

The Biggest Event of 'The World: 'La Notte Bianca' in Rome

Fabio Severino

M.A., Ph.D candidate

Department of Sociology and Communication

University of Rome "La Sapienza"

Fabio Severino is BA at Roma Tre University in performing arts marketing, M.A. at University of Rome "La Sapienza" in service marketing. In 2005 fall he will discuss his Ph.D. thesis in Sponsorship. He is the editor of the handbooks "Marketing for the cultural sector" and (with M. Trimarchi) "Seven ideas for the cultural sector". He has published his researchers several times on the Italian scientific review "Economia della cultura".

Abstract

Cultural events could see a political way of success, not only as a natural public service. In Italy, where politics is not steady, many municipalities each year plan activities without any cultural value, empty entertainment so as to please the electors. In Rome, where naturally this vision is not so far off, the actual mayor (an ex-Italian minister of culture), on the opportunity of cultural event (with political benefits), has built a cultural night, taking place in september, which involves all the city and calls two million visitors. There were already two editions with the format getting better each time and in 2004, many hotels, flights and trains sold out. 463 free events, i.e. performing arts, concerts, cinemas, extraordinary openings of museums & archeological sites etc. gave life to a unique night in the world. With a budget of 3.3 million Euro, the general income for the city would be 7 times more. Politics, economy and culture could work together with results for everyone: politicians, private interests and community.

Keywords

Territorial Marketing, Cultural Event, Urban Policy, Tourism & Culture, Free Entry.

Introduction

During the last three years, the municipality of Rome's policy was aimed at developing the cultural sector. Walter Veltroni, ex-Italian Minister of Culture, has been the Mayor of Rome since 2001. He thinks that the possibility of having cultural activities, is an important part of social and economic development. To this aim the Municipality offers several cultural activities during the year. In particular, there is 'La Notte Bianca', 463 events taking place on one night throughout the city.

City Context

To understand the strategic relevance of this kermesse, it is important to define Rome both in the national context and in the cultural consumption. The city has 2.8 million citizens, 200 thousand of which are foreigners (57 million in Italy with 1.5 million foreigners); an additional million reaches the city daily for several reasons (work, study, pleasure). There are 13 universities with more than 222 thousand students, young people aged between 15 and 29 total 464 thousand. Each year in Rome there are more than 22 million tourists (897 million in Italy), 63.7% of which are foreigners (41% is the national percentage). The average stay is 4.27 days long. Cultural supply is: 23.2 thousand live plays (169.3 thousand in Italy) for 3.3 million tickets

sold (27.9 million in Italy), 87 thousand cinema showing days (877 thousand in Italy) for 11 million tickets sold (110 millions in Italy), the 58 most important public museums (state, municipal and vatican) for 11 million visitors. There are 40 public libraries (30 local and 10 national) with 1.3 milion users.

Due to this strong cultural policy, in 2003 Rome increased its economy by 0.9% compared to the national value of 0.3%. The Mayor is probably the only politician who understands the power of cultural as a tool, as well as sport, tourism and free time in general.

Mayor Veltroni is a politician of the left wing but, in these last three years, has achieved widespread success in Rome, that reached 86% even if the city is historically conservative and catholic. Moreover, in 2003, his candidate won the election of the district presidency. In 2005, another of his candidates won at the regional presidency.

The Case: 'La Notte Bianca' (The White Night)

This is a collection of events taking place in public and private museums, historical squares, parks, gardens, cultural istitutiona, theaters, libraries, malls, fitness centera, churchs, cinemas, art galleries and discos.

The promoter, the Municipality of Rome, calls several artists to perform original cultural products for 'La Notte Bianca'. An interesting phenomenon is that many others spontaneously bring their artistic contributions, producing collateral events which amplify the power of the event.

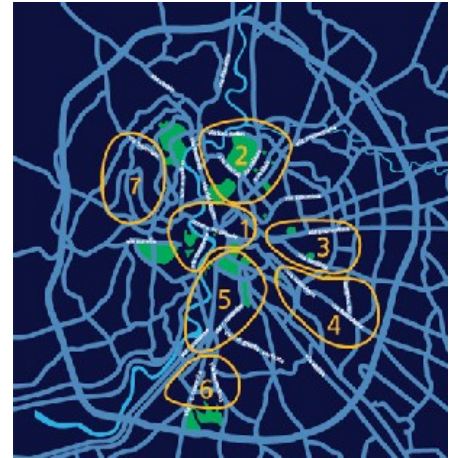
'La Notte Bianca' is linked to the french *Nuit Blanche*, which started one year prior to Rome's. Probably, from next year, it will also take place in Barcelona too.

The first edition of the Italian 'La Notte Bianca' took place on 27th September, 2003 and it immediately became famous in Italy. That very nigt at 3am there was a blackout throughout the nation and all the events in the Capital were stopped. Luckily this did not hamper the success of the kermesse, as one million people attended more than 170 events. In Rome tourist facilities like trains, flights and hotels, were nearly all sold out. Newspapers reported that, during the night, also "coffee" for espresso was sold out which was extremely. Furthermore, it rained all the time.

The program of 2003 was divided into 8 routes, where visitors could follow different themes. Instead in the 2004 edition, the strategy had been to create 7 macroareas, from the center to the hinterland, to have a more homogealous consumption with each area having each theme. Moreover, in the second edition, car circulation was stopped in the center area of the city, to improve viability and security.

The activities of 2004 were planned to satisfy 9 types of entertainment: visual art, cinema, performing arts, music, events, sport, children, readings and shopping. In 2004, the activities for children and readings were richer than before.

Areas 2004 ed.:	Activities
1. Center zone, Trastevere, Gianicolo:	248
2. Borghese garden, Flaminio, Nomentano:	86
3. San Lorenzo, Pigneto, Prenestino:	36
4. San Giovanni, Tuscolano, Cinecittà:	33
5. Testaccio, Ostiense, Garbatella:	24
6. Eur:	28
7. Primavalle:	8
TOTAL	463



Starting from the 2003 experience, the Municipality organized a very efficient new edition for 19th September, 2004, twelve hours of entertainment from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.. The total attenders were 2 million, there were 463 events (more than twice the amount of 2003) and its visitors were 1 million. Public transport passengers were 1.55 million, as the Municipality, for the night, left open all the city lines (bus, train and underground) using only one single 1 Euro ticket. In detail, city transport made 10.200 trips with 600 thousand people, hinterland transport with 112 trips bring 950 thousand people.

According to the Azienda di Promozione Turistica (the local tourist agency), 80% of the hotels were sold out.

Program

There were different kinds of cultural contents. Many events entertained the attenders, some of them were: *Cirque du Soleil*, in Piazza di Spagna, with more than 30 thousand people; jazz concert in the new Galleria Sordi in front of the Parliament, had a afurther 30 thousand; MTV dj set party, in Termini railway station, had 25 thousand; the archeological site, Mercati di Traiano had 18 thousand visitors. All the city lived an unforgettable and long night: in the park of Villa Borghese park there were 25 thousand people, also the Galleria Borghese was sold out and many people were left disappointed. In the suburbs, for example in the cinema studios of Cinecittà (opening expressly to allow visits) there were 50 thousand people; in Eur the business area of Rome, there were two events with 8.5 thousand people

It is important to point out the presence of a further 4.5 thousand people in the public libraries, 7.2 thousand in another archeological site, Cripta Balbi which usually does not have many visitors, and 3.4 thousand visitors in the Roman museum Palazzo Altemps. The following are the macro with its quantities.

VISUAL ART

- ❖ 124 visual art events;
- ❖ 43 opening museums;
- ❖ 71 opening private art galleries;
- ❖ 23 opening foreign cultural istitutions.

Most important locations	Visitors
Traiano Market	24.000
Capitolini museum	10.000
Sant'Angelo Castle	10.000
Synagogue and Jewish museum	10.000
Crypta Balbi	7.200
Farnese buildings	4.000
Planetarium	3.500
Altemps buildings	3.400
Museum of Rome in Trastevere	2.500
Church of Santa Rita	2.400
The thermal baths of Diocleziano	2.300
Basilica SS. Cosma and Damiano	2.000
Source: SIAE	

CINEMA

For 'La Notte Bianca', film viewing was increased for the night, and there were also events as directors' conventions, reviews, special exhibitions, cinema *en plein air*.

- ❖ 85 special events;
- ❖ 45 extraordinary opening cinemas.

Events	Visitors
Cinemas	67.000
Cinecittà Film Studios	50.000
Exhibition "Sordi Segreto" – Vittoriano buildings	10.000
Exhibition "Una notte tutta da ridere" – Cinecittà Due mall	4.000
Exhibition "Cremaster" – Consolazione place	2.500
Exhibition "CineIndesity" – Siena place	2.500
The Cinema Building	1.800
Cinecittà Campus	1.500
"Celiomatografo"	700
Exhibition "La notte è fatta per..." – Sala Trevi	400
Source: SIAE	

PERFORMING ARTS

Shows were expected in theaters but also there were performances in new contexts as pubs, squares, gardens, archeological sites...

- ❖ 27 performances;
- ❖ 13 opening theaters.

Events	Visitors
"Eneide" – Massenzio'S Basilica	4.000
Globe Theatre	6.200
Other theater	6.800
"I viaggi di Gulliver" and "E se fosse che morirò domani" – Rampa Prenestina	420
"Il pasto della Tarantola" – Semenzaio di San Sisto	300*
"Zirkus" – Primavalle	300
*(all tickets were booked ten days in advance)	
Soure: SIAE	

MUSIC

There were concerts throughout the city.

- ❖ 32 concerts.

Events	Visitors
"Ennio Morricone" – Piazza del Campidoglio	60.000
"All jazz in one night" –Alberto Sordi gallery	30.000
"Mtv Zilla" – Stazione Termini	25.000
"Jazz" – Pincio park (0 to 6 a.m.)	10.000
"Do you want to dance with me?" – Braschi building	4.800
Rai Trade concert – Augusto Imperatore place	4.000
"Xcoast Live" – Auditorium	3.800
"Sunrise symphonic concert" – Terrazza del Granicolo	3.000
"Acustimantic" – Centrale Montemartini museum	2.300
"Music on the water" – Sant'Angelo bridge	2.000
"Concert" – Napoleon museum	2.000
Source: SIAE	

CHILDREN

In The Borghese Park (the most important in the town) different shows were expressly organised for children.

- ❖ 18 events for children;
- ❖ 13.000 visitors only in Borghese Park.

Events	Visitors
"Pulcinella world – San Carlino theater	500
"...also animals go to sleep late" – Urban Museum of Zoology	400
Cinema scenes for Children	170
"Didactic Farm" – Primavalle district	160
"...also animals go to sleep late" – Biopark place	100
(sold out, 3 repeated performaces)	
Source: SIAE	

BIG EVENTS

These were acrobatic performances, street performing arts, light and sound shows, food and wine tasting, multimedia shows, fashion parades, firework displays.

- ❖ 136 events.

Events	Visitors
"Elemental" – Coliseum	155.000
"Cirque du Soleil" – Piazza di Spagna	100.000
"90 years of Maserati" – Piazza del Popolo	85.000
"Blanche Neige" – Rinascente shop	43.000
"Burning Spirit" – garden of Colonna Traiana garden	30.000
"Arterie" – San Lorenzo	26.000
"Kitonb" – San Giovanni in Laterano Place	16.000
"Artsan place – S.s. Apostoli place	9.000
"Tra-monti" – Monti district	7.500
"Moon" – Congressi building	5.000
"Oasi bianca" – Piazza della Cancelleria	4.100
"Una notte tra mille" – Piazza dei Campitelli	3.000
"Attraversamenti multipli" – Stazione metro Anagnina	3.000
"Fiori e cioccolato" – St. Peter's square	2.500

Source: SIAE

SPORT

Extraordinary openings of fitness and sport centers.

- ❖ 2.200* participants;
- ❖ 36 sport events.

READINGS AND BOOKS

Libraries, foreign cultural institutions and bookshops were opened to host several readings and talks on books.

- ❖ 4.500 visitors in 17 libraries;
- ❖ 31 opened bookshops.

Organization

During 'La Notte Bianca' 150 people worked on the organization, there were 1000 artists from 42 companies in 10 different countries and 150 technicians.

The advertising activities of the media plan were as follows:

- ❖ 1 million leaflets with the program;
- ❖ 170.000 Notte Bianca leaflets with the sponsors logos;
- ❖ 25.000 stickers;
- ❖ 7.000 playbills;
- ❖ 15.000 postcards;

- ❖ 9.000 posters.

The organizations decided to also carry out merchandising distribution free of charge:

- ❖ 100.000 branded paper napkins;
- ❖ 500 t-shirts and 500 sweatshirts.

Media attention was from:

- ❖ 10 press agency;
- ❖ 50 newspaper;
- ❖ 20 tabloids;
- ❖ 100 websites;
- ❖ 25 tv stations;
- ❖ 40 radio stations;
- ❖ 10 foreign newspaper;
- ❖ a total of 1.000

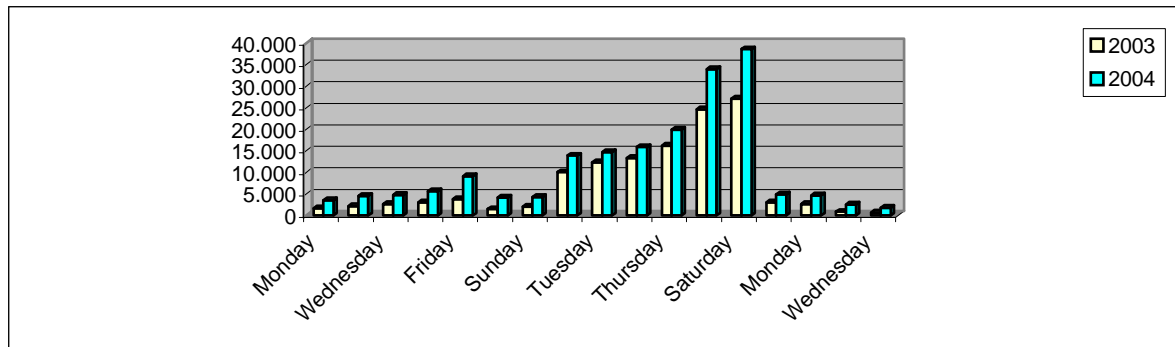
The Notte Bianca website was <http://www.lanottebianca.it/> and it was put on line from 30th July 2004, the date of the press conference. Total web users of the second edition were 221.539, 30% of them were foreigners. The website was in four languages: Italian, English, French and Spanish. It has some relevant tools for audiences: it can plan itineraries for the night, select events as well as havin an internal search engine, a description file for each item of the night, a list of locations and a daily update downloading program. There was a map with the possible tours and the public transport to reach them.

Overall the website had the function of being a teaser. Each day, from June, it drove the users toward this appointment.

There was a section of the website (called “subscription”) which enabled the city shops (like for food&beverage) to sign their opening time online(it was also possible by email, fax and phone). The opportunity was to be included in the interactive guide of the events. In total they were 211 subscriptions online.

Website Stats		
	Visiting	Unique users
June	2.907	2.343
July	7.601	5.166
August	14.029	10.141
September	197.002	165.933
Total	221.539	183.583

Comparing web sites access from monday before the event to the next wednesday, for both editions.



period of survey: from 15 to 31 september 2003; and from 6 to 22 september 2004

A lot of people go out to enjoy themselves and to try an outdoor cultural experience with a good cultural supply, together there is a good propension to spend a lot of money. In Italy the big problem of these last years is the market stagnation, in particular home consumption. Our calculation shows that with an average of 10 euro per capita, for commercial and cultural consumption, the volume of business of this night was near 20 million euro.

La Notte Bianca is supported by the Municipality of Rome and by the local Board of Trade, which gives the authorization for the shops to be open all night long. They both gave 1,5 million euro. In addition there are some sponsors, in money and in kind, that provided 300 thousand euro in total to brand La Notte Bianca. Companies and enterprises are the natural sustainers of these events. Local institutions planned that in three or four years sponsors could pay all costs.

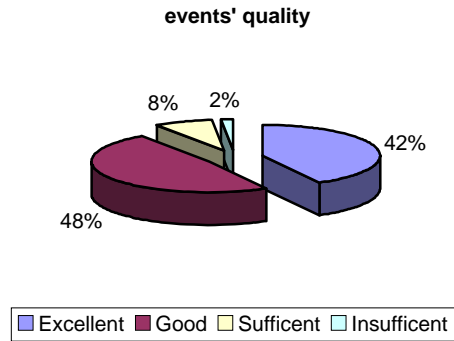
Economy, commerce, tourism, entertainment and political success increased together with social and cultural knowledge. Many people discovered several sites of their own city, serendipity phenomenon in this case is very strong, and many persons will return to visit museum, archeological sites. The inhibitory impulse to visit an historical museum, typical for lower classes, in this particular situation goes down. In one night museum visitors were 225 thousands.

Customer Satisfaction

The organization prepared a questionnaire to be given to visitors to fill out. To tempt them to write it the hostesses gave out gifts.

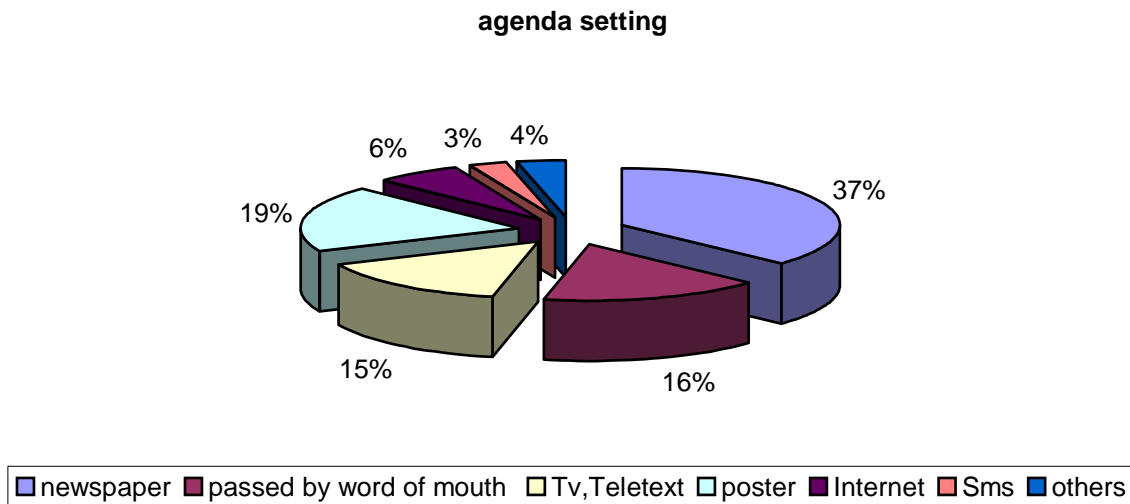
➤ Quality of the event

48% of note about this was good (2 on 3), 42% was optimum (3 on 3). The average was 2,3 (the range was 0 = not sufficient, 1 = sufficient, 2 = good, 3 = optimum).



➤ Agenda setting

Newspaper is the first medium for the agenda setting of people (37%), next tool is advertising posters (19%) and communication “passed by word of mouth” (16%). 15% of visitors knew the appointment from television – including teletext - those already some days before told a lot about La Notte Bianca.

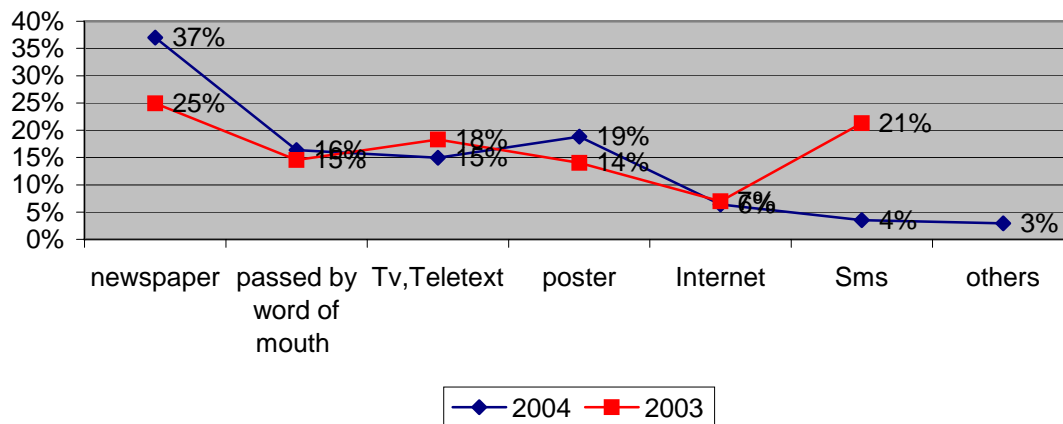


➤ Effectiveness of media, comparison edition 2003 and 2004

Newspaper gave more attention to La Notte Bianca in 2004 than before, then many visitors knew the event by this medium (37% in 2004 vs 25% in 2003).

The point “other”, in 2003, had a big value (21%); visitors didn’t remember where they knew the appointment, probably because it was news. In 2004 “other” is less important, awareness is grown.

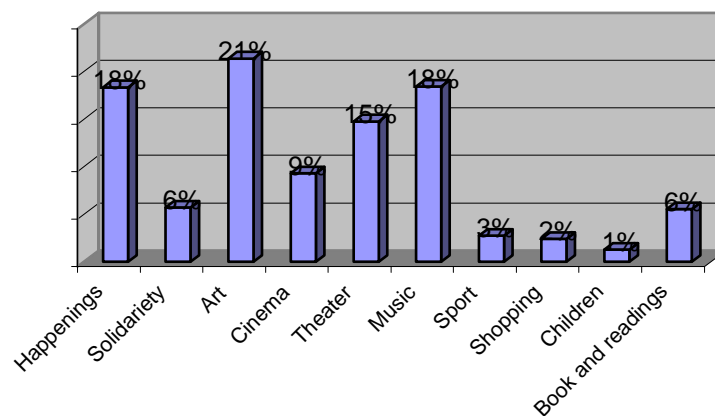
Comparison effectiveness of media, edition 2003/2004



➤ More interesting events

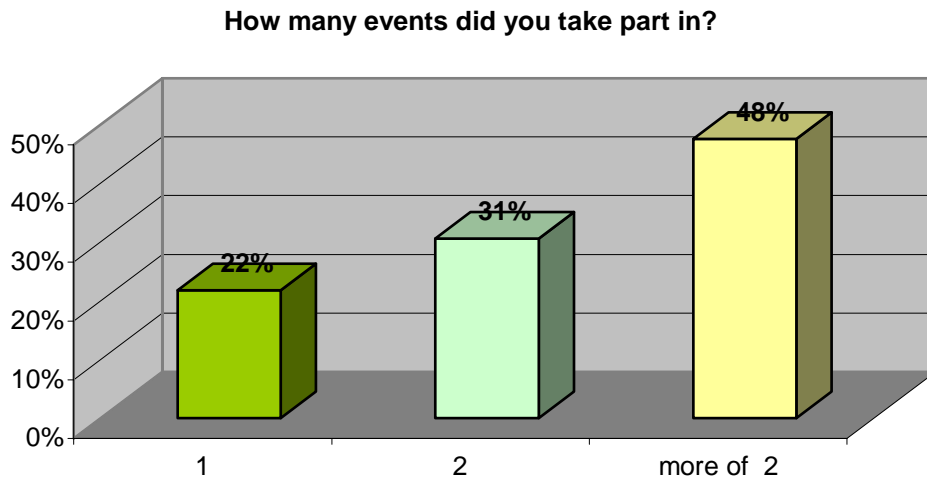
The questionnaire asked visitors which types of leisure they prefer between: events, solidarity, art, cinema, theatre, music, sport, shopping, children, books and readings. Art with 21% of preference was the best for La Notte Bianca visitors, shown by the large crowds at both the museums and art galleries.

events more interesting



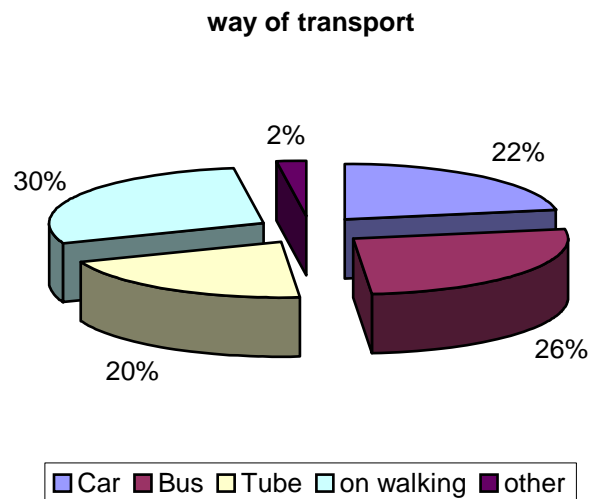
➤ How many events did you take part in?

48% of visitors chose to take part in more of 2 events in the night, 31% in two, 22% in one. Large supply is so justified by a good demand.



➤ Means of transport

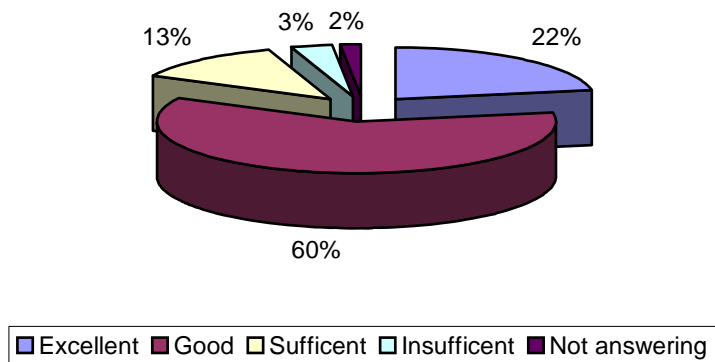
30% of visitors selected to join the event on foot, others by public transport. Only 22% of them used their own transport. No traffic reflected this good result.



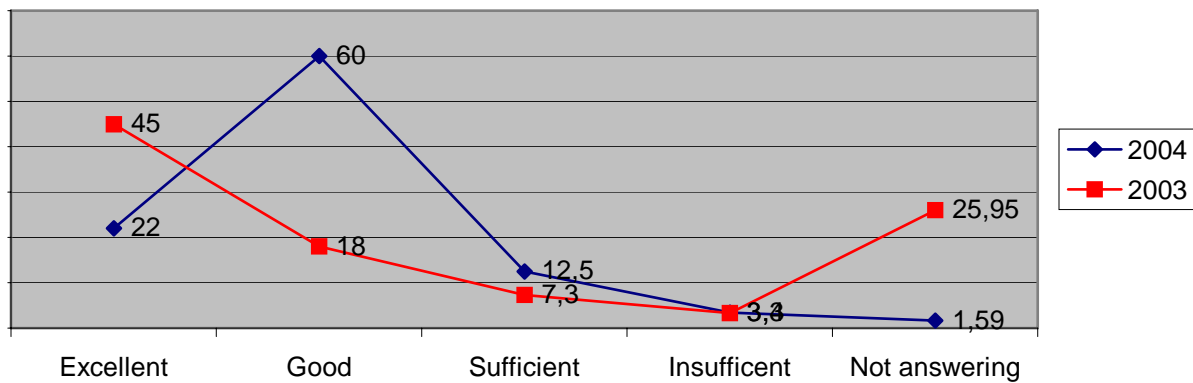
➤ Note on general organization

Four notes to indicate an opinion: excellent = 3; good = 2; sufficient = 1; insufficient = 0. The average resulted was 2, first edition it was 1.8.

note on general organization



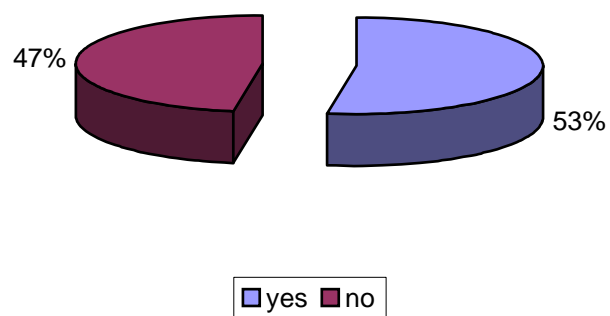
2003/2004 - note on general planning



➤ Participating in edition 2003

53% of visitors, answered to the questionnaire, took part in La Notte Bianca first edition.

fidelity



Conclusion

The collection of events for 2004, organized by local institutions, shows that cultural demand is already growing. In the first edition the rain and the black-out did not stop one million people to take part in this opportunity to socialize, to see new places of own town, to stay with friends, to be entertained. Probably, it is an excellent case of “edutainment”. In the second edition, without any unlucky expedient and with more adequate organization and planning than before, two million people shared the emotion. With quite a cost (3.3 million Euro) the Municipality of Rome (with the Board of Trade and some sponsors), made an excellent opportunity for tourism, residents and commerce, the activity inducted was very relevant (20 millions, 7 times more). Furthermore, election favour rose substantially. A few days ago, one of the candidate of Rome’s Mayor won the election to the region’s presidency for the next 5 years. Italy shared in 20 regions, Lazio where there is the capital of the republic Rome, is one of the most important for economic and population index which is a good start for future national elections.

References:

- Comune di Roma. 2004. *Le Città nella Città*. Rome: Comune di Roma.
- ISTAT. 2005. *L’Italia in Cifre*. Rome: ISTAT.
- Severino, F. and A. Anzera. 2004. *Social Network Analysis: the Case of Istituzione Biblioteche di Roma*. Proceedings of 2nd Workshop EIASM on cultural organizations, 13-14 december 2004 Bologna, Italy
- SIAE. 2005. *Lo Spettacolo a Roma*. Rome: SIAE.