Belfast City Council

Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit

Marketing and audience development toolkit
for arts and heritage organisations

Contents

Part 1: Introduction

A marketing and audience development plan should be a core part of your business – it sets down who your audience is, what they need and how you are going to communicate with them.

This toolkit is designed to help arts and heritage organisations develop a marketing and audience development plan.

You need to have at least a year-long marketing and audience development plan in place to apply for Belfast City Council's core multi-annual funding. We strongly advise you also have a plan if you are applying for project funding and community festivals funding. This could be a plan for the individual project or your annual plan including the project.

Some applicants will already have a plan or even plans. If you do, you don't need to complete this template, but you may still find it useful as it highlights some of the areas we will look at when assessing your marketing and audience development activity.

What is marketing?
> "Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably."
> Traditional Chartered Institute of Marketing definition

> "The strategic business function that creates value by stimulating, facilitating and fulfilling customer demand."
> 2008 Chartered Institute of Marketing definition

> "I know that half of my advertising budget is wasted. I just don't know which half."
> Quote attributed to Henry Ford

What does GOOD audience development activity look like?
- We know who our audience is and understand their needs and wants, and strive to meet these. We invest in long-term customer relationships, not short-term transactions.
- We collect data on our audience, and ensure it is kept up to date and free from duplication.
- We use data analysis and market and sector research to inform and direct marketing and audience development activities.

- We utilise segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies to communicate with different audience members. We differentiate our message to make it appropriate to each audience segment.
- We use customer relationship marketing to develop project audiences into organisational advocates. Working from our core audience cut, building on strong foundations.
- We actively communicate to our audience segments through mediums they already engage with. We have developed a two-way dialogue mechanism to collect audience feedback.
- We monitor campaign performance, measure our effectiveness, analyse sales trends and feed this information back into our planning.
- We work from mid to long term audience development plans that are strategic and outcome focused.
- We all know what audience development is and are all actively engaged in ongoing CPD and training in relation to best practice. We take professional advice on how to improve our audience development and put our learning into practice.
- We take direction from our organisational leader, who is committed to audience development and directs the organisation's focus on the audience.
- We plan our audience development as an inter-disciplinary organisation, we don't just leave it to an individual or department.
- We actively investigate ways to break down barriers to our art form or organisation, which may stop people participating or attending.
- We work collaboratively and network with other arts organisations to develop arts audiences and strengthen the arts sector.
- We see audience development as a rewarding and fulfilling part of our daily job, not as an additional piece of work to tick the right boxes.

What does BAD audience development activity look like?
- We know who our audience is. They are the people in the seats. We try and collect some data on them, but never check, update or clean it.
- We don't use data analysis or market and sector research; we just work on what we think we know. We do things because that's the way they have always been done, so why change them?
- We don't believe in segmenting our market; we target everyone with the same message, therefore we will communicate with more people. We treat all our customers the same.
- We don't need to know what our audience development strategy or organisational vision is, our organisational leader takes care of all that.
- We focus on wide spread discounts to attract new audiences and don't do anything for our current audiences as they are already attending.

- We believe that our art should sell itself. We don't focus on customer communication or actively encourage audience dialogue, because it will only be people complaining.
- We work on tactical audience development activities, performance-by-performance, and only if they are not selling well.
- We know that audience development is the remit of the marketing department so we don't need to get involved. We don't measure our performance as tickets are sold through the box office which is a separate department.
- We don't have an IT department so cant engage with social media or e-marketing.
- We don't need training or continuous professional development; we know how to do our job.
- We don't think there are any barriers for audiences wishing to engage in our art form; if they don't attend, they must not be interested.
- We see the rest of the arts sector as our competition.
- We are a small organisation so can't carry out audience development.
- We see audience development as additional work that is hard to find the time to do, but have to tick the box.

Why plan?
> "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory."
> W. Edwards Deming

Your marketing and audience development plan should be part of your wider business planning process, not a tick-box requirement from funders or an abstract document that sits on the shelf and is updated once a year.

Your marketing plan should be based on sound knowledge and research. This includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation and of the environment in which your organisation operates. You should also know who your existing and potential audiences are and what are the best ways to target them.

Your marketing and audience development plan should also be continually monitored and evaluated. This will help you to identify which activities are effective and under what circumstances, and you can decide whether to repeat the activity in the future, change it to make it more effective or stop doing it altogether.

For example, some arts organisations use a large percentage of their marketing budget on producing their season brochure(s). Yet few undertake research to check whether the cost of producing the brochure (design, print, stationery, plus mailing and staff time costs) brings a sufficient return on investment to justify continued

production. Is this the best way to target your audience? Could this money be better spent on another method, for example digital marketing? Should a portion be transferred to digital to test the assumption?

Deming's PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) cycle is a useful way of thinking about this. The process should never stop, but constantly improve with each cycle. Information gathered through measuring, monitoring and evidence gathering should feed into each new cycle to achieve continuous improvements. This is known as an iterative process.

Deming's PDCA cycle

Achievability
One of the biggest challenges is to write a plan that is ambitious yet still achievable. Bear in mind your resources – you do not want to commit to a plan you can't deliver on. Resource is not just about budget. Often, the most valuable resource in an arts and heritage organisation is the people working for it. Your staff time and expertise is a resource that needs to be considered in the same way as your funding and other income.

Fit with Belfast City Council's Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15
Belfast City Council's Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15 sets down the council's priorities for action and funding under four themes.

The **Attracting audiences** theme is concerned with marketing and audience development. It recognises that engaging, retaining and developing audiences is one of the most critical challenges facing the cultural sector today.

Culture and arts is part of the experience economy. Audiences value the feeling of being engaged. They buy tickets and refreshments, increasing organisations' earned income and making them less reliant on public subsidy. Surrounding restaurants, hotels and businesses also benefit from increased footfall, supporting the wider service economy.

Heritage is our most accessible cultural asset – it is the backdrop to our daily lives and a magnet for tourists. Visitors to the city in particular bring additional spending power and attract yet more visitors by broadcasting the Belfast story around the world. Increased income can help organisations grow, but engaged audiences also sustain the cultural scene as a whole, increasing the demand for high-quality, culturally relevant programming. Ultimately, our audiences are advocates for our future cultural provision.

Growing audiences is important. Over the past five years, we have invested in the cultural infrastructure, and now we must ensure that there is the demand to sustain the supply. However, sustaining existing audiences is also vital. Audiences NI's recent audit of Belfast audiences indicated that only 31 per cent of households attending 12 venues and festivals across Belfast made more than one booking.

The **Inspiring communities** theme is also concerned with audience development.

In the development of the Cultural Framework, Councillors and other stakeholders emphasised that engaging communities across the city must be a priority, and this theme is all about connecting the diverse people and communities of Belfast to its rich culture, arts and heritage.

Community arts, outreach and audience development all create opportunity and encourage people to learn new skills. Different cultural identities and traditions can be explored through heritage, providing opportunities for shared learning and community ownership. Festivals and other events can offer new experiences, challenge preconceptions of identity and open up communities to new people and other cultures. This improves community and social cohesion, building confidence, tolerance and trust at an individual, community and whole-city level.

This is a significant achievement in its own right, but these activities also help to grow audiences for whole cultural scene, increasing the demand for arts and heritage and, in turn, shaping the future of our cultural city.

The Inspiring communities theme prioritises children, young people, older people and hard-to-reach communities, including people living in areas of deprivation, minority ethnic communities and disabled people.

You can get a copy of the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15 from the council's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit:

Phone: 028 9050 0512
Email: culture@belfastcity.gov.uk
Website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/culture

Target markets
The council's target markets for arts and heritage activity are set out under the Attracting audiences and Inspiring communities themes. They are:

- **Attracting new audiences**: people who have not previously attended arts and heritage events in Belfast
- **Attracting existing/repeat audiences**: returning audiences to arts and heritage in Belfast
- **Attracting Belfast residents:** new and existing audiences who live in the Belfast City Council area
- **Attracting priority groups**: children, young people, older people and hard-to-reach communities, including people living in deprived areas, minority ethnic communities and disabled people
- **Attracting visiting audiences**: people who do not live or work in Belfast, but are visiting the city for leisure or business purposes

There may be overlap for your organisation between these different target markets – people living in deprived areas may be a new audience for your organisation, for example. You may also have your own, additional target markets, but it is important for you to show how the work that you do can help us to deliver our strategy.

If you are writing a new marketing and audience development plan, we recommend developing two SMART objectives to show how you will **attract new audiences, existing/repeat audiences** and **Belfast residents**. Priority groups and visitors will not be appropriate target markets for all arts and heritage organisations. The guidance contained under part two of this toolkit will help you decide whether they are appropriate.

If you already have a marketing and audience development plan, it is important that the council's target markets are reflected within it as your application for funding will be scored on fit with the council's strategy.

Some questions to think about while writing your marketing and development plan

- How do my organisation's marketing objectives align with the Cultural Framework?
- How will achievement of my organisation's marketing objectives help deliver the priorities and targets of the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15?
- What will my organisation need to implement/change to achieve its marketing objectives?
- What impact will achieving my organisation's marketing objectives have?
- How will my organisation know it is achieving its marketing objectives?
- How will my organisation measure, monitor and evidence this achievement?
- How can my organisation work with Belfast City Council and its strategic partners to ensure improvement in engaging, retaining and developing audiences?

Part 2: Marketing and audience development plan template

Contents

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Vision and mission

Using the boxes below, briefly describe the purpose of your organisation and what you want to achieve.

You probably already have a vision and/or mission statement for your organisation in your corporate plan. If you have these in place, they can be copied directly into your marketing and audience development plan.

If you don't have a vision and/or mission statement, it's important to get your staff, board members and key stakeholders together to discuss and agree them. Your vision and mission are part of your brand identity, and they should underpin everything you do. This helps audiences and other stakeholders believe in your organisation and trust what you do.

You can find more guidance on developing a vision and mission, including handy worksheets, at DIY Committee Guide, www.diycommitteeguide.org.

Our vision is

Our mission is

Situational analysis

This section asks you to consider where your organisation is now. How is it performing internally? What factors in the external environment may affect your success?

A SWOT analysis is a tool to evaluate your **s**trengths and **w**eaknesses and the **o**pportunities and **t**hreats you face. A SWOT can be used to assess your whole organisation, your annual programme of activity or a specific project. For the purposes of this plan, you may find it most helpful to consider the factors that may affect your marketing and audience development activity.

Strengths are **internal** attributes of the organisation which are **helpful** in achieving your activity. For example, strong artistic programme.

Weaknesses are **interna**l attributes of the organisation which are **harmful** in achieving your activity. For example, no dedicated marketing staff.

Opportunities are **external** attributes of the environment which are **helpful** to achieving your activity. For example, new social media platform.

Threats are **external** attributes of the environment which are **harmful** to achieving your activity. For example, funding cuts.

This analysis will help you understand your strengths and uncover opportunities that you can exploit. It will help you understand your weaknesses and take steps to manage threats. It may also help you assess what steps you need to put in place to exploit opportunities or manage threats. For example, if you really want to embrace a new social media platform but have no dedicated marketing staff, do you need to train staff or hire a consultant?

You should also consider what other organisations are doing. A new festival on at the same time as your main event can be both an opportunity and a threat. Might audiences choose to attend the festival rather than your event? Can you work in partnership with them to reach bigger audiences? How is your event different, and how can you communicate this to your audience?

Now, complete the SWOT analysis below.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	
		INTERNAL
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	EXTERNAL

Objectives

In this section, you should outline the objectives of your marketing and audience development plan. Your objectives detail what you want to achieve. They should support the vision you outlined above.

Arts and heritage organisations usually have objectives in one or more of three areas – social, artistic and financial – often referred to as the 'triple bottom line'. A healthy balance is required to ensure that your organisation produces quality work (artistic), is inclusive and accessible (social) and ensures its future viability (financial). An overly strong focus on one of these areas, to the detriment of the other two, can be damaging to the organisation as a whole.

Some of your objectives will be specific things you want to achieve through your marketing and audience development plan. For example, attract an audience of 10,000 to the 2013 festival.

Some objectives might be wider corporate goals that rely on the success of the marketing and audience development plan. For example, make £10,000 in ticket sales for the 2013 festival.

Your objectives should also reflect Belfast City Council's priorities. For example, attract 8,000 Belfast residents and 2,000 visitors to the 2013 festival.

What is a SMART objective?

A SMART objective is **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime bound.

A SMART objective is more likely to succeed because it clearly **specifies** exactly what needs to be achieved.

You can tell when it has been achieved because you have a way to **measure** its success.

A SMART objective is likely to happen because it is within your control to **achieve** it.

Relevant factors such as resources and time must be taken into account to ensure that it is **realistic** – it is within your capabilities to achieve it.

Finally, a **time bound** objective will have a deadline, which helps people focus on its delivery.

You should now complete the table below. We have included the council's target markets. Not all of these may be relevant to your organisation and your objectives.

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Priority area	SMART objectives
Attracting new audiences	(1) (2)
Attracting existing/repeat audiences	(1) (2)
Attracting Belfast residents	(1) (2)
Attracting priority groups (children, young people, older people and hard-to-reach audiences, if relevant)	(1) (2)
Attracting visiting audiences (if relevant)	(1) (2)

Strategy

This section should briefly outline how you are going to achieve your objectives.

A useful tool for thinking about your strategy is the Ansoff matrix below. This matrix lets you see what the broad options are for your organisation, and lets you place your planned activity in a wider context.

Market penetration is the name given to a growth strategy where an organisation focuses on selling existing products into existing markets. For example, continue to sell the same artistic product to current audiences.

Market development is the name given to a growth strategy where an organisation seeks to sell its existing products into new markets. For example, try to sell the same artistic programme to new audiences.

Product development is the name given to a growth strategy where an organisation aims to introduce new products into existing markets. This strategy may require the development of new competencies and skills. For example, try to sell a new artistic programme to current audiences.

Diversification is the name given to the growth strategy where an organisation markets new products in new markets. This is an inherently more risky strategy because the arts organisation is moving into markets in which it has little or no experience. For example, try to sell a new artistic programme to new audiences.

The area(s) of the matrix you choose to work in will depend on your organisation's vision and mission, your situational analysis and your objectives. Arts and heritage organisations can sometimes focus on developing relationships with new audiences because this can fulfil the social aspect of the triple bottom line – being inclusive and accessible. The most sensible and successful marketing plans will incorporate strategies for both existing and potential audiences in order to meet social, artistic and financial objectives. New and existing audiences are also both Belfast City Council target markets.

You should now complete the Ansoff matrix below.

	PRODUCTS	
	PRESENT	**NEW**
PRESENT **MARKETS** **NEW**	MARKET PENETRATION	PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
	MARKET DEVELOPMENT	DIVERSIFICATION

Tactics

At its core, marketing works on the assumption that groups of people can be broadly said to have the same sorts of interests and attitudes and will behave in similar ways. Developments in digital marketing mean that communications are increasingly becoming bespoke, while many traditional marketing tools, such as brochures, leaflets and advertising target groups more generally.

The process of identifying and characterising audiences into distinct groups is known as segmentation. We all like to think that we are individuals, but in reality we share a number of broad characteristics with large numbers of the population. This could be:

- The newspaper we read
- The films we like
- Whether we drink wine or beer (or nothing)
- How we vote
- What our ethnic background is
- How much we earn

You may find the following categories and resources useful when thinking about which market segment you will target.

Life stage: this may involve considerations around whether people have children, are in education, have low or high levels of disposable income.

Demographics: attendance is often seen to be influenced by an individual's social and educational background. A very useful tool for analysing audiences is Mosaic NI. Mosaic NI is a Northern Ireland specific consumer classification system, which segments consumers into nine groups based on a mixture of census information and lifestyle surveys. It can be used to map any data that includes a postcode. Audiences NI are one of the few organisations in NI to operate a Mosaic licence, and their members are able to access this service.
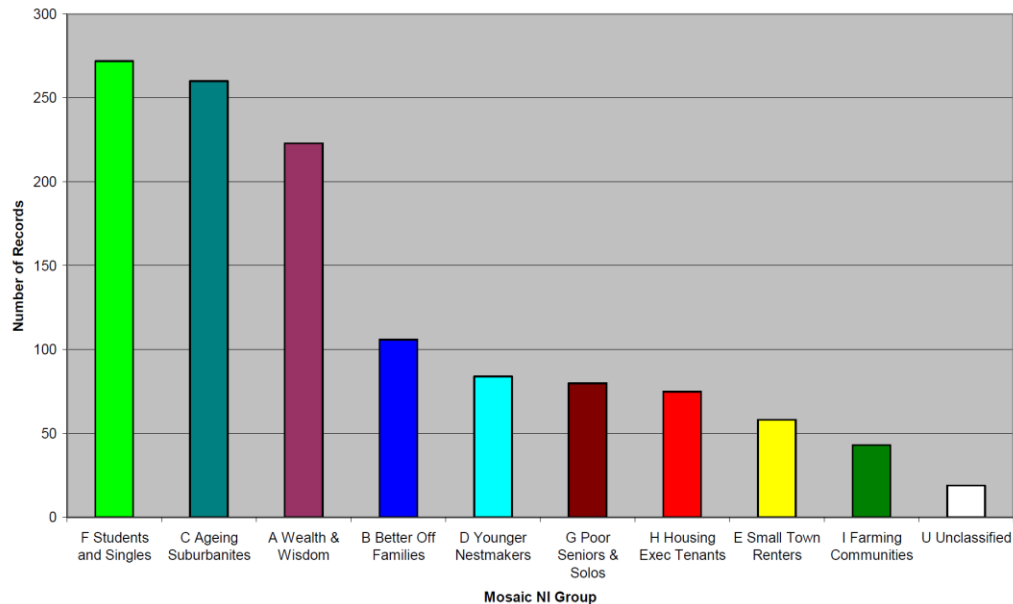
Sample Mosaic NI profile

Attitudes, values and behaviours: political, religious and social beliefs will affect the type of arts events people choose to attend, avoid or participate in less frequently.

Geographical location: people with broadly similar attitudes, backgrounds and incomes tend to live in the same places. This is why postcodes are often used as a way to identify audiences. The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service website, www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk, has a wealth of data which is easily searchable by postcode. It is also important to consider the distance from your venue as journey time and ease of access to transport could be key issues.

Segmentation is a key tool in developing cost-effective marketing, which will deliver more return for less expenditure. When you know who your audience are, you will have a much better sense of how to talk to them, what they will be interested in and how much they can afford to spend.

Some groups will prefer to be contacted by Facebook. Some will prefer to receive large-print brochures. You should take care not to put up barriers that will put off your target groups. For example, high ticket prices may put off people with low levels of disposable income.

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Now complete the table below, identifying your market segment and the best tools to target them. We have included the council's priority market segments. Not all of these may be relevant to your organisation and your objectives. You will also want to identify further segments based on your answers so far.

Priority area	Tools	Details
Attracting new audiences	e.g. Direct mail Flyers and posters Website Press Social media Word of mouth E-marketing	Letter to target postcodes City Centre distribution Homepage presence Target business pages Twitter campaign Encourage subscribers to promote E-Postcard campaign
Attracting existing/repeat audiences		
Attracting Belfast residents		
Attracting priority groups (children, young people, older people and hard-to-reach audiences)		
Attracting visiting audiences		

Actions

By this stage in the planning process it should be relatively simple to draw up an action plan outlining what you intend to do, who will do it and when they will do it. This will keep you and your team on track when you are actually delivering the marketing and audience development plan.

Start date	End date	Activity	Detail	Owner	Status
August	October	Programming	Finalise season	CEO	Late
October	October	Brochure	Collate content	Marketing	Ongoing
November	November	Brochure	Mailing	Marketing	Planned
December	December	Festival	First event	All	Planned

Once you have decided on your market segments, what tools you are using to communicate with them and who will be doing what and when, the process of drafting an outline budget should be straightforward. A significant amount of your budget will be made up of direct campaign costs associated with the areas in your marketing plan, but you should also give consideration to allocating amounts, however small, to testing new approaches to see if they prove effective.

Tool	Detail	Number	Unit cost	Total
Direct mail	Priority Area A	1500	50p	£750
	Priority Area B	800	50p	£400
Press ad	Belfast Telegraph	1	£550	£550
				£1,700

Control

It is of course important that you achieve the objectives set out in your marketing and audience development plan.

You should regularly monitor and evaluate your progress as you deliver your plan against the agreed targets.

This could include:

- Weekly or monthly team meetings
- Producing management accounts
- Carrying out audience satisfaction surveys
- Producing sales reports and projections
- Reporting to funders, board and other stakeholders on project progress

It is important that you are able to provide evidence of success, in particular to your funders. A key element of this is the ability to capture, process and analyse audience data such as their name, contact details and preferred method of communication.

Understand your obligations when collecting and storing data

When you collect and store data you must adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998 and be guided by its eight data protection principles. These specify that personal data must be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully
- Obtained for specified and lawful purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept any longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the "data subject's" (the individual's) rights
- Securely kept
- Not transferred to any other country without adequate protection in situ

Adherence to these principles is often a matter of making common sense decisions, particularly as the majority of data collected by arts and heritage organisations on their audiences is name and address data, much of which is already available publicly via the electoral roll and other datasets. If you need further guidance or have concerns and queries, you can call the Information Commissioner's Office helpline on 030 3123 1113.

Understand the purpose of the data you're collecting
Bearing in mind the principles above, it is essential that you understand why you need to collect particular data and what you intend to use it for. This not only ensures you are adhering to the Data Protection Act, but also ensures that you are not wasting your time and money collecting customer data that you simply don't need.

For each piece of data you collect, it's useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Who needs access to the data?
- What do they need it for?
- What will this help your organisation achieve?
- What would happen if your organisation didn't collect this data?
- Are you collecting too much data or not enough data to meet your objectives?
- How often do you need to be collecting this data to meet your objectives?

Ensure appropriate processes are in place to manage the data
Bearing in mind your obligations under the Data Protection Act and the purpose of the data you're collecting, you need to ensure that you have robust processes for collecting and storing this data, and that everyone who wants to use this data has access to it and understands their obligations under the Data Protection Act as well.

Collecting data for direct marketing
One of the most common uses for customer data is for direct marketing with brochures, leaflets and emails. It is best practice to only send your marketing information to those who wish to receive it, and so it is best to ask for permission as early as possible in your relationship with the customer – typically when they buy a ticket or sign up to the mailing list.

Informed consent is key here as the customer must be made aware of what their data will be used for when permission is obtained to market to them. This is particularly important if you are considering passing customer data on to third parties – a customer providing you with data has a right to know whether their data will be passed on to someone else and for what purpose.

Catch-all permissions versus multiple questions
Asking a single permission question covering all marketing options (e.g. post, email, text and phone) is the quickest way of obtaining permission, but if someone opts out from your mailing list then they must opt out from everything. Asking a different question for each option takes longer to collect, but it allows a customer to opt out

of one channel, but not others. For example, they may not want to receive emails, but are keen to receive your printed brochure.

Part 3: Additional resources and support materials

The following information is available free to Belfast City Council clients from Audiences NI.

- Guide to Audiences NI services
- Audiences NI training programme
- Audience review
- Audience development manifesto
- Digital report

They are available to download from Audiences NI's website, www.audiencesni.com

For a useful guide to marketing terminology, use the Chartered Institute of Marketing online glossary, www.cim.co.uk/Resources/Jargonbuster.aspx