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ARTS RESOURCES TO SHARE

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Lyric Theatre Grows Under 40 Audience

Paula Love, Public Relations Director for Lyric Theatre, grew up with the arts and learned to appreciate musical theatre at a young age. Exposure to the arts was a gift from her mother who had learned to appreciate the arts from her mother. Love carried this family tradition into her professional career last February when she spearheaded development of the Lyric Understudies Board of Directors, a group of under-40 musical theatre enthusiasts who work together to build a stronger commitment to Lyric Theatre among the 21 to 40 age group.

According to Love, the primary way they accomplish their mission is through planned events and social occasions that draw in the younger crowd and encourage their attendance at Lyric shows. Understudies do not pay dues, but do agree to buy four tickets during the Lyric season at a discounted rate. Corporate sponsorships and donations help maintain funding for the group. Throughout the year, the Understudies board helps drive interest in musical theatre and boost ticket sales. After one year, Understudies membership has grown to more than 100 members.

"I have already seen a change in attitude and awareness that was not there previously with the 21-40 age group," Love said. "Someday, this group...will be the next generation of supporters for the arts and Lyric. I couldn't be more thrilled." For more information on this audience development success story, contact Love at 405.524.9310 or paulalove@lyrictheatreokc.com.

Audience Development

Who comprises your current audience? What potential audiences aren't you reaching and why? Do they know about your programs? How can you inform them? Research, creative marketing, innovative program design, and thoughtful evaluation are required. For arts organizations needing to respond to issues such as declining audience numbers, the aging of traditional audiences, or the changing economic and governmental funding environment, audience development has become an operational reality. Therefore, audience development is an integral part of programming, marketing, and education.

For audience development to occur, it is imperative that staff, board, and all other involved parties agree to make changes and to commit necessary resources. We all understand that a wide range of choices are available for people's time and money. However, a successful marketing program can make clear the positive impact and valuable contribution you are offering to peoples' lives.

Another vital component of this process is to understand your audience and community as well as the inherent changes audience development will bring. Your approach to audience development will be unique to your organization due to your mission, goals, needs, resources and community. When targeting an audience, understand what motivates them. A blanket approach to serving the entire community will not work because it is impossible to meet the expectations of all customers. However, you can break the market down into more manageable segments of identifiable groups and determine

what each group needs and wants and determine how to satisfy those needs.

Whatever your target audience, understand as much as you can about them such as their history, demographic/statistical information, attitudes and motivations. This is particularly helpful before meeting with representatives of these communities. Understand the different communication channels by which culturally diverse groups find out about cultural events. Consider forging partnerships, networking, or having a community liaison for establishing and building long-term relationships. Education and cultural understanding are needed if we are to attract, develop and maintain audiences for the future.

Understand barriers to participation and perceptions of what it means to participate in arts activities. Barriers are the reasons people do not attend—lack of awareness, cultural or physical barriers, past cultural experiences, time, money, transportation, parking, child care, attire for the event, interest, comfort level in that particular setting, or scheduling. Perceptions determine whether individuals are inclined to participate or not. Brainstorm about ways to overcome or neutralize those obstacles.

A common tendency in engaging other cultures is to market to them for a culturally specific event and assume that they are only interested in cultural events related to their community. However, like any other new audience, the relationship needs to be nurtured so they make a connection and are encouraged to attend other events and programs that are not related specifically to that community. Added

involvement creates more familiarity, ownership, loyalty and stimulates new ideas. Besides the obvious, increasing arts participation can produce new volunteers, donors and increased services for all.

Audience development is challenging but rewarding as it can help secure vital future support for your organization from the community.

Audience Development Resources

Increasing Cultural Participation: An Audience Development Planning Handbook for Presenters, Producers and Their Collaborators—This guide suggests ways to increase cultural participation and describes a process that can guide organizations through the planning, implementation and evaluation of such work. Download this guide at www.arts4allpeople.org/pdf/ICP_1.pdf

A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts, a study designed and conducted by RAND for the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, examines what influences people's decisions to participate in the arts. The study provides a new behavioral model for understanding the process through which people become involved in the arts and suggests ways arts organizations can influence peoples' decisions to participate. www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1323/MR1323.pdf

From NASCAR to Cirque du Soleil: Lessons in Audience Development is a WESTAF-sponsored research paper that examines marketing trends and principles in the realms of entertainment and performance and concentrates on case studies of entertainment presenters. <http://westaf.org/pdfs/nascar.pdf>

Audience Development for the deaf community can be found at <http://terptheatre.com/audience.html>

Marketing

ArtsMarketing.org — Arts administrators at small to mid-sized not-for-profit arts organizations in the U.S. are the target audience for the marketing information on this site. It is also a resource for all members of the arts community, across all artistic disciplines. Through ArtsMarketing.org, artistic peers and marketing professionals address daily marketing needs and longer-term marketing issues.

www.artsmarketing.org/includes/sitemap-view.cfm

Hispanic-Market.com — The Hispanic demographic is projected to be the largest minority by the year 2010. If you don't already understand your Hispanic audience (or potential audience), this informative site provides an easy to read and clearly structured primer on the Hispanic/Latino market, along with data and sound advice. www.hispanic-market.com

U.S. Census Bureau — Census data with links to the latest trends and data on all races including household income, education attainment levels, employment/occupation tables, etc. www.census.gov/

Eight Steps to Targeted Group Sales by Lisa Remby — Not only can a concentrated group sales effort increase earned revenue beyond single ticket or subscription sales, but it can also tap into a new source of arts patrons. See the article at www.artsmarketing.org/marketingresources/tutorials-detail.cfm?category=Earned%20Income%20Sources&listorder=2



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Nationwide Product Donation Program

Cisco and TechSoup have announced a networking product donation program to benefit nonprofit organizations across the United States. Realizing that many small to mid-sized nonprofits need networking equipment to meet increasing operational goals but often lack the resources, this program will provide both networking hardware and the added support needed to make the best use of these product donations.

Deadline: Open

Information: [www.techsoup.org/
DiscountTech/cisco/](http://www.techsoup.org/DiscountTech/cisco/) or
call 800.659.3579, ext. 396

Target Stores Offer Funding to Local Communities

Target offers grants to nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status, schools or units of government that are located in a community where Target does business and that do work in the areas of arts, education, or family violence prevention.

Guidelines and application form are online. Neighborhood Target store team leaders will accept and review applications as they are received between February 1 and July 31, 2003, so applicants are encouraged to apply early. Most grants average between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

Deadline: July 31, 2003

Information: Guidelines and application at
http://target.com/common/page.jhtml?content=target_cg_grant_guidelines