2 Elements needed to seize opportunities

Communication characteristics

There are certain communication characteristics needed to seize opportunities in visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability. These concepts were, just like the visitor pressures, also newly identified. The first characteristic is transparency. In this sense, transparency means being open about steps you

take, and about the results from these steps, even if they are negative. This means that there are no secrets about which you do not communicate. Transparency is important, as it increases the credibility of your greening process. It is noteworthy that only DGTL mentions transparency explicitly as a communication strategy. This might be caused by the fact that DGTL is further along in the process of greening their festival than Mysteryland and Vierdaagsefeesten are. Vierdaagsefeesten does mention the second and third communication characteristics 'openness' and 'knowledge sharing' as important elements needed for visitor communication, as does DGTL. These elements are strongly related to transparency. It is about being open about everything you do, having no secrets for others, and having a willingness to share what you know to help others green their festival. Vierdaagsefeesten is also part of the thinktank that is a community of practice. In this community, drivers and barriers are shared to help event managers learn from each other and take the right steps towards green events. It is thus a community where transparency, openness and knowledge sharing are central elements, therefore it is safe to say that for Vierdaagsefeesten, transparency is also highly valued. The communication characteristics transparency, openness and knowledge sharing help with overcoming allegations of greenwashing.

Intrinsic motivation

Further opportunities in visitor communication are evoked by people at an organisation intrinsically motivated to start and continue the greening process of a festival. This is the case for Vierdaagsefeesten, Mysteryland, DGTL and Drift. During the community of practice meetings, intrinsic motivation was also mentioned as an important driver for greening. Typically, this debouches into a desire to communicate the sustainability vision to the general public. This desire to communicate is further grounded in a desire to educate visitors and a desire to create awareness amongst visitors. The desire to create awareness is noticeable in the various attempts to tackle the plastic waste problem at festivals. DGTL does this with hardcups, Drift with a deposit system on softcups, so they can go into high quality recycling, and Mysteryland and Vierdaagsefeesten try to separate the softcups front stage with the desire to achieve circular cups, also with high quality recycling. With these attempts to tackle the plastic problem, visitors are faced with the facts of how much plastic we normally throw away. During the evaluation of the deposit system, Drift visitors indeed indicated that it made them more aware, therefore the ambition to create awareness using this system succeeded. Accordingly, the deposit system is an example in which communication *about* and *for* sustainability is considered to be effective as the ambition to create awareness was realised.

It is interesting to note this desire to communicate the sustainability vision is welcomed by visitors. That is, the questionnaire pointed out that a lot of respondents would like to learn about how Drift is working on sustainability. Herein, it does matter to what extent respondents agree with the statement that sustainability is in general important to them. The more they agree, the more they would like to know about the sustainability strategy.

Organisational drivers

Another element that determines opportunities in visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability, is the extent to which a festival brand is strengthened by the communication. For example, DGTL really profiles itself as a festival where sustainability is highly valued; it is one of the festival pillars, next to music and art. Therefore, the DGTL brand is strengthened as a festival that is also sustainable. Especially the establishment of the festival's living lab, where innovations can be tested, really sets an example for other festivals. Hence, sustainability can also be used as a marketing tool, for example to gain media attention. In this way, DGTL gains a competitive advantage over other festivals who do not pay attention to sustainability in the same sense. The strategy of using festivals as a living lab was also discussed during the community of practice meetings. Drift Festival trying out the deposit system at this edition is an example of such a living lab situation.

Institutional pressures

The last elements that can be used to seize opportunities in visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability are institutional pressures. Through institutional pressures, festivals form partnerships or are forced to adhere to certain guidelines. This can be used to advance and communicate the greening process of the festival. First, there is the private-public partnership of which the covenant sustainable events in Nijmegen is an example. Both Vierdaagsefeesten and Drift are part of this partnership and it fills the role of a community of practice. Second, there is the Plastic Pact by Green Events, a tripartite partnership of which Vierdaagsefeesten and DGTL are part. Third, Mysteryland, Vierdaagsefeesten and DGTL all joined the private-public partnership Plastic Promise. Fourth, DGTL Festival must adhere to guidelines set up by the municipality of Amsterdam, which is a government initiative. Both Mysteryland and Vierdaagsefeesten use the partnerships to get their sustainability message across. Pinas (Mysteryland) told me about this explicitly, regarding the Vierdaagsefeesten I noticed this on their website.

5.1.3 Conclusion

The following can be concluded from the interpretation of my results. As visitor pressures, I identified (perceived) visitor experience and greenwashing as important concepts. For overcoming the barrier of visitor experience when communicating *about* and *for* sustainability, it is important to take into account visitor perspectives. These perspectives can teach you a lot about visitors' preferences, they can confirm what you know or give you new insights, for example that visitor experience is not negatively affected by the implementation of a deposit system. When trying to prevent greenwashing allegations, it is important that your communication contains certain communication characteristics: transparency, openness and a willingness to share knowledge. These characteristics are also opportunities to reinforce communication *about* and *for* sustainability. As capabilities I discovered the importance of having knowledge on what kind of visitor communication works (understandable, not too preachy, not

too explicit) and how to enable this knowledge skilfully as important elements needed to overcome barriers of visitor communication.

Regarding intrinsic motivation to green a festival, this often debouches into a desire to communicate the sustainability message to visitors. This communication can then be informative *about* sustainability or educational *for* sustainability. The desire to create awareness the and desire to educate are both important opportunities for visitor communication on sustainability. Considering organisational drivers, the opportunity of using the greening process to have a competitive advantage over other festivals is an important driver for visitor communication on sustainability. Branding and trendsetting are the most important factors that contribute to increasing the competitive advantage. With regard to institutional pressures, I identified private-public partnerships, tripartite partnerships and government initiatives as important elements both in the greening process and when pursuing to get the sustainability message about this process across. In figure 17 you find my proposed conceptual framework revisited with the new concepts I found during my data analysis.

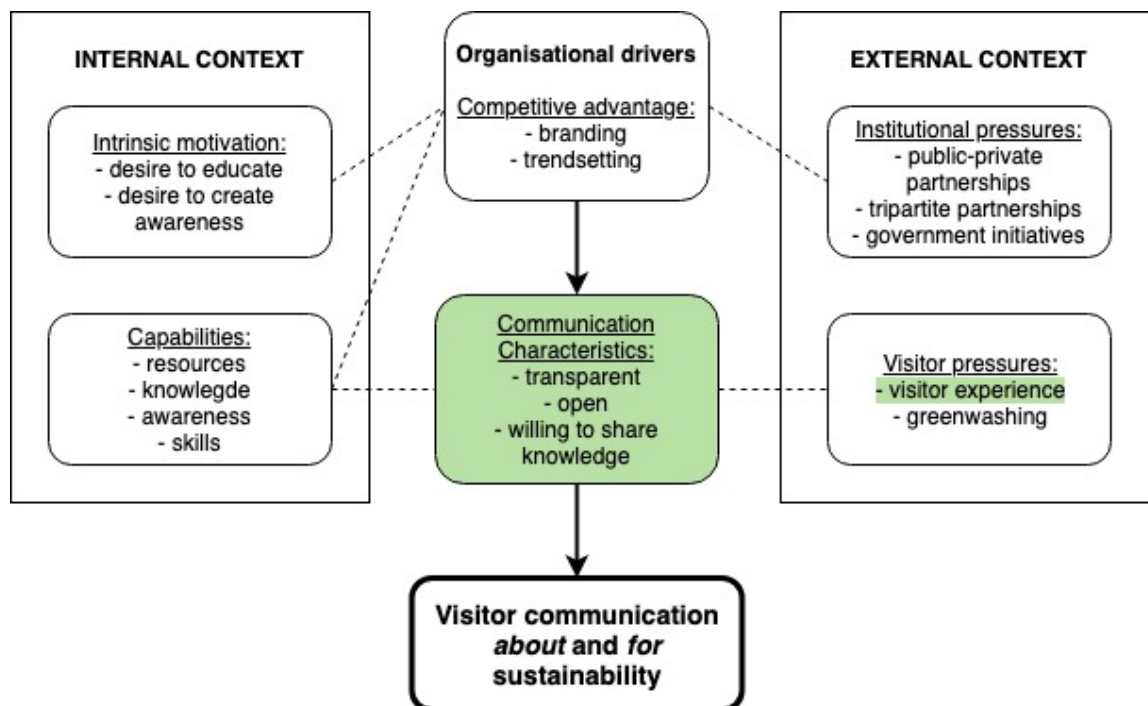


Figure 17. Confirmed conceptual framework; the concepts added to the model are shown in green.

The model starts internally with intrinsic motivation to green a festival and a desire to educate and create awareness by communicating about this greening. It is observed externally that other festivals are also working on greening (institutional pressures), creating a further desire to continue with the greening process while trying to keep ahead of others (competitive advantage). The festival thinks about the best fitting communication form (communication characteristics), which is also influenced by the capabilities to communicate as well as by the way visitors should be addressed (visitor

pressures). Eventually, this process leads to the most fitting form of visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability.

5.3 Theoretical reflection

The interpretations of my findings are now reflected upon by relating them to the literature. According to Jones (2018, p. 64), communication is one of the most powerful and essential tools for a sustainability manager. This statement can be related to my findings, as through the use of sustainability communication, awareness can be created, and education can be achieved. This is powerful and also essential when greening a festival; if visitors do not cooperate, their behaviour can stand in the way of corporate greening.

Tinnish and Mangal (2012) state that publicly communicated sustainability efforts are a means to differentiate from others, besides being a way to build a stronger brand. This statement is corroborated by my findings. Both Mysteryland and DGTL mention marketing and branding as one of the motives to communicate their sustainability practices.

Jones (2018, p. 82) describes that effectiveness of communication techniques in creating behavioural change depends strongly on the person or group you are trying to influence, meaning that it is essential to know your audience. Therefore, it is very useful that my research looked into visitor perspectives regarding sustainability and sustainable festivals. Overall, respondents find sustainability important and they would like to find out more about Drift's sustainability strategy. Here, it is noticeable that the extent to which visitors find sustainability important is related to the extent to which they would like to find out more about the sustainability strategy.

According to Kotter and Cohen (2002) it is necessary to induce feelings when motivating people to change familiar behaviour. This statement is not reflected in my findings. This is probably due to the fact that I did not focus on behavioural change in my research. I focussed on the creation of awareness, which is the step that comes before actual behavioural change. Therefore, inducing visitors' feelings was not necessary to reach the goal of creating awareness, for example with the deposit system at Drift Festival.

As reported by De Brito and Terzieva (2016), the setup of an eco-zone can be a means to communicate *for* sustainability. This eco-zone creates a positive engagement that lasts beyond the day(s) of the event. From my interview with DGTL, it became clear that they aim to achieve such an engagement; DGTL Festival has a resource hub where visitors can see how waste is treated as a resource, with the intention to change people's perspectives of waste.

Hallahan (2008) states that with strategic framing, people are prompted to think in particular and desired ways about a topic. You choose the storyline you want to use in your communication. This statement is verified with my data, as being too explicit or too preachy in your communication on sustainability is identified as something to be avoided. Therefore, the festivals choose their storyline strategically, to reach the big masses with their sustainability vision.

During the analysis of my data, I came across some concepts that did not come up during my literature review before the start of data collection. The first concept is transparency; openness and knowledge sharing are related to this. In her book on sustainable event management, Jones (2018) talks about the basic concept of transparency, that is information about an event's operations should be available for interested parties. In her chapter on communication and engagement she further mentions that it is important to report on your performance. Yet, it remains a question why this is important. According to my research, performance reporting is important to make your sustainability claims trustworthy and avoid greenwashing. The second concept is the experience of the visitor. According to Getz (2010) the temporary state of being apart from the mundane is an enduring theme in visitor experience. In my interviews with Mysteryland and DGTL this came across as the most important barrier for communicating on sustainability; people do not want to be confronted with problems that already confront them in daily life. It is interesting to research whether this barrier is legitimate; is visitor experience really undermined by sustainability communication?

Mair and Laing (2012) researched drivers and barriers for greening practices in the festival sector. Their research focused on organiser's behaviour, while mine focused on communication about this behaviour. Since the underlying process of greening is the same, similarities can be found. For example, 'financial cost' and 'lack of time' are mentioned by Mair and Laing (2012) as barriers for greening a festival, and my research also identified these as barriers for communication about this greening. Moreover, 'competitive advantage' and 'image' are mentioned as drivers for greening, and my research also identified these as opportunities in sustainability communication. It is noteworthy that Mair and Laing (2012) found these drivers to be less significant, whereas in my research they provided significant opportunities. Also, a desire to educate was found important in both research projects. A difference between the two is for example in the main driver 'consumer demand' which Mair and Laing (2012) mention: people expect a certain level of sustainability from the festival organisers. Consumer demand does not surface in my research as an important opportunity to communicate sustainability.

In conclusion, with my research I have identified a typology on visitor communication *about* and *for* sustainability. Furthermore, I have given a new dimension to the research of Mair and Laing (2012), by adding drivers (opportunities) and barriers to communicate about these greening practices in the (music) festival sector.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Music festival recommendations

The core of my findings is that applying greening practices in festival production is very different from communicating about these practices. I experienced this up close during my internship with 'Drift om te dansen'. Van Overbeek told me about everything 'green' they were doing as an organisation, right when I started my internship. Yet, these green practices were nowhere to be found at Drift's own online

channels. Some research brought me to external sources that had communicated about it, such as the blogpost from Alfen (Aflen, n.d.) about their collaboration with Drift to green the festival's electricity use.

This points to different motives for the greening process at festivals. Everyone I spoke to mentioned intrinsic motivation as a driver for this process. Yet, not everyone took the next step; use the greening process as a topic for communication and make your festival look good. Furthermore, sustainability communication can be a means to change behaviour of visitors. Organisers with intrinsic motivation to green a festival have strong awareness that we have to make the world a better place if we want to continue to live on this planet with the same comfort. Therefore, this intrinsic motivation could also drive them to communicate the sustainability message of a festival.

Hence, my practical recommendations to music festivals in general and Drift Festival specifically are as follows. The intrinsic motivation to green a festival should develop into a drive to spread the sustainability vision amongst visitors; communication *about* sustainability. This vision can then educate the people on sustainability as well as generate awareness about the impact the festival industry has on the environment; communication *for* sustainability. With this, the brand of the festival can be strengthened, and they can position themselves as an example for other festivals, in the case of Drift Festival especially in Nijmegen. As a consequence of brand strengthening with the communication *about* and *for* sustainability, there is a possibility of making festival tickets slightly more expensive. This extra budget can then be used to invest in sustainable measures to further green the festival.

Furthermore, it is important that the communication on sustainability adds content and depth to the festival. Therefore, it is a good idea to both communicate easily understandable messages to the general public and have more background information available for those who are interested. This also builds to the elements of transparency and openness, as a means for meaningful communication, while at the same time avoiding greenwashing.

Besides that, I have some recommendations for Drift regarding greening practices to implement later. These recommendations are drawn from ideas respondents had in the survey. Mentioned often was the idea of more sustainable catering; meaning vegetarian, local and organic food. Unique, but noteworthy ideas were compensating CO₂ emissions (as DGTL has started to do this year), energy generating dance floors (as a means to charge your phone for example) and poles to collect cigarette butts. These greening practices can of course also be implemented by other music festivals.

Further, the visitors were enthusiastic about the deposit system, therefore it is my advice to continue with this system in upcoming festival editions. Still, internal communication regarding the system has to be improved. Everyone involved needs to be informed about the specifics well before the festival takes place. As for the 2019 edition, decisions on the specifics were made last minute, but since the system is now clear to everyone, informing people on time will probably not form a problem for next edition(s). The deposit system is a good example for other festivals in Nijmegen and also for music festivals outside of Nijmegen.

5.5.2 Governance recommendations

Last but not least, institutional perspectives were also reviewed in my research. With regard to these perspectives, I also have some recommendations. First, it has to be recognized that there are little institutional pressures in Nijmegen at the moment. The covenant on sustainable events is the only private-public partnership there is, and this does not pressure festivals in any way, it offers a space for voluntary discussions. Further rules and regulations on the initiative of the municipality do not exist. Therefore, my hope is that this research will contribute to raising policy awareness in the area of sustainable events in general and music festivals specifically. Also, with the covenant we want to generate support from the municipality of Nijmegen. This support could take the form of facilitating fixed power outlets with a large capacity at all event locations in Nijmegen and having a green battery available for festivals to rent in cases where these outlets are not possible. Further, helping events set up a good system to collect and separate waste (through for example subsidies), is also a step in the right direction.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions

To conclude my thesis, I will discuss some limitations regarding my assumptions and research approach and give suggestions for future research. A limitation to my research is the number of interviews I held to generate case descriptions of Vierdaagsefeesten, Mysteryland and DGTL. This number was rather low due to practical reasons. Of course, I used other sources to corroborate my interview findings, but still, this is not the same as having a second interview of the same length with another person from the same case. It would have contributed to the validity of my research if the case description would have been based on more interviews. Additionally, some questions in my questionnaire were suggestive. For example, the question ‘Which aspects of sustainability are important to you? (Multiple answers possible)’, had fixed response categories (food, waste, energy, mobility, clothing, water use, sustainability is not important to me, other, namely: ...). These categories can cause people to think of aspects they would not have thought of themselves, decreasing the validity of the questionnaire.

As a suggestion for future research, it is interesting to measure if B2C sustainability communication that has the elements I identified (is understandable, is transparent, is open and demonstrates a willingness to share knowledge) is effective. Effective in a sense of strengthening a festival brand, causing them to have a competitive advantage over other festivals that have less (communication about) greening practices. Researching this can for example be done with focus groups where the groups talk about what comes to mind considering various festivals. A further suggestion is to research the attitude-behaviour gap. According to Tölkes (2018) this is under-researched theoretically and empirically in the sustainable tourism sector. In this research, visitor attitudes have been examined with a questionnaire. Visitor behaviour is also explored during the evaluation of the deposit system. Yet, it would be interesting to measure the attitude on sustainability and observe sustainable behaviour with the same participants, creating the possibility to generate firm claims on this attitude-behaviour gap.

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Appendix I

Interview guide for the interviews with other festivals (Vierdaagsefeesten, Mysteryland, DGTL).

Translated from Dutch.

Questions guiding the interview:

- Can you tell me something about yourself, your position and the festival in which you are involved?
- What does sustainability mean to you personally and how important is it in your daily life and in the workplace? Can you give examples of this?
- What do you consider as important factors that contribute to your sustainability initiatives?
 - o Who influences these initiatives?
 - o What influences these initiatives?
- What obstacles do you experience with these initiatives? Can you give examples of this?
- How do you promote sustainability? Why? (Communication)
- What are the important opportunities, future developments and threats that you see? Can you give examples of this?
- Is there anything else you would like to discuss?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Concepts to keep in mind:

- Internal context
 - o CSR
 - o Champion
 - o Education
 - o Awareness
- External context
 - o Societal context
 - Greenwashing
 - Willingness to pay
 - o Government
 - Subsidies
 - Rules and regulation
- Organisational context
 - o Trendsetting
 - o Competitive advantage
 - o Branding

Appendix 2

Self-administered questionnaire

Q1: What is your age?

⇒ Scroll bar (0-100) to identify the age

Q2: What is your gender?

⇒ Male

⇒ Female

⇒ Other

Q3: What level of education are you currently following, or have you completed as the highest?

⇒ High school (Middelbaar onderwijs in Dutch)

⇒ Intermediate vocational training (MBO in Dutch)

⇒ Higher professional education (HBO in Dutch)

⇒ Academic education (WO in Dutch)

Q4: Have you attended a Drift event before?

⇒ Yes

⇒ No

Q5 (if 'Yes' is selected Q4): How often have you been to Drift events?

⇒ Scroll bar (0-20)

Q6: Standpoint: Sustainability is in general important to me.

⇒ Completely agree

⇒ Somewhat agree

⇒ Don't agree, don't disagree

⇒ Somewhat disagree

⇒ Completely disagree

Q7: Which aspects of sustainability are important to you? (Multiple answers possible).

⇒ Food

⇒ Waste

⇒ Energy

⇒ Mobility

⇒ Clothing

⇒ Water use

⇒ Sustainability is not important to me

⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]

Q8: On a scale from 0 till 10, how sustainable do you estimate Drift Festival?

⇒ Scroll bar (0-10)

Q9: On what do you base your estimate of the previous question?

⇒ Open question

Q10: How can your eating habits be described best?

⇒ Meat eater

⇒ Flexitarian (one or more days per week no meat and fish)

⇒ Vegetarian (no meat and fish)

⇒ Vegan (no animal products)

⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]

Q11: Have you ever eaten a meal at Drift Festival?

⇒ Yes

⇒ No

Q12 (if 'No' is selected Q11): If you would buy a meal at Drift Festival, what is of importance to you? (Multiple answers possible).

- ⇒ Price
- ⇒ Sustainability
- ⇒ Queue
- ⇒ Appearance of the food truck
- ⇒ Opinion of others
- ⇒ Appearance of the meal
- ⇒ Ingredients
- ⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]

Q13 (if 'Yes' is selected Q11): What was the purchase of this meal based on? (Multiple answers possible).

- ⇒ Price
- ⇒ Sustainability
- ⇒ Queue
- ⇒ Appearance of the food truck
- ⇒ Opinion of others
- ⇒ Appearance of the meal
- ⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]

Q14: What is your meal of preference at a festival? (Multiple answers possible).

- ⇒ Fries
- ⇒ Pizza
- ⇒ Veggie burger
- ⇒ Hamburger
- ⇒ Burrito
- ⇒ Falafel
- ⇒ Spring rolls
- ⇒ Curry
- ⇒ Fruit
- ⇒ Ice cream/ice popsicle
- ⇒ Lollipop
- ⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]

Q15: How important do you find sustainability in the food offer at Drift Festival 2019?

- ⇒ Very important
- ⇒ Important
- ⇒ Fairly important
- ⇒ Somewhat important
- ⇒ Unimportant

Q16: What do you find important in making the food more sustainable at Drift Festival 2019? (Multiple answers possible).

- ⇒ Less disposables
- ⇒ Recyclable disposables
- ⇒ Local food
- ⇒ Organic food
- ⇒ Seasonal food
- ⇒ Vegetarian food
- ⇒ Vegan food
- ⇒ Sustainable food trucks (economical equipment for example)
- ⇒ I don't find it important

Q17: What would you think if sustainable food was promoted at Drift Festival 2019? (For example, putting a vegan/vegetarian food truck in the spotlight or making a sustainable meal cheaper).

- ⇒ Awesome
- ⇒ Good
- ⇒ Average
- ⇒ Not good
- ⇒ Terrible

Q18: Are you prepared to pay more for a sustainable meal at Drift Festival 2019 in comparison to a not sustainable meal?

- ⇒ Yes
- ⇒ No

Q19 (if 'Yes' is selected Q18): What percentage would you pay more for a sustainable meal at Drift Festival?

⇒ Scroll bar (0-100)

Q20: How do you separate your waste at home?

- ⇒ Very good
- ⇒ Good
- ⇒ Not good, not bad
- ⇒ Bad
- ⇒ Very bad

Q21: How could Drift make waste separation easier at Drift Festival?

⇒ Open question

Q22: Would you like to find out more about how Drift is concerned with sustainability?

- ⇒ Very nice
- ⇒ Nice
- ⇒ Neutral
- ⇒ Not nice
- ⇒ Not nice at all

Q23: How would you like to be approached about the steps that Drift takes to make the festival more sustainable? (Multiple answers possible).

- ⇒ Facebook
- ⇒ Instagram
- ⇒ LinkedIn
- ⇒ YouTube
- ⇒ Drift Newsletter
- ⇒ Website
- ⇒ Offline media (newspaper, flyer, etc.)
- ⇒ On the festival itself
- ⇒ Other, namely: [blank to fill in]
- ⇒ I would not like to be approached about this

Q24: Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how Drift Festival can be made more sustainable?

⇒ Open question

Q25: Fill in your email address if you want to have a chance at winning a weekend ticket for Drift Festival 2019.

⇒ Blank to fill in email address