



Audience Development Specialists
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Looking towards 2014

By Shoshana Fanizza, Audience Development Specialists (USA) – www.buildmyaudience.com
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It's been an interesting year. I chalk it up to a great deal of growing pains. Change is here, and change is the only constant. After a year of scoping the arts, here is a list of the top 10 themes of 2013 which serve as top advice for 2014:

- 1 Community Projects Rule!** I have seen the increase of the use of arts to engage with their communities and provide solution based projects. I believe this trend will continue and becoming stronger since the younger generations dig being a part of these types of formats. It is also known that the younger generation will donate money to these types of programs. They want their money to be invested in improving their communities – community impact is going to be more important than ever. It's not just about selling tickets, it's going to be more about joining the rush of the arts we create.
- 2 Audience Development becomes more than a buzz word.** The 4 Cs of audience development are flying around at top speed. We will see more connection with our audiences, more collaborations for interesting projects, more community efforts (see above) and more care for our constituents. Do yourself a favor and join this [audience development band wagon](#). It is the future and the future is now!
- 3 Correct branding is essential.** Branding has been a hot topic this year. It is a major part of audience development. I have said it many times this year, if you want to attract the right audiences, you need to brand yourself as uniquely you so they can find and connect with you right from the start. So, examine your branding, your marketing design, messages, collateral. Are these components aligned with who you are? If not, use the beginning of 2014 to make the changes. You can become a magnet for the best audiences in 2014!

- 4 Ditch the ugly, non user-friendly, poor content websites.** We have the technology and the artistic capabilities to design websites that are attractive and user-friendly in ways that will help people get the exact content that they need to purchase your art, your tickets, and a buy in to supporting you. Investing in your website was a top advice theme in 2013. In 2014, I can't wait to see all the lovely websites that will be developed in conjunction to listening to audiences and hiring the right people to do this important project for you. This is an investment in yourself worth making!
- 5** Extracted from above - **Listening to your audiences to guide you to the best choices.** If you really want to find out the best direction for you as an artist or organization, start listening to your audiences. They will give you the feedback needed. It's time to develop a two-way relationship. It's not about simply doing what they want exactly. You can still challenge them to new art and new ways of thinking. Yet, with this two-way communication, you no longer need to play a guessing game of what is going to engage them, how they would like to interact with you and your art, and how they would like to support you. Listening and really hearing what they have to say is prime advice from 2013. In 2014 we can incorporate new formats that will bring listening to a whole new level for running and improving our businesses.
- 6 Arts are good for the economy and business.** I can't wait to see more of this trend develop. This will mean more support for the arts in order to support business and our communities. It will be a win-win formula that will be implemented in new and wonderful ways.
- 7 STEAM gains steam?** I did see more advocacy for STEAM in our educational system. This was a global topic in 2013. People are starting to understand how important the arts are for education. Even if it is a means for kids to show up to school, the arts are important. In order for this advice to catch on, we need more people advocating for it. Right now, we are still a small percentage to the majority of people on earth. Let's make some noise in 2014!

- 8 Creative venues and spaces to put arts front and center again.** The use of community spaces and using our own spaces in a community fashion was a trend in 2013. Classical music in the bars, multi-media art presentations projected on buildings, flash mobs continuing to unfold in airports, grocery stores, and other public spaces – this trend will continue and become more clever. What can you do in 2014 that will catapult you into your communities?

- 9 Guiding the elite elephant out of the room.** From pic campaigns of orchestra musicians and their tattoos to hosting cat video festivals at art museums, we are attempting to ‘unsnob’ our benchmark arts and bring them down to earth. The arts are not only for the 1% and the elite. In 2014 we will see more of these campaigns and projects unfold. We will finally be [connecting the dots](#). As I mentioned before, it would be good to have a campaign showing the arts as part of everyone’s daily life. The arts right now are for anybody, and in 2014 we have an opportunity to make the arts for everyone.

- 10 Technology and social media can be used to engage and co-create.** Being social and co-creating were themes of 2013 and I think it will become a stronger entity in 2014. It will be interesting to see how technology will further our ability to play and create with our audiences, if we let ourselves. The best keynote I saw all year was Kevin Carroll’s talk about play and how play is important for building relationships and for business. For a link to this keynote and other theme considerations from NAMPC,

- 11 Bonus! Diversity will be a major hot topic in 2014.** We are headed towards a minority majority in our world. [Diversity](#) was a consideration in 2013, and I have a feeling working for real diversity as it unfolds globally is going to be one of our biggest goals in 2014.

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