

Case study

Cheek by Jowl – marketing and data capture

**Beth Byrne, Executive Director ,
Cheek by Jowl and Naomi Davenport,
Junior Associate, Wonderbird**



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK:
England & Wales License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/)

Published 2013 on [CultureHive](http://CultureHive.com), a place to discover and share best practice in cultural marketing

Supported by



Created and managed by



In partnership with



Background

Cheek by Jowl (CbJ) is an international theatre company, which operates in-house as an Associate Company at the Barbican Centre in London and is currently presenting in 3 languages. The company has performed in 301 cities in over 40 countries, spanning six continents and has received numerous international awards.

At a point when CbJ were opening their production of *Ubu Roi* at the Barbican Centre and preparing for the upcoming implementation of a new database system, in which they had already invested and had been tailored to their specific needs, it seemed a prime opportunity to examine their audience data in a meaningful way and use this to inform and develop a successful marketing campaign.

However, as a touring theatre company, CbJ face the ongoing challenge of trying to capture data, to refine and target their marketing activity, in the absence of any box office information. For this campaign the company was heavily reliant on recent tour figures and audience surveys.

Objectives

- Use data from recent audience surveys to shape and strengthen the campaign;
- Identify target markets and align communications with this – in order to further audience development;
- Deliver marketing campaign for London run of tour – operating largely ‘below the line’ given that the sales were already good but the focus was on profile-raising.

Target audience

- Age group 16-25
- European audiences (expat communities) in London
- Key influencers within the sector

Process

As data protection continues to tighten, it is becoming increasingly difficult for touring theatre companies to obtain any data from venues – despite it being *their* audience who have booked the tickets and submitted their details.

CbJ tackled this by seat slipping surveys at their performances and also asking venues to send an email to all attendees, on their behalf, with a link to subscribe to their e-communications. The company then held an audience development workshop, which helped to establish next steps.

CbJ later created a survey to email to all existing contacts, enabling them to learn as much about their audience as possible. By integrating this survey with the new database system, CbJ were able to feed this information back into the relevant journal entries, which meant that not only did they have a more general knowledge of their audience but were also able to target specific groups with a far more nuanced approach for each.

Outcome(s)

- Consolidated and increased data;
- Laid the ground for an Individual Giving strategy and gave the organisation the confidence to implement this;
- Created a process for data capture which the organisation can continue to use for their touring productions.

Key points for effective practice

- Ensure that there is a database, suited to the organisation's needs – into which this data can be entered – as well as ensuring that all users receive training on its use and that there is an appointed member of staff to take ownership;
- A database with the right capabilities is worth investing in – it is the most valuable asset to a touring company;
- Not only is this instrumental in acting as platform to launch an Individual Giving scheme, thus increasing revenue for the organisation, but will be essential in managing donor relations.

Conclusions and recommendations

Through strategic planning, CbJ was able to create a model for data capture that can be used when operating as a resident company in other venues.

Although these venues are not able to share data, there are other ways in which partnerships can be formed so that the touring company can reach its audience and retain a relationship with them.

Crucially, a well-designed and well-maintained database is essential if this data is to be used effectively.

Additional information:

cheekbyjowl.com