



Audience Development Specialists
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Connect the dots

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I have written a few posts about [connecting the dots](#). I think a major problem we have in the [#arts](#) is that we are not connecting the dots from opportunities to building audiences.



Here are a few examples:

- Dance companies having SYTYCD parties to find new audiences in their area
- Opera companies outreaching at the Met HD events
- Theatre organizations having Twitter chats during the Tonys

There are many ideas for outreaching to your exact match of potential audience members if you learn to connect the dots.

Connecting the dots means that you connect your outreach program with something happening that makes perfect sense to connect with.

It is a matter of creating programs based on relevancy of what is already happening in our world. You connect yourself to something bigger that is already making an impact or is currently popular. Recently, I was thinking about fun ways to connect the dots using formats that are getting people engaged. Here are a few of my suggestions with examples:

- 1 **Quizzes** - They are all the rage on Facebook. Which Harry Potter character are you? Dumbledore. What type of dog would you be if you were a dog? I got Corgi! Are you a Sybil or a Mary from Downton Abbey? I'm Matthew Crawley. All these quizzes are fun and entertaining because they are about what is relevant in our world and because it is about ourselves. What types of quizzes can you create that would entertain and perhaps educate people about themselves in relation to the arts or your art form specifically? I recently found one example of a quiz that is using this idea: [Arts Council of England's Play the Quiz](#). In 60 seconds you can find out what type of audience member you are. This is only scratching the surface of what we could do with using quizzes. I hope to see more examples soon.
- 2 **Legos - Or Movies - Or Celebrities!** I came across an ultimate [Classical Music and Legos](#) countdown the other day. Due to the Legos movie, Legos are in the mainstream again. I'm posting my favorite of this list here (although the Wagner Lego came in a close second). We are artists and we too can create relevant and fun videos to attract our audiences.
- 3 **Top and Countdown Lists** - Countdowns and the Tops lists are still very effective in getting people's attention. [Top 10 Most Stunning Art Installations in 2013](#) caught my eye and was a memorable article for me. We are always categorizing and putting our world into a favorites list. Our brains work with segments of information to make sense of our world. What can you do to help educate and entertain using these types of lists?

- 4 **Vote!** People love to vote, at least when it comes to their entertainment. *The Voice* and reality shows of this nature are still going strong. When the audience gets a chance to have a say and participate, they get hooked. The arts have dabbled in mimicking these formats from time to time, but maybe we can use voting systems on a more regular basis to get our audiences involved. I once went to a chamber group's coffee house performance where they had a list of music to choose from and the audience would suggest the next selection by show of hands. I heard someone whisper, "Yes! They chose my piece." They felt very involved and it was fun being a part of this format. [Art Prize](#) is another great example. The prize winners are based on votes of the audiences who attend and participate.

- 5 **Technology** - We use new technology on a daily basis. I'm excited to see more artists and arts organizations using technology to engage our audiences. We can use new technologies for promotions (in [yesterday's podcast](#), Jeffrey Nytych, composer, talked about using a [video blog](#) to get some people clamoring for more). Many museums are using technology as a way to have their audiences enjoy hands-on educational experiences. One of my favorites is the Cleveland Museum of Art's [Gallery One](#).

Another example is using Twitter hashtags to have conversations with people during television events. You can connect with new audience members this way!

Again, connecting the dots is making note of what is happening, what is popular or becoming popular, and then formatting a program that will connect in some way to the events that match the best.

Latching onto something bigger than you is a great way to connect the dots to find your best potential audiences. You simply have to be aware, get creative, and then go for it!

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