



Audience Development – steps to success pack (2018 – 2022)

An example step-by-step guide to creating an audience development plan

1. Audience Analysis

- Use Audience Finder - to help you understand, compare and apply audience insight. (See p.8 for more info)
 - Identify current audience segmentation – “Segmentation is the process of dividing and organising the population into meaningful and manageable groups – or segments - so that you can tailor your cultural offer and communications to the preferences of each group” – Audience Agency
 - Audience Spectrum Report – The audience agency outline 10 different Audience Spectrum profiles that you can use to understand who lives in your local area, what your current audiences are like, and what you could do to build new ones.
 - Potential audiences – Identify ‘cold spots’ within your database. Which communities/areas are you not reaching?
- Internal audit (and internal data analysis)

2. Audience goals

- Your audience goals should be reflective of your organisation’s overall goals – they will most likely be a combination of – Goals will probably be a mix of:
 - Social
 - Educational or experiential
 - Reputational/ creative
 - Financial

(Full details on each of these goals can be found on the Audience Agency Website)

- ACE goals – Ensure that sure your goals adhere to the five ACE Goals, these are;
 - Excellence
 - For everyone
 - Resilience and sustainability
 - Diversity and skills
 - Children and young people
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Read full information on ACE goals here; <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-strategy-0>



3. Action Plan

- Retain and grow, diversify, increase participants, hard to reach audiences, digital, access/accessibility (see p.4-7 for more ideas)

4. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Google Analytics – use google analytics to monitor your website activity. Record key statistics on a monthly basis and make a note of any change in activity and investigate what may have caused this.
- Post-show surveys/other feedback – Surveys can be distributed via hard-copy or via online link in post-show email (if customers have given email consent). Staff can also gather feedback directly by speaking with families.
- Data –
- Sharing -
- Campaign reports -
- Benchmarking – The Audience Agency define benchmarking as what “helps you define what ‘good’ and ‘best’ mean in a particular field of activity so that you can then work out how you stack up against ‘best in class’ and make informed decisions about what improvements are needed”. Further information and resources on benchmarking can be found on The Audience Agency website.
- Audience Finder -

5. Appendixes:

- SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) – balance these out and find out where your strengths and opportunities lie and how they can counteract your weaknesses and threats.
- Example data sharing agreement (you should all have a copy of one of these)
- Example distribution plan (marketing print distribution plan, for example)



Breakdown of an example audience development plan

1. Mission – Set a key mission of what you wish to achieve and in what timescale.
2. Audience goals
3. Set out clear aims.
 - Aim 1
 - Aim 2
 - Aim 3
 - Aim 4
5. Audience analysis
 - Segmentation/Audience Finder
 - Current
 - Potential
6. Create SMARTER goals. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relative, Timely, Evaluation, Readjustment)
7. Engagement
 - Quality principles (you should all have a copy of these)
 - Participatory engagement
 - Outreach
 - Digital engagement
 - Action plans
08. Evaluation
 - Quantative evaluation
 - Qualitative evaluation
 - Audience development plan
 - Data sharing

See more details on pages 4 – 7.



Step-by-step guide

1. Putting together your plan

It is important to set out your goals, methods of evaluation, and who is responsible for which parts of your audience development plan right from the very beginning. Start with asking:

- What are your goals? Why?
- Who are your current audiences and what do they tell you about your organisation?
- How do your audiences know about you?
- What does 'new' or 'diverse' audience mean to you?
- What projects do you think will attract new audiences and why?

2. Get your organisation on board!

For a plan to come together and to be implemented correctly, your whole organisation needs to understand what the plan is, why you want to achieve what you say you want to achieve, and how everyone can work together to reach those goals. Things to think about are:

- Your whole organisation needs to be behind your Audience Development Plan.
- Sometimes Audience Development is expensive and it doesn't always provide a ROI
- How and where does this Audience Development Plan sit with your other strategic plans?

3. Insights, Reporting and Feedback

The way you need to evaluate and report, and on what, needs to be decided at the very beginning of your audience development journey. That being said, things can change so there always needs to be room to change your methods, to report and feedback on all aspects of a project, event or show, and a clear indication of who will be providing evaluation and feedback on what.

Think about:

- It's necessary not only to report back on how well your Audience Development is going but also to tailor and shape future projects, leading the way in what and how to embed more of your aims and visions into your organisation's day-to-day output.
- What evaluation do you do? What feedback do you gain? How do you respond?



- How do your audiences behave when it comes to your productions / venue?
- How you segment, group and communicate with your audience?

4. Potential markets and room to grow

Following your audience development plan may highlight some barriers to why audiences may not be attending but also where cold spots and opportunities may lie. Think about ways to change different aspects of how your organisation works to maximise on these opportunities and break down barriers:

- Consider the barriers – ticket prices, accessibility, times of performances etc
- Think about connections you have already made with your audiences, why were those connections successful? How can you use this to improve future projects or audience experiences?
- How can you use staff and volunteers more effectively during projects?

5. Engagement

From the first moment someone hears about you, all the way through to them leaving your venue, performance or project, their experience has to be brilliant. Think about your audiences' journey and how it can improve, how you can retain them and make that one-time journey into repeat trips to see you, perhaps even looking at how it becomes a life-long journey for both you and that audience.

Think about:

- How your organisation provides an engaging journey from start to finish
- How to continue that journey so it lasts for years, even a life time?
- All the touch points of your organisation, from marketing and outreach, to what your seats are like, customer service, food and drink, the show they're coming to see etc.



Discussion notes

Getting everyone on board

- Get team members to be behind the plan from the beginning, ask for input from all departments and see what is reasonable/achievable, and who would lead on what
- Internal workshops – get your team together to discuss the plan, have fun and engaging ways of working together to make actions plans for each strand of the audience development plan
- Staff meetings – if you have them, ask for a regular section about audience development updates and feedback
- Workshop on fun ways to get feedback from your audiences as well as your staff
- Provide clear actions and deadlines. Communication is key and needs to be clear. This can be written into the plan but can also be chased up if you have assigned responsibilities to certain departments and individuals

Putting your plan together

- Make your audience development plan a working document. Have someone lead on inputting the updates and evaluation, but assign responsibility to people who will lead on projects and who collect evaluation
- Identify your own key steps and think about whether they are easy wins or more challenging to achieve.
- Think about time constraints, and communication time constraints with your team. Explain why there are deadlines in place and why it is important to hit them. Also think about whether your team has enough time to complete all the goals that you set out in your audience development plan.
- Partners – utilise the partners you have or make, they may be able to provide insight into the challenges certain goals have, or they may be able to work with you to help achieve some of your goals.
- Resources – do you have enough resources within your team to effectively carry out your audience development plan and to provide quality insights for it too? There needs to be a clear and honest discussion about this before your plan is fully written up and agreed upon.
- Team on board. We're creative! Think of engaging, fun and creative ways to get your team behind your plan – staff away days, workshops, quizzes about the plan. Try everything to make sure everyone feels like they are a part of the plan and can contribute.



- Community ambassadors

Insights, evaluation, reporting and feedback

- Audience Finder/Audience Agency (see page 8)
- Arts Council guidance
- Rewards for audiences who provide feedback – a balloon giveaway, for example
- Map customers journeys, map the positives and negatives and think about what can be changed for the future, communicate regularly about adaptations and improvements, and think of creative ways around things that cannot be changed, e.g. you might not be able to make your venue bigger, but how could you make it more accessible?
- Assign people roles in evaluation and gathering feedback, and especially empower your Front of House to speak to audiences and encourage them to talk about their visits

Engagement

- Think about your brand and your use of language in marketing
- Again, look to your partners and see how they can work with you
- Create a young person's/cultural ambassador board – listen to their ideas for a greater depth of engagement

Room to grow/potential markets

- Community outreach – this is a long-term investment, think and plan what you need and want to achieve from this and how the whole team can support this
- Research and look at what works elsewhere and amend/replicate and action this
- Identify partner groups and ambassadors to help build audiences in cold spots



The Audience Agency/Audience Finder

Audience Agency and Audience Finder are great ways of tracking your audience numbers and ticket sales. If you're new and would like to register -

<https://audiencefinder.org/register>

- Audience Finder is also home to the Audience Spectrum, which is one way of segmenting your audiences. It is up to you if and how you use this form of segmentation, but it can be helpful when looking at print distribution plans and areas to improve targeted marketing
<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum>
- There is a full guide all about the Audience Agency and their work if you would like to learn more before signing up:
<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/guide-to-audience-development-planning>

For some venues, Audience Finder may not be the best way of collecting anonymised data about your audiences. Show Stats may be better for those who tour or do not have their own box office system. Visit their website to find out more:

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/show-stats>



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