

Exhibition Concept Bertelsmann EXPO Pavilion

Project	Planet m
Customer	Bertelsmann Group
Format	Pavilion at the EXPO2000 world fair Hannover
Task	Creative Director Main concept audio content Technical Director Main concept audio technology Audio-Design Audio software
Status	Permanent presentation during the EXPO2000
Credit	Triad Berlin
Info	www.dataphonic.de

Concept

The EXPO2000 Bertelsmann pavillon "Planet m" stands for Planet media, the focus of Bertelsmann's corporate activity. Planet media is orbiting in outer space and can be visited by the Expo attendants by using a spaceship to reach out, land on, and explore the planet. A giant elevator at the pavillon's lower floor acts as the spaceship to suck up 200 astronauts and skyrocket them up onto and into Planet m. Once entered, a sequence of show areas give the visitors an background plus information in a subtle and entertaining way on what Bertelsmann and its media products are all about.

The pavillon's show concept defines five show areas for the visitors to pass in sequence:

1. Outside Waiting Area
2. Spacelift
3. Pre-Show Cinema
4. Main-Show Cinema
5. Media Wall

Sound is playing a very prominent role in this concept. It has been chosen to link the five show areas by means of following a consistent design. The design is to guide the visitors thru the pavillon, both physically and emotionally by raising attention in the subsequent show area and keeping it at a high level.

As one prominent style feature to create a consistent audio experience, dataphonic has chosen to employ discrete multi-channel audio with sophisticated spacial distribution algorithms. The multi-channel systems are programmed to establish a concise and often surprising surround experience with many sound sources moving in parallel.

In the Outside Waiting Area 24 discrete audio channels have been installed, the Spacelift has 16, the Pre-Show Cinema 14, the Main-Show Cinema 7, and the Media Wall 24 channels, many of which have been installed in three-dimensional arrays to increase the liveliness of the experience.

The Show Areas in Detail

1. Outside Waiting Area



The visitors are to be both entertained to shorten the waiting time as well as introduced into the thematic world of Bertelsmann Media Corporation. To this end the Waiting Area has been divided into three sectors. These can be used as a. three separate areas for audio content programming or b. as one giant homogeneous area. Both modes have been extensively used. In mode a. entertaining shows with distributed audio have been created. Thanks to the discrete audio channel architecture they are grabbing the crowd's attention with lots of sound sources moving in parallel, such as car races, planes, or helicopters speeding through and hovering above the public. In mode b. one of Bertelsmann's radio stations broadcast hourly programs with live moderators interacting with the visitors standing in line.

2. Spacelift



The Spacelift is a giant elevator for 200 people. It acts like a huge high-tech space ship taking them on a flight up onto the planet to explore its goodies. Like with any good space ship trip there is a countdown before take-off, a huge blast when the space ship takes off into the sky, the 60-second flight with welcomes in many languages and announcements, the getting closer to Planet m, and finally the entry into the new atmosphere, which is celebrated like a big bang with tremendous sound, light, fog and haptic effects.

30 seconds before take-off the engines switch from stand-by into active mode and produce a bassy, sonorous, energetic tone into the space ship for everyone to experience. Then the countdown: 3-2-1-Lift-off!

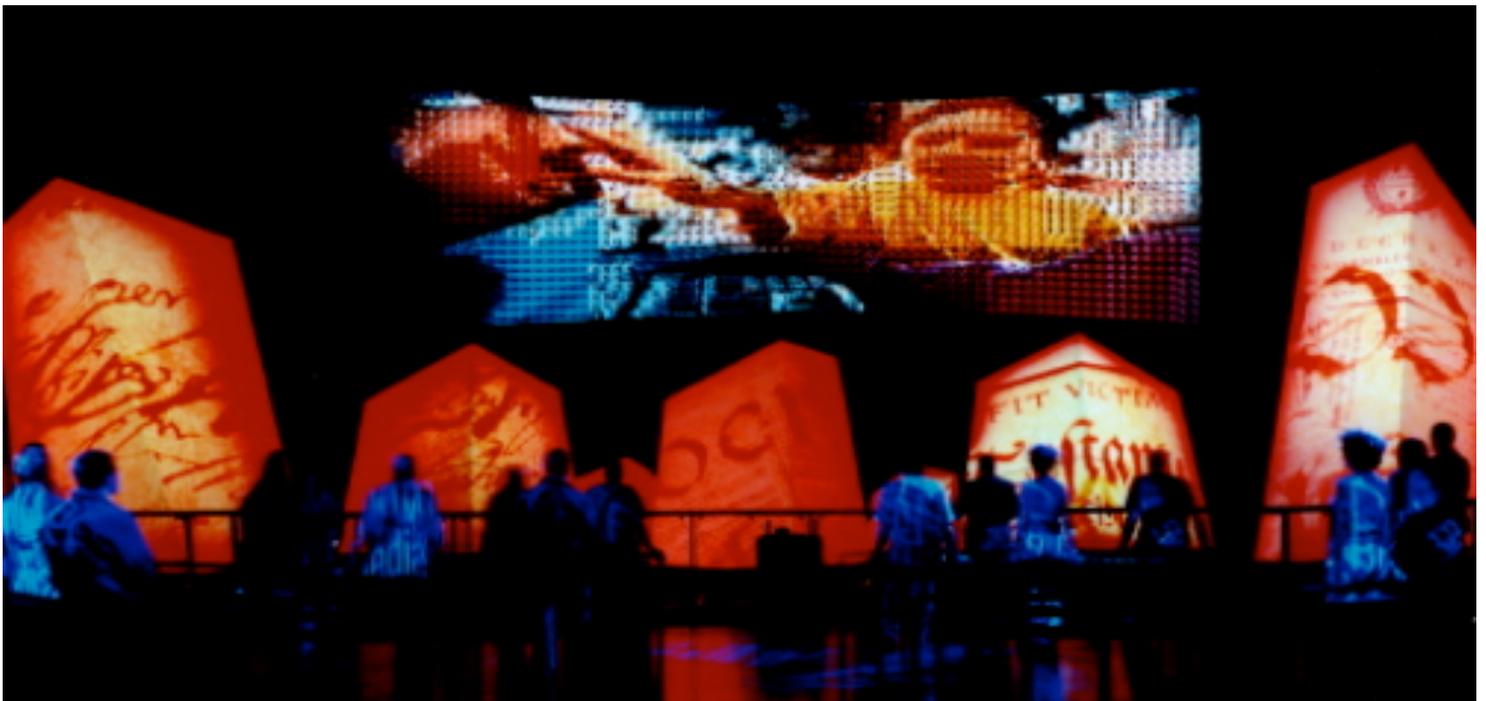


The giant power of the mighty turbines is conveyed into the visitors area. 64 heavy-duty bass actuators mounted within the lift's floor giving the take-off the necessary engine impact. The trip to Planet m has begun.

After a short while the atmosphere of Planet m becomes noticeable. Hundreds of sounds and recognizable sound fragments taken from famous Bertelsmann TV show trailers are raining down on the astronauts from above like comets. The meteorits become denser and denser, louder and louder on the last third of the trip, until climaxing upon entry into Planet m's atmosphere. Incredibly heavy sound, fog, and light effects mark the landing with a Big Bang reaching every single visitor in the crowd.

The lights dim, the sound gets softer, the next show area, Pre-Show, dimly lit, becomes slightly visible in blue schemes as the fog is settling. Planet m has been reached, and is now ON AIR.

3. Pre-Show Cinema



The Pre-Show is special within the Main Show Concept because it is the first cinematic presentation. It tells the Bertelsmann company story by going back to the beginning of media and elaborates on the sophistication and diversification of media throughout history. In a dramatic and entertaining way, the visitor gains a thorough understanding about the evolution of the company's core product: media content. He also understands that Bertelsmann is the key content provider because of the breadth and quality of their line of products, be it movies, music, books, radio, TV, or the Web.

The Pre-Shows sound track brings the pictures to life and creates an atmosphere of tension, realism, and truth to the story being told. It is the sound which establishes the emotional, close connection between the movie's content and the audience. Only audio has the power to arouse the desired emotions so that the visitors are left with an understanding and a deep feeling of the company's content and brand image.

4. Main-Show Cinema



The transition music guides the crowd into the Main Show Cinema.

Here, a high-resolution movie is shown. It is telling the touching story of an Arabian boy. He gets lost in the desert, but is found and saved by a nomad tribe due to his mobile device.

5. Media Wall



The concluding Media Wall shows hundreds of memorabilia and pieces of interesting historic information from Bertelsmann's company archives. The company founders are being showcased, famous Bertelsmann artists such as Elvis Presley receive their honors showing collectibles, landmark original record releases and personal items

The Wall consists of many cubes whose glass front panes are made opaque by an automatic media control system. The clear windows showcase interesting information and deliver a corresponding sound track with focused sound speakers from above. These special-purpose speakers focus the sound field on a very narrow beam of sound so that only the person standing underneath the speaker is able to listen. This way, many different audio channels can be projected adjacent to each other without interfering with one another.

Bottom Line

The Planet m EXPO2000 pavillon is a good example for intelligent company presentation. Bertelsmann's products are not showcased at face value but are included in a larger story, often enriched by facts and history in a highly engaging and entertaining manner. Key to the success of Planet m is the touch of the emotions, linking each visitor to Bertelsmann's brand messages and conveying a feeling of respect and mindfulness. The audio medium is playing the biggest role because only sound and music are capable to stir, maintain, and direct the emotions in a precise and unobtrusive manner.

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