



A roadmap for Dutch festivals towards future relevance

Dutch festivals are currently extremely popular and offer visitors a way to escape the daily routine, and experience new things. This popularity starts to have its drawbacks since the number of complaints increase. As an effect, regulations become stricter and municipalities hand out fewer permits, resulting in last-minute cancellations of festivals.

The festival landscape already encounters other extreme risks. This can either be the result of extreme weather, short term (financial) plans, the battle for artists, lack of distinctiveness, unexpected infectious diseases or the high demands visitors or other stakeholders have. The festival landscape has become a much-discussed topic and every year questions pop up with regards to its relevance and effects.

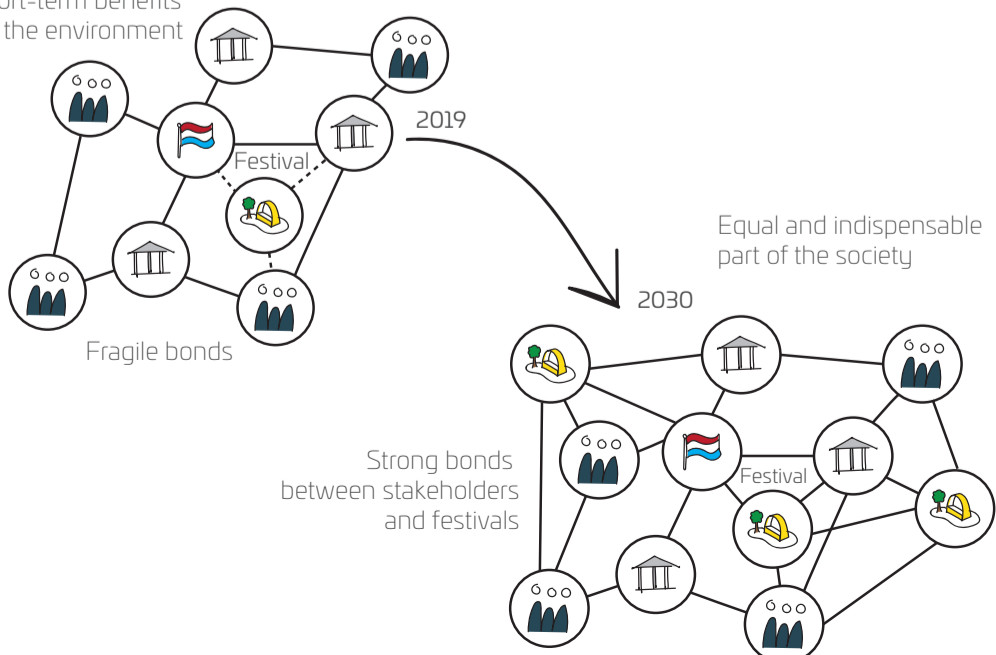
This thesis presents a proposal on how festivals can **create a permanent position** in 2030 when dealing with this changing environment. In order to do so, **festivals will have to change their role to a stakeholder-oriented service** and **position themselves as a platform where citizens and visitors come together** and take the opportunity to fulfill local and personal needs. This results in a shift of focus and festivals can use this position to strengthen its base.

Why?

An overview of the research insights

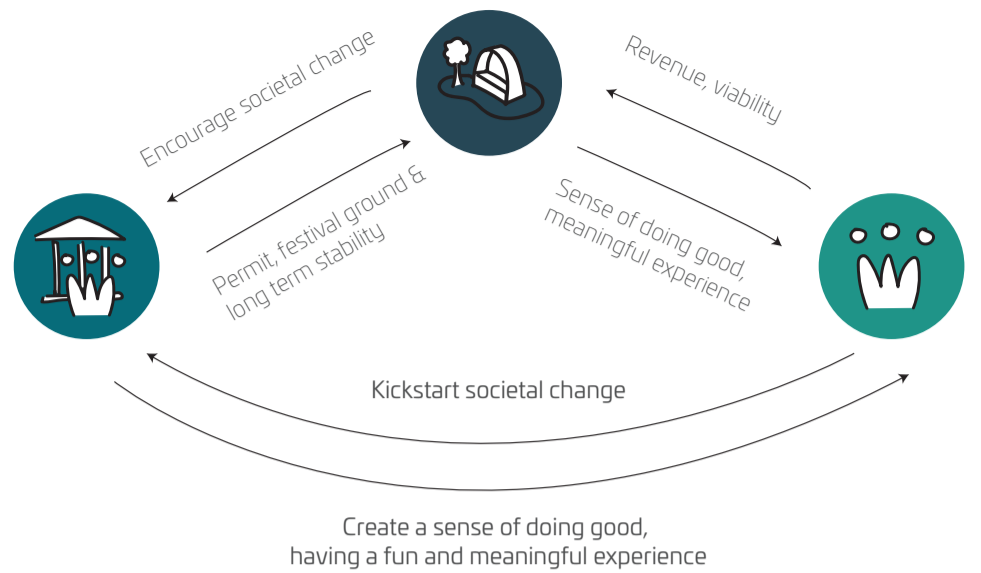
- 1 The two stakeholders to focus on when wanting to ensure a stable position are the **festival visitors and local citizens**. These stakeholders currently have the biggest influence.
- 2 The drawbacks of festivals are becoming more predominant to citizens. The benefits of a festival are often invisible to the local citizens and mostly short term, focusing on economic, social and cultural benefits. If festivals would leave our society, it would be missed by the short term economic benefits, cultural pride and social benefits it induces. Festivals are not putting a lot of effort into leaving a visible or physical benefit behind the community. **They will have to become indispensable** to the community in order to create a permanent position.
- 3 Possible design solutions that create an indispensable position are in the field of sustainability, communication with the local community, dealing with the competition in the field of the lineup and attracting visitors.
- 4 In 2030, the Netherlands will have **fully embraced the purpose economy**. Every decision made is based on doing something good for the world. The need for people to escape reality and take a break from daily life will remain to increase.

Short-term benefits for the environment



A new role for festivals

The festival will have to become a service, where it fulfills the needs and challenges of the stakeholders and as a result creates reciprocity.



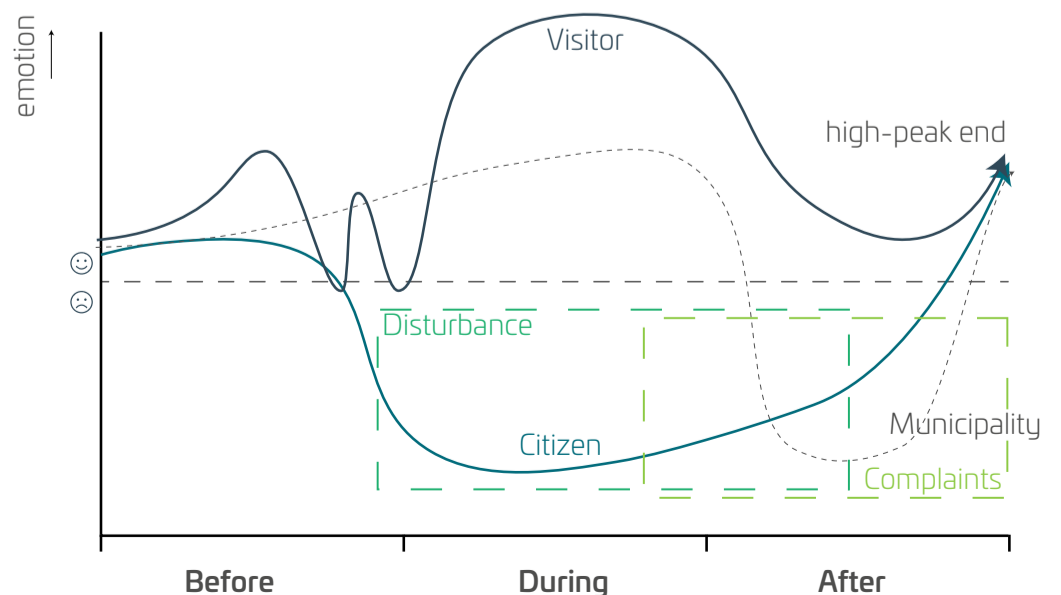
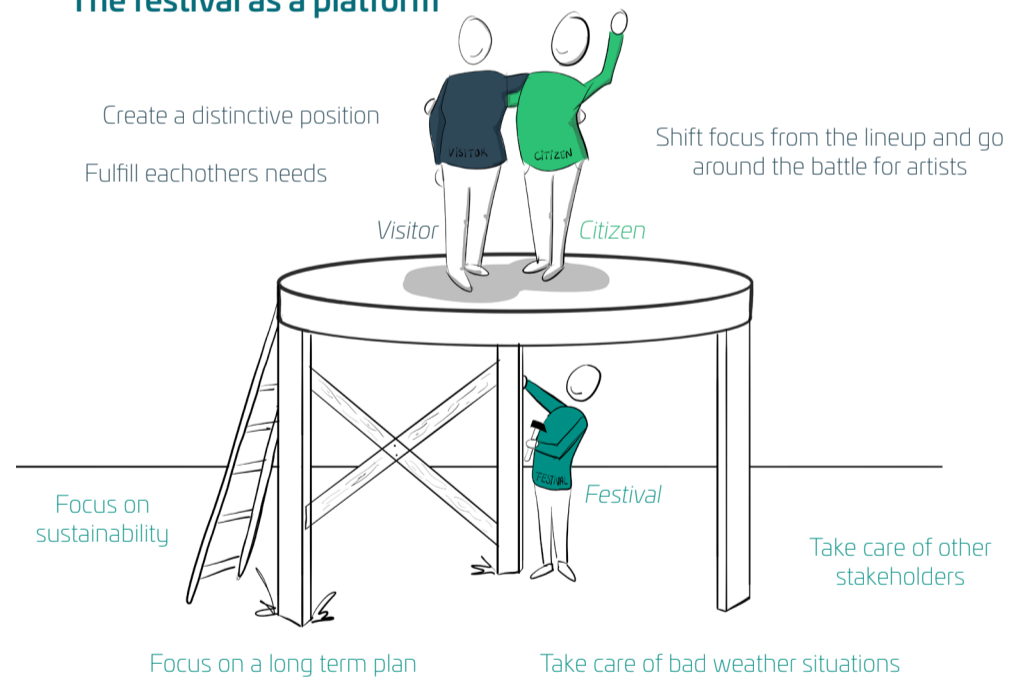
In order to gain an indispensable role, a festival should focus on making the citizens satisfied and happy by adding to the economic challenges municipalities currently encounter. They can help **improve the local environment** and add to the welfare of the majority of the citizens. For the visitors, a **purposeful, 'out of this world' experience** can be delivered by combining narrative and purpose where visitors go on a unique journey while adding something to the world. By fulfilling these needs, the festival will transform into a service.

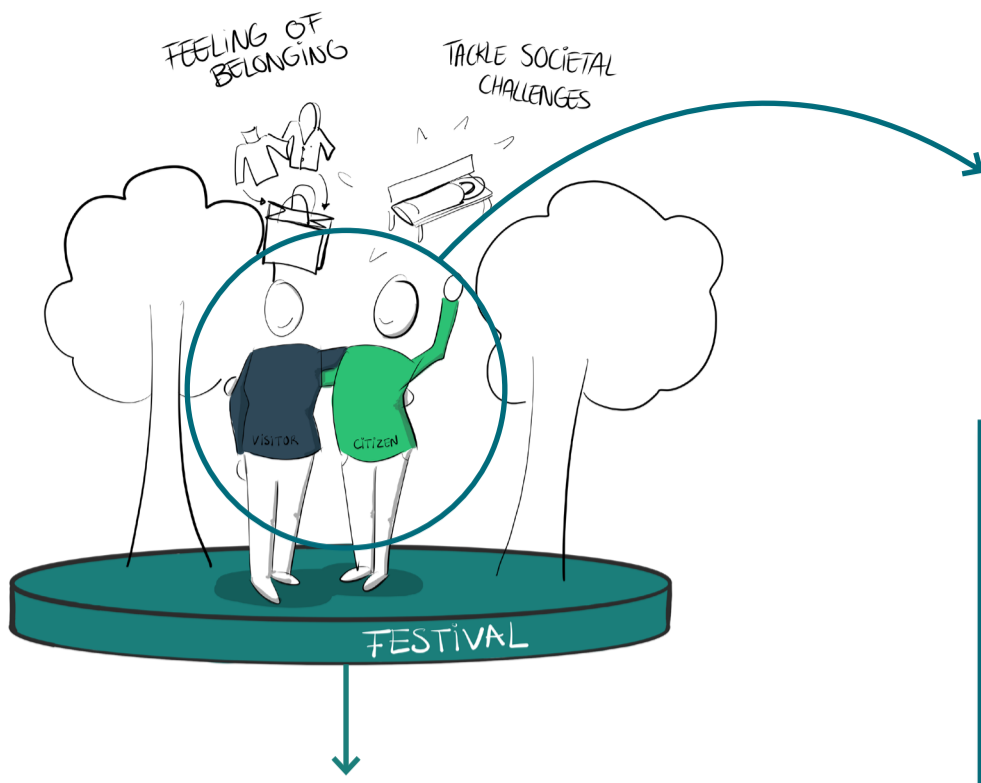
Festivals will execute this new role as a service by becoming a **platform** and giving part of their ownership to the stakeholders, creating the opportunity for itself to focus on a strong base.

Finishing with a peak end

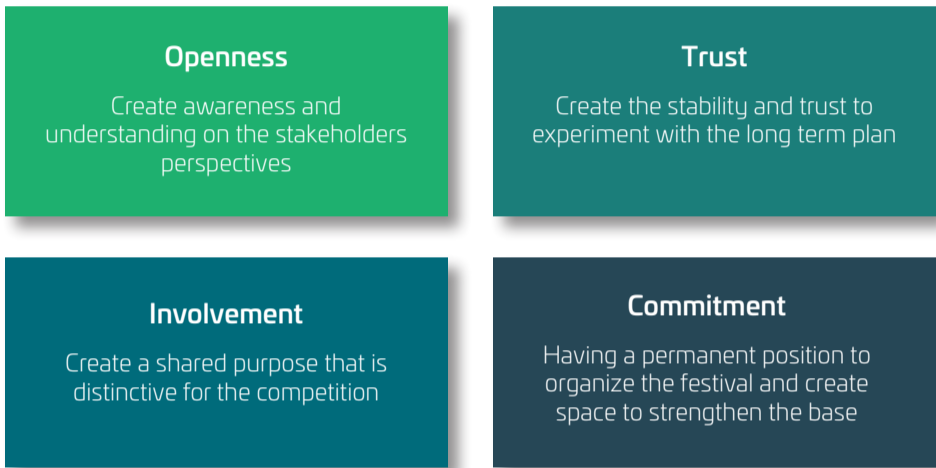
Indispensability will have to be created in the **before-, during- and after phase** of the festival. By **ending the phases with a peak-end**, the stakeholders will remember the festival more positively. This is important in establishing loyalty towards the festival since after this peak-end, evaluations start.

The festival as a platform





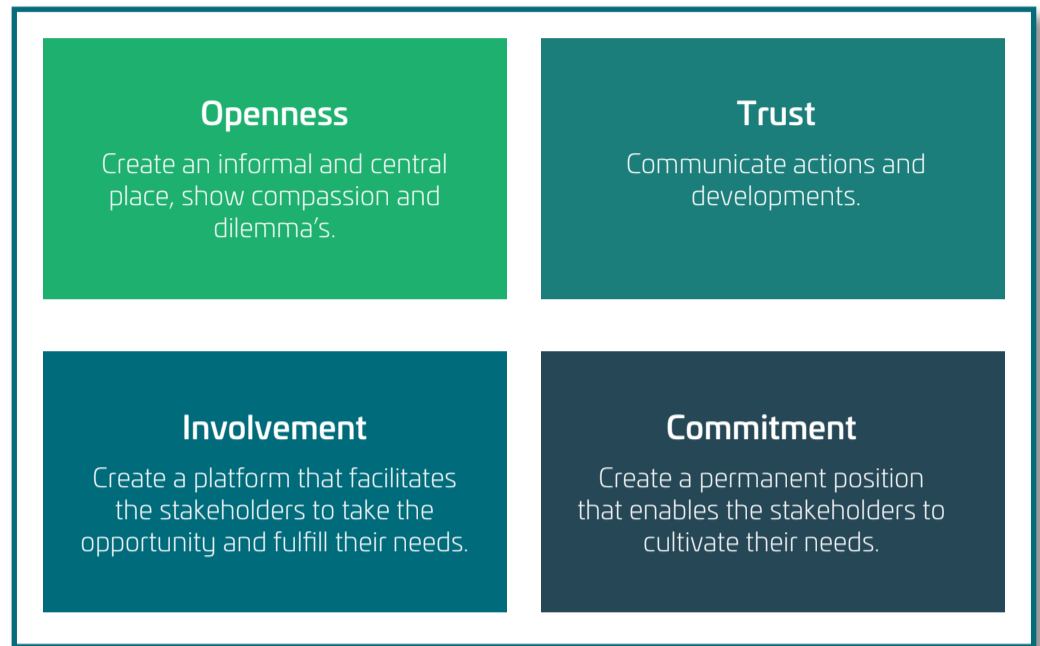
Value to the festival



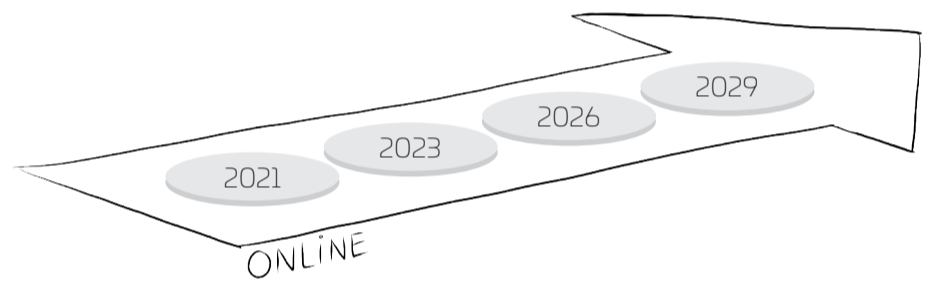
How? By creating a strong relationship

Festivals will be able to execute this new role as a platform to its full potential when a strong relationship between visitors and citizens is created. Four elements need to be implemented in order to create this strong relationship. For this, three different scenarios are designed. Each scenario aims for a different kind of strong relationship, depending on the festivals' needs. Step-by-step, the four elements are implemented over time. The first horizon is 'Openness', the second one is 'Trust', thirdly 'Involvement', and the final horizon that needs to be implemented is 'Commitment'.

A strong relationship includes four elements:



Three scenarios towards a strong relationship



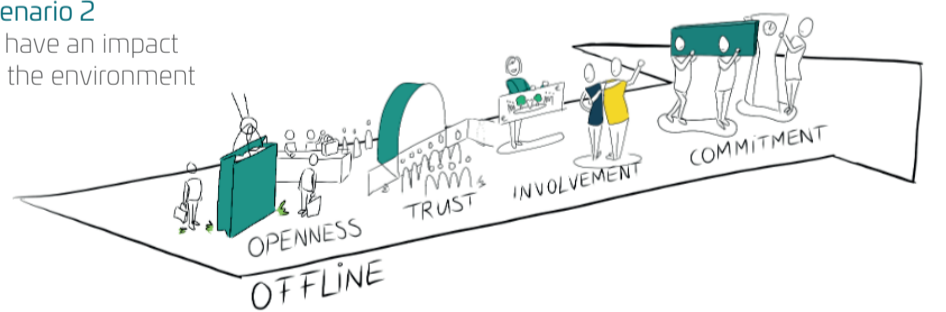
Scenario 1

A formal relationship



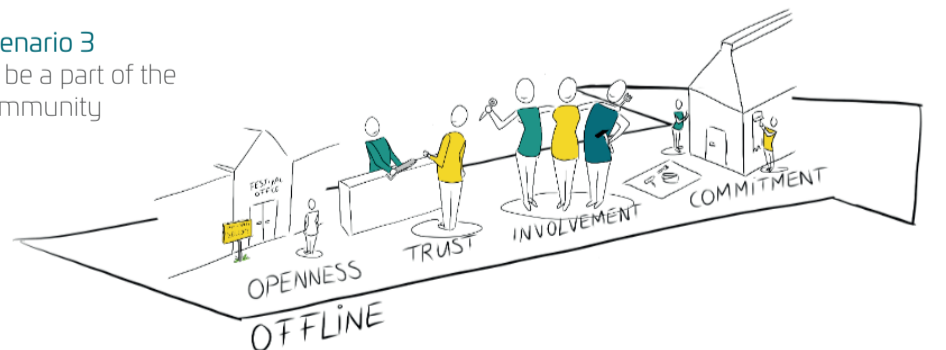
Scenario 2

To have an impact on the environment



Scenario 3

To be a part of the community



For every scenario, an online and offline platform is designed. By designing an online platform, a bigger community can be reached and challenges or complexities that occur during the implementation of the concepts can be resolved. The two platforms can reinforce each other.

General recommendations

- #1: Every festival does something good
- #2: Be critical and reflect. Where is room for improvement?
- #3: Embrace complaints
- #4: See yourself as a platform that can facilitate great initiatives
- #5: Create a long term mindset, enhancing long term stability
- #6: Be aware of your purpose in this purpose economy
- #7: Use the online world to the festivals advantage

Recommendations towards a strong relationship

- #1: Visitors and citizens are key partners
- #2: Work on a strong relationship with the stakeholders, become a user-centered organization
- #3: Co-creation creates a feeling of ownership
- #4: Create a year-round visible relationship
- #5: Communication is key
- #6: Focus on the relationship in the before-, during- and after phase of the festival
- #7: End every year with a high peak

Getting curious? Any questions? Let's get in touch!

Maartje Hofker
festivalsin2030@gmail.com