Arts Audiences

Tour Marketing Resources

3. Essentials of…

Understanding Audiences



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# Introduction

This resource forms part of the training commissioned by Arts Audiences from The Audience Agency to support touring companies in receipt of The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon funding to tour during 2015. It is one of 6 resources designed to cover the Essentials of Tour Marketing, and is accompanied by a workshop session on 7 October 2014 in Dublin.

The full set of ‘Essentials’ resources includes:

1. Effective information exchange
2. Marketing planning
3. **Understanding audiences**
4. Top tips for copywriting, images and messaging
5. Effective PR
6. Local engagement and networking

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| How to get the most from this resource |
| * Refer to your learning log and consider your current levels of experience and knowledge in this area and your personal objectives.
* Allocate some time to reading the resources
* Do the exercises where relevant and useful
* If you want to know more refer to the reading list
* Use the template/s to start formulating your plans
* Fill out your learning log (how confident do you now feel in this area?)
* Refer any comments or questions to The Audience Agency or save them up for the workshop session
 |

# Key areas of skill/competence

This resource will help you to:

* Learn more about your audiences
* Identify target audience groups and recognise the principles of segmentation
* Use audience information to inform marketing planning
* Recognise different strategies for engaging different types of audience group ie. attenders and non-attenders

# Exercises and Templates

* Marketing reach and tools template

# Further reading and resources

A guide to marketing your production on tour By Heather Maitland and Jenny Traynor © Arts Audiences 2010 available at [www.artsaudiences.ie](http://www.artsaudiences.ie)

Marketing and Touring: a practical guide to marketing an event on tour by Heather Maitland © Arts Council England 2004 available at [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

This Way Up: A flat pack guide to marketing the arts by Caroline Griffin © Arts Council England 2007 available at <http://www.takingpartinthearts.com/content.php?content=1318>

Arts Marketing Association The Marketing Map © AMA and Ros Fry available through Arts Audiences

Audiences on Tour © The Audience Agency available at [www.audiencefinder.org](http://www.audiencefinder.org)

Further reading is also quoted throughout this resource.

# Knowing your audiences

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| Marketing is common sense… know your audiences |
| It involves thinking through the relationship between the arts event and the audience in order to: * talk to the right people
* about the right things
* in the right way
* at the right time

What is ‘right’ will be different for each company. The only way to decide what is ‘right’ is to understand your existing and potential audiences and those of each of your promoters. The promoters know most about their existing audience and the local community. You and your colleagues know most about your own work and the existing and potential audiences for the art form. Effective touring marketing involves pooling this knowledge.Heather Maitland & Jenny Traynor 2010 |

The wisest words are worth repeating – and Heather Maitland’s description of marketing as common sense says it all. Having an understanding of who the audiences are for your work will enable you to be as efficient as possible with your tour marketing.

However, for a touring company visiting different venues or locations, geographically dispersed, over differing time periods, knowing audiences in depth is a challenge. Accessing or commissioning detailed information about different audience types and understanding their needs relies on a good relationship with a venue or using additional resources.

This resource suggests that common sense, asking the right questions of venues and a bit of audience insight and information can go a long way in a touring context.

Refer to the Effective information exchange resource for advice in this area

# Which audiences?

Heather Maitland also recommends that you think first of all about your ‘best bets’ in terms of audience groups.

However, you should not assume it ends there as you will invariably need to go beyond these groups to attract a large enough audience. This might include understanding and seeking out audiences for other artforms. As the Infographic developed by Arts Audiences from the TGI data showing audience crossover between artforms indicates, audiences rarely stick to one artform - <http://artsaudiences.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Crossover-Infographic.pdf> . Or you might need to work more closely with the venue to identify and understand new audiences, whether they are local audiences, those with an interest related to your work or particular groups such as families or younger people.

Some audiences are looking to do or learn more about your work or artform, so you may want to work with the venue or promoter to build relationships with them. This might involve being part of a multi-buy deal with similar product or offering something special to friends or members such as a talk or opportunity to meet the artists.

Alternatively a venue or promoter may have identified an audience group who could be introduced to your work or work like yours. For this group the marketing messages will need to be tailored in order to attract their interest and different marketing channels used (beyond the usual venue/event brochure and website).

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| Highlights from Target Group Index dataBelow are some of the highlights from the 2012-2013 Arts Audiences report, with suggestions about what you might do in response to this information. |
| * Plays and art galleries are the two most attended artforms
	+ Consider how you might reach these audiences (whatever artform you are presenting) – through your host venue, making links with other local organisations or promoting through media which covers theatre and visual arts
* People still do not attend very often. The frequency with which audiences attend at the arts remains a key issue.
	+ You cannot assume that previous attenders to your work or to a venue will all attend again. You need to think beyond the ‘best bets’ to consider how you might re-ignite venue/event ‘lapsed’ attenders or initiate with new attenders interest in your work – using well placed messages.
* There are differences in attendance at certain artforms between the regions.
* There are marked differences between the regions in terms of newspaper readership: nearly half of Dublin arts attenders are regular readers of The Irish Times, while a quarter of Munster arts attenders are.
	+ Drawing on the local knowledge of your host venues and promoters is crucial to ensure you are not making any assumptions about how local arts attenders are behaving or what sources of information are used by them.
* Young people between 15 and 24 make up the smallest percentage of the audience of any of the age groups except in contemporary dance.
	+ Return on investment for engaging young people will be low and will require a significant allocation of resources to be successful, the right offer and the right kind of messaging
* Just over 10% of the Irish population regularly use Twitter: and fewer than 15% of arts attenders in all the regions. Just under 50% of arts attenders regularly use Facebook.
	+ You cannot assume that arts attenders who use Twitter are using this social media to engage with the arts. However, if they are, it is most likely to be those who have seen your work more than once or attend a venue regularly so they can be engaged as advocates to spread information by word of mouth through social media. If you have few resources it may be better to focus on Facebook.
* A quarter of arts attenders now regularly access the internet using a mobile phone.
	+ Ensure that your website is mobile optimised – refer to the Delving into Digital resources for more advice

Full report available to download: Arts Audiences report – Arts Attendance in Ireland 2012-2013 <http://artsaudiences.ie/2013/11/arts-attendance-in-ireland-2013-published/> |

# Describing audiences: Segmentation

So, it is clear, not all audiences are the same, and we need to be specific in our understanding the different groups – why they attend, why they might not and how we can best persuade them, in order to engage them ie. what messages will be most effective. By segmenting audiences into groups of people who are most likely to respond to a similar message, we can design our marketing activity accordingly. Segmentation is a compromise of efficiency – grouping people so that we avoid having to make a bespoke offer for everyone that is too expensive or a general offer for everyone that is too bland.

Refer to the Copywriting, images and messaging resource for further advice

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| Segments |
| “A market segment consists of a group of customers within a market who share a similar level of interest in the same or comparable set of needs” Malcolm McDonald, Marketing Plans 2011 |

To be as specific as possible in describing audiences it is necessary to consider a combination of characteristics based on their demographics, geography, behaviour and attitudes.

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| Segmentation characteristics |  |
| Demographics | AgeLife stageSocio-economic situationFamily circumstances |
| Geography | Where people liveWhere people work |
| Behaviour | What people have done in the past |
| Attitudes | Values and beliefs (lifestyle) |

Finally, to be viable as a marketing tool segments need to be:

* large enough ie. enough people to get a return on your investment,
* distinct enough ie. there are key relevant characteristics which differentiate them from other segments and
* reachable ie. you can find a way to communicate with them.

AMA Marketing Map

## Off the shelf or bespoke

In devising a segmentation approach that’s right for an organisation, there are two approaches.

* The first is using an ‘off the shelf’ existing segmentation – these are usually proprietary products owned by commercial agencies. Some are described below. These segmentation systems are often useful to read about to give you ideas about how you might describe your audiences.
* The second approach which possibly larger or more complex organisations may take is to devise their own bespoke segmentation, complete with names and ‘personas’. So, if a host venue or promoter uses their own bespoke segmentation it would be useful to make yourself familiar with it at the campaign planning meeting.

For touring companies, there is a suggestion below about a lighter approach to devising your own segmentation.

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| Off the Shelf Segmentation Systems |
| While many of these are not specific to Ireland, their content will be useful. Customers are segmented on the basis of their responses to questionnaires and/or where applicable on their postcode: * Mosaic Republic of Ireland (by Experian) <http://www.experian.ie/assets/marketing-services/brochures/MosaicRoI%20Flipchart.pdf>
* Data Ireland geo-demographic segmentation <http://www.dataireland.ie/Services/Pages/Consumer-Lists-OGHAM-Geo-demographic-Segmentation-Model.aspx#.VC3W4vldVe8>
* Arkenford have provided a segmentation of visitors to Tourism Ireland <http://www.arkleisure.co.uk/>
* Audience Spectrum for the UK [www.audiencefinder.org/spectrum](http://www.audiencefinder.org/spectrum)
* Culture Segments for the UK <http://mhminsight.com/articles/culture-segments-1179>

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# The DIY Guide to devising a segmentation for touring companies

1. Start with what you know
2. Add in some trusted sources
3. Test it out with venues
4. Ask the audience

This is a simple process which you can use to build understanding of your audience groups and enable you to draw picture of each of them (literally or descriptively). It may take a matter of months or more than a year to get the fullest possible picture of your audiences. The timescale will depend on the resources you have to develop your segmentation and the opportunities you have to observe and engage with them. However, for many companies it may not be necessary to do go all the way, as a little information and a good conversation with a venue or partner may be all that is required.

## Start with what you know

You probably already know quite a lot about your audiences, based on your observations, conversations and instincts. For example, based upon the types of events you deliver, you will have an idea about the kind of arts events/activities they like; you will probably also have seen for yourself what sort of age groups tend to enjoy your work; and perhaps even whether you see the same faces at different performances, which will tell you if they attend often, are prepared to travel, and are your ‘loyal fans’, or maybe have some direct connection to you/your company.

*To do: List your key audience groups and describe their characteristics and your assessment of their relationship towards your work or similar work. These should be equivalent to light sketches of the types of people in each group. Involve your colleagues and use whatever information you have available, however anecdotal. As a model have a read of some of the off the shelf segmentations listed above.*

## Add in some trusted sources

Depending on what type of group you are describing, there may be existing data or research reports, which while not necessarily totally relevant, will enable you to develop the portraits of your different audience groups. Ask your peers in other organisations, talk to the Arts Council and Arts Audiences to track down these ‘secondary’ sources. Here are a few:

Census data – available from Central Statistics Office Ireland – [www.cso.ie/census](http://www.cso.ie/census)

Target Group Index data as reported on in the Arts Audiences report – Arts Attendance in Ireland 2012-2013 <http://artsaudiences.ie/2013/11/arts-attendance-in-ireland-2013-published/> - see above for some highlights and their implications

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon <http://www.artscouncil.ie/publications/?&Category=Research%20reports>

In Northern Ireland – Audiences NI research <http://www.audiencesni.com/what-we-do/Publications>

Tourism Ireland consumer insights - <http://www.tourismireland.com/Home/Consumer-Insights.aspx>

In the UK – [www.audiencefinder.org](http://www.audiencefinder.org)

<http://culturehive.co.uk/>

*To do: Consider what information you might find useful to build pictures of your audiences – whether it is the age ranges for your artform, likely use of Facebook, frequency to the arts or other lifestyle interests. And read any secondary sources of data with these questions in mind. Start to add some hard facts to your light sketches to make them into portraits.*

## Test it out with venues

Talk about what you have observed and what you have found out and see if a venue or partner’s understanding corroborates yours of different audience groups. Ask about regional differences and where the venue’s successes have been with the local population. Add to your body of knowledge by gathering audience feedback and information from either box office information or audience surveys.

*To do: Ask venues if you can have a look any research across their audiences or for particular artforms or audiences – and again identify if there are some hard facts which can enhance your audience portraits. Request relevant box office data or audience survey findings which relate directly to the audiences for your work in the context of those for the venue. And lastly, agree any research you would like to undertake at the venue.*

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| Requesting box office data from venues/host promoters |
| Companies can learn a great deal from the huge amount of information many venues collect about audiences on their box office computer system: * build up a picture of ‘normal’ booking patterns for different types of event at different times of year to see how bookings for the current show are different
* test pricing structures by seeing which price bands sell out first
* monitor the take-up of relevant discounts to see whether campaigns targeted at particular market segments worked
* identify likely target audiences for future events according to factors such as
* previous attendance, frequency of attendance, average or total spend or average number of tickets per transaction

However, this can be a time consuming process for a venue to produce, so if you want to work with a venue to get this sort of insight about your audiences: * Talk to venues and promoters at the campaign planning stage about what you would like to do and why
* Think about the benefits of such audience data analysis for both company and venue/promoter
* Think strategically about how often you might use and therefore request such in depth information – it may only be important for those partners with whom you have a longer term or strategic relationship

Heather Maitland 2004 |

## Ask the audience

Think clearly what it is you want to ask the audience and why – what gaps do you have in your understanding? Work with the venue to deliver a survey or focus groups, whichever is the most appropriate for the information you want. A survey will help with the ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions ie. quantitative questions. Although you can also include open questions or qualitative questions in your survey to understand the ‘why’. Alternatively, qualitative focus group or telephone interviews will provide a greater opportunity for probing motivations and attitudes and the ‘why’.

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| Audience Research Top Tips |
| * Be clear on your research objectives – how are you going to use what you find out, what decisions will it inform, what changes could be made as a result of the findings.
* In deciding what you want to know – make sure that you are only asking what you really need to know to answer your questions, and not what would be merely interesting. Think VUMI – Vital, useful, merely interesting
* Ensure you have allocated sufficient resources to get to the answers you are looking for, either enough people to collect data or time/money to do the required analysis
* Get advice on the ‘robustness’ of your findings
* Make sure the venue is not doing other research at the same time so audiences get survey fatigue
* Standardise your question choices ie. age ranges to align with the Census and TGI so that you can put findings into a wider context
 |

Refer to the Marketing planning resource for further advice on audience research

# Engaging audiences

Once you have found out enough about your different audiences, and you know which ones are relevant to the venues or events you are visiting, it is time to think about how you will tailor your approach to each group. The key elements of this are:

* Different groups will be seeking different benefits from an arts experience
* Different groups will respond to different types of messages
* Different groups will favour particular communications channels

But do not forget that all audiences are looking for ‘a good night out’ and/or an enjoyable experience (no matter how expert or regular they may be).

Refer to the copywriting, images and messaging resource for further advice

The following suggest some things to remember when approaching different kinds of audiences.

## ‘Regular’ or repeat audiences

* These audiences will be looking for enjoyment, inspiration and to increase their experience and knowledge of the arts (generally or specifically).
* They will invariably know where to find information, seek it out and be able to engage with the offer (without much help).
* Organisations will be looking to deepen relationships with these groups, to increase their loyalty, frequency and spend and engage them as advocates.
* They will expect a personal approach and be looking to interact or feel involved.

## New Audiences

* These audiences will be looking to be entertained and to have a memorable experience.
* They may be unfamiliar with the conventions that more regular audiences take for granted, and rely heavily on word of mouth for recommendations and ‘mass’ media.
* Organisations will be looking to ensure they have a good experience which they would like to repeat.
* They will respond to familiar hooks, will not necessarily understand jargon, and will need to know about the basics - start time, timings, date, location, how to buy tickets etc., but also ‘will they fit in’ and feel comfortable.

## Local communities

* These audiences will expect to be involved and feel a sense of ownership over anything which is presented within or to their community.
* They may or may not be regular arts attenders, but they will be well connected with what is going on locally, and will expect to be consulted
* Organisations will want them to feel that their building or event is part of that community and to work in partnership to promote a sense of place
* It is important to go out to them, and talk in their language and make an offer which will be relevant to them

## Specialists, professionals, academics

* These audiences may feel a sense of ownership of an event and be looking for personal opportunities to network and contribute as well as inspiration and intellectual stimulation (not forgetting enjoyment)
* They will find out about things mostly through their own networks or will know where to find the information – some will be initiators in this and some responders
* Organisations may be looking to engage these audiences as advocates, to endorse what’s on offer or to become regular attenders
* Information should identify the specific elements which may appeal to their interests and be placed in specific (possibly non-arts) contexts

## Young People

* These audiences may be looking for opportunities to socialise or learn, but mostly for ‘a good night out’; they may also be looking to get involved, participate and develop skills
* They will find out about things through schools/colleges, family and friends, and possibly through social media or other communities
* Organisations may have a strategic priority to engage young people or specific schemes or programmes designed to increase their attendance
* Young people will be looking to do things – so workshops, input into marketing or curating their own events. So, making communications relevant is essential to their engagement.

## Families

* These audiences are looking for appropriate events and activities for their children which engage or occupy them and may also offer some learning and opportunities to enjoy activities as a family
* Engaged families will know where to find information from organisations, others will be using local information sources and networks, and many are active in making recommendations using social media
* Organisations may have ‘family friendly’ policies or strategies including appropriate work, facilities, pricing and food/drink plus other activities which bring families into a building
* Information needs to be engaging both to parents and children, provide the basics (as with newcomers), think about the relevant facilities on offer and consdier a price which takes into account the whole cost of a family outing

## People with access needs

* These audiences are like any others (whether regular or new) but may need specific facilities or services to make their visit possible or to ensure their enjoyment is on an equal basis with other audience members
* Some may declare their needs, others may not, so ‘access’ information needs to be included alongside other basic information (not listed separately)
* Organisations will want to make sure they are as accessible as possible

# Using audience information – a quick guide

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Type of information | Detail | Source | Practical applications |
| **Informing Marketing Activity, Reporting, Evaluation** | Sales patterns | Income and tickets (full/discount), capacity, group sizes | * Sales report - Venue box office system
* Merchandise sales
 | * Calculating return on investment (ROI)
* Setting and measuring targets
* Setting pricing and price incentives
 |
| Booker/attender behaviour | Repeat visits (for venue, company, artform) | * Audience analysis - Venue box office system

or audience survey | * Tailoring marketing
* Direct mail selections from venue box office systems messages
* Cross artform promotion
 |
| Booking/attending behaviour | Advance/late, phone/online/walk-up | * Audience analysis - Venue box office system or audience survey
 | * Timing marketing activity appropriately
* Selecting marketing channels
* Devising price incentives
 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Building Relationships**  | Booker or audience profiles | Geo-demographics (Mosaic RoI) Other segmentation systems/approachesDemographicsGeographic originAttitudes to arts | * Audiences’ geographic information from venue box office system or audience survey responses
 | * Identifying audience groups with growth potential
* Tailoring marketing messages
* Selecting marketing channels
* Identifying tour venues
* Print and broadcast media use for press releases and advertising
* Devising promotions and promotional partnerships
* Audience segmentation
 |
| Audience geography | Venue or production geographic catchment area | * Audiences’ geographic information from venue box office system or audience survey (some from online analytics)
 | * Identifying geographic hot spots
* Identifying areas of potential where penetration is low
* Direct mail selections
* Selecting locations for leaflet distribution or direct mail
* Local media coverage
* Identifying travel routes to a venue to inform geographic targeting
* Audience segmentation
 |
| Audience experience | Motivations Satisfactions / quality of experienceImpacts of marketing | * By venue and/or company:
* Follow-up e-survey
* Face to face survey
* Mini-interviews (face to face or telephone)
* Vox Pops
* Focus groups
* Social media analytics
 | * Improving customer service and experience
* Identifying audience needs and benefits
* Identifying effective marketing methods
* Tailoring language, tone and style
* Audience segmentation
 |
| Audience digital engagement | For information, resources/downloads or interaction and sales | * Company and/or venue social media and website analytics or audience surveys
* Tracking bookings
* Tracking advertising campaigns
 | * Measuring reach/interest/awareness
* Measuring return on investment (ROI)
* Identifying effective content
* Impacts of effective marketing activity
 |
| Identifying audiences | Population | Geo-demographic and arts engagement within venue catchment area | * Demographics/ population
* Mosaic RoI profiles
 | * Selecting venues
* Matching local venue population to tour company audience profiles
* Identifying potential – hot spots of highly or less engaged population
* Assessing potential and actual levels of penetration of local population
 |

# Templates

## Marketing reach and tools

You may want to expand your template for reaching different audience groups as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience Group** | **Needs** | **Tools** | **Details** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Eg. Keen opera attenders: What age ranges?Where do they live?How frequently do they attend?Expectations of programme? | Basic information in all the usual placesDepth of informationAdditional resources/talksDigital content to use as advocatesMulti-buy offer to increase frequency | BrochureDirect mail / email Website Social mediaPress  | Full brochure and website listingsLetter to previous attenders and attenders to more ‘classical’ work Signposting to additional online content – website and social mediaPromote online booking Local radio and national print press – endorsing quality product |
|  |  |  |  |

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