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EIA News Release: **Event marketing attracts TV partner**

Pioneering events company Brand Events has recently signed a deal with Channel 4 which has acquired a 50% stake in Taste Events, a programme of food and drink festivals owned and managed by the independent event organiser.

In addition to delivering Channel 4 both a new revenue stream and vehicle to reach viewers, the deal gives the Taste Events their own opportunity to build huge 'Taste' communities, through which to develop the brand, create C4 brand-related features on-site and new marketing platforms.

Channel 4 will seek to develop a more engaging relationship with its customers through the acquisition, signifying its intentions to get closer to its audience, to develop positive experiences around food – one of its core genres – and to offer a new medium to its existing and potential TV advertisers and programme sponsors.

Rod Henwood, New Business Director at Channel 4, said: "A key objective of Channel 4's new business strategy is to diversify our revenue base, in part by investing in third party businesses. Taste Events is a fantastic example of a business that complements the core channel and will benefit from the expertise Channel 4 can provide. A valuable addition to our existing 4Rights business, Taste will help extend Channel 4's strong reputation in food programming beyond the TV arena."

Live events represent an increasingly popular way for major brands to achieve their marketing aims. In the current business climate of the 'distrusting consumer', who is consistently bombarded by multiple methods of mass communication (via TV, on-line, direct mail, outdoor ads), event marketing offers a truly permissive route to the customer; where the audience *chooses* to see the brand! Events deliver forums for companies to create memorable and favourable experiences for consumers (a proven asset to the purchasing process); Channel 4 clearly see the value of face-to-face interaction.

The 'Taste of London' event has gone from strength-to-strength following its 2004 launch. The summer Regent's Park show, where attendees flock to sample the latest culinary delights from leading restaurants, owned by the likes of Gordon Ramsay and Michael Roux Jr, as well as major food-and-drink outlets, such as Marks & Spencer, has built a substantial audience in excess of 35,000 visitors. Other brands such as British Airways and SAAB are active sponsor supporters of the 'Taste' event series, which this year spread to Birmingham and Dublin.

Importantly for Channel 4, the 'Taste' audience largely consists of younger affluent professionals; a specific target audience that brands are always keen to reach. It is said that 'for every passion, there is an event', an illustrative phrase that conveys event marketing's ability to attract and deliver a particular attendee group that companies are committed to engaging with. At 'Taste', chefs can demonstrate their craft in a live setting, and produce their signature dishes for the very people they want in their reservation books (Gordon Ramsay "noticed a significant increase in reservations" following his participation at the event).

Chris Hughes, Managing Director of Brand Events, explained that, "Channel 4 will be a fabulous partner for creating new live event experiences. We are confident that a

combination of our expertise in the business, coupled with their reputation for innovation and quality output will propel the 'Taste' business into stratospheric heights."

Trevor Foley, Group Chief Executive of the Events Industry Alliance (EIA) stated, "Brand Events and Channel 4 will be just the first of a number of such deals involving big brand participation in event marketing. The second coming of the newest medium, digital marketing, has heralded a new dawn for the oldest... the experience! Broadcast, press and DM can all be replicated by on-line, but a live experience cannot!"

ENDS

---NOTES TO EDITORS---

About the EIA

The Events Industry Alliance (EIA) is the new marketing arm for the exhibitions and events industry, tasked with telling business leaders and media planners about the huge prospects for business growth through the medium of "Face to Face Marketing", and increasing recognition in Government of the considerable value of the industry to the UK economy.

This new body has been formed by and is equally owned by members of three associations that have increasingly worked together to speak with one powerful voice for the industry:

- The Association of Exhibition Contractors (AEC)
- The Association of Exhibition Organisers (AEO)
- The Association of Event Venues (AEV)

The EIA aims to:

1. Provide a single stronger voice for the industry
2. Better resource industry promotion activities
3. Enable greater sharing of information and intellect between existing association parties and new communities
4. Increase professionalism within and knowledge of the industry at all levels within member companies, In order that all members can run existing events more successfully and win more exhibition/event business.

For more information, visit the website at www.eventsindustryalliance.com

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