

Seminars: Marketing workshops

Kate Sanderson and Sarah Gee, Consultants, Indigo Ltd ***Reviewing your marketing campaign strategy***

Kate Sanderson has worked as an arts consultant since 2006, after leaving her role as Director of Communications for West Yorkshire Playhouse. She joined Indigo Ltd, a small Consultancy working with arts and cultural organisations, as a Partner in January 2009. As a marketing and audience development specialist, Kate has worked with a wide range of theatres across the UK, including Curve, Sheffield Theatres and Bury St Edmunds Theatre Royal. Since 2008, Kate has worked with around 40 performing arts organisations across the UK to develop benchmarking projects, initially funded by Arts Council England through the Audience Data UK project and now as a sector-led project led by Audiences UK. Kate is also an accredited Coach and was Course Director of the Theatrical Management Association's flagship Druidstone marketing course from 1999 – 2009. She is currently working with the Arts Marketing Association to develop their new programme of residential professional development retreats and is the Course Leader for Cambridge Marketing College's specialist CIM Professional Diploma in Arts Marketing.

Sarah Gee is co-founder of Indigo Ltd, the consultancy which increases income and impact for the arts, culture and heritage sectors. She has worked across the UK on fundraising, marketing and audience development projects, with current clients including the Culture Programme for London 2012, National Youth Brass Band, mac Birmingham, Glasgow Life and the European Broadcasting Union. An erstwhile hornplayer, Sarah is also a regular trainer and speaker on marketing, communications and fundraising matters across Europe. In 2010 Sarah founded AngelShares, the philanthropic crowd-funding site for arts and other creative projects. She is a trustee of the BBC Performing Arts Trust, Motionhouse and Spitalfields Music and a former Chairman of Birmingham Future. In 2004 Sarah was elected as a fellow of the British American Project, an initiative designed to establish stronger trans-Atlantic relationships across public and private sectors and in 2009 was made a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts (FRSA).

This workshop advised delegates on developing a health check for their communication strategies and marketing campaigns so that they could prioritise the stuff that works and ditch the stuff that doesn't. It looked at the key things needed to monitor and improve in order to optimise the communications mix to sell more tickets, attract more visitors and engage more participants.

Why do you need a health check?

We've been working with an associate, Alan McGregor, on developing a marketing health check which has about a hundred questions which looks at marketing strategy and context within the organisation and the way that marketing sits within the strategic planning framework. We've developed a set of indicators around those that can be used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing operations in different types of organisations.

The problem is that lots of arts organisations still don't know which bits of their marketing campaigns are working ... and which bits aren't.

They might have much of the information, but it isn't being shared within their organisations in a way that might be useful. It's especially important in this climate.

To begin with, delegates were asked to discuss these three questions in groups of 3s and 4s.

- How do you monitor & evaluate your marketing campaigns at the moment?
- Does it work/ is it used?
- If so, for what and by whom?

In feedback, delegates were asked 'how many of you monitor and evaluate your campaigns on a regular basis?' The majority said that they were.

Secondly, 'do you have a standard way that you collect that information?' About half said that they did.

Thirdly, 'do you have a standard way of reporting this information?' A few did.

It's interesting that lots of people are collecting the information but not everyone is reporting this information.

So, what's the point of a marketing health check?

A marketing healthcheck could...

Help you manage your budgets better

We don't have enough resources; human, financial etc. There is also a squeeze on public spending at the moment so it's especially important to be able to justify every penny we spend. For example,

- The Lowry measured the impact of their season brochure over several seasons
- The Lowry has now moved to better segmenting, producing a main brochure for most frequent attenders and a mini brochure for less frequent.

- The Lowry reduced the main brochure print run from over 100,000 to around 25,000
- This more targeted approach has saved them tens of thousands of pounds without affecting sales

Put you in control

At Theatre Royal Plymouth

- The marketing department suspected that their general distribution wasn't really working
- They tested distribution over a number of seasons to test the case, putting in different calls to action (eg. different phone numbers on different pieces of print) to measure different distribution channels
- They have now replaced general distribution with a simple piece of print targeted at key postcode 'hotspots'
- They are trialling this at present and will track response rates to measure ROI. So far they are saving financial resources overall

Help you see the bigger picture

The Ulster Orchestra

- reviewed its approach to season mailings, based on analysis of booking patterns, looking especially at the timeframe of bookings. They found that subscribers booked early on, and then there was a quiet time when no-one much booked and as they got closer to the event the bookings started to pick up. So, they decided to reduce communications about the full season and sent smaller targeted pieces of print to identified segmented groups
- as a result it trebled its bookings and halved its costs
- has invested the savings in long-term audience development campaigns aimed at broadening its audience

Give you inspiration

The MAC in Birmingham, which re-opened in June after a huge refurbishment, aimed to make more of its various users, so it

- looked at its different customers and the ways in which it could 'speak' to them with a view to fundraising
- produced a simple matrix of customer/user segments and communications methods
- highlighted that there were people who only came in to use the loos (because it is in the middle of a big beautiful park)

- had discussions around ways of encouraging the loo users to come to events and so they
- used simple advertising on the back of the loo doors, including the text number for people to donate money

It was a simple thing to do, but it required us all sitting down and ensure that we were checking these things.

It makes you indispensable

We must make resources go further and prove our worth within organisations. If we have information on our customers, the proof to back it up, we also have the power within an organisation.

At every AMA conference, someone will say at some point, that marketers are not involved in the strategic decisions of an organisation. This is one of the ways in which we can become part of this decision making. Information is power.

Lots of further details and resources are available on the Indigo website (www.indigo-ltd.com/)

Indigo's Top 21 for Campaign Monitoring

A full marketing healthcheck looks at five areas in detail.



This helps to build up a picture of the marketing effectiveness of an organisation.

For today, we will look specifically at marketing campaigns within the marketing operation, pulling out our Top 21 tips for campaign monitoring

Season communications

Even though some argue that the season brochure is over, many still use it as a core part of their marketing strategy. It is therefore still important to measure its effectiveness.

1. Cost per individual brochure. How much does it actually cost to design, print, mail and distribute?
2. Average value of sales per brochure. Appropriate for organisations charging for tickets or admission mainly. Expressed in £.
3. Average number of visitors per brochure.
4. Brochure Return on Investment (ROI). The cost of the brochure measured against the income it generates.

Digital and Social Media

This is difficult because we wanted to include loads more, but we tried to boil it down to the key ones.

5. Unique visitors to website
6. Time spent on site
7. % traffic from search engines, direct and referrals, including social media

These three (above) you would easily find on your Google Analytics Dashboard.

8. % who book a ticket (as a proportion of visitors to the site for example)
9. % online sales (overall proportion of those booking online compared to other methods).

Depending on your digital strategies, there may be others you'd want to look at such as social media users etc, but for these purposes we were trying to boil it down to some key points.

Direct marketing and advertising

Most people are still doing dm, but probably within five years this will have mostly disappeared. The problem we have at the moment is that we are in transition period where old and new communication channels are being used.

10. Direct mail response rates.
11. Direct mail cost per ticket/ visitor

12. Advertising response rates. There are different ways in which you could do this – the number of responses given the distribution for example, or it could be purely an internal campaign basis – what was the response rate for this campaign compared to that campaign. As with the print testing at Plymouth Theatre Royal there are various ways you could measure this: distinct phone numbers, voucher codes etc.
13. Advertising cost per ticket/visitor
14. Direct mail and Advertising ROI

Sales, visits and marketing ROI

15. Marketing spend per visitor and/or per ticket. This is really powerful if you can get to this point. If you can look campaign to campaign then you can build up an idea of what is effective and what is not.
16. Average ticket yield. Making sure that we include complimentary tickets.
17. % tickets sold at full price. Rather than looking at breakdowns of concessionary ticket by concessionary ticket, start off by being clear about the bigger picture. How many tickets have you sold at full price?
18. Total income from ticket sales
19. Booking/visitor patterns. It might be about dispelling myths within the organisation. It can also help you to understand ‘when you need to worry’ and when to understand that ‘it always happens like this.’
20. % new bookers/visitors. This could be useful in all sorts of ways depending on our aims and objectives.
21. Top 10 postcodes. At the Playhouse we used to run this for every production to get a sense of who the audience was geographically (and consequently socio-demographically).

All of which adds up to regular monitoring and reporting of your campaign effectiveness. You would also ideally present this in a regular, consistent way to create a shared vocabulary and build up shared knowledge.

This is not a comprehensive list; it's a starting point to make sure some of the bases are covered. So now we'd like to look at what it is that we are missing. What are you doing that should be in this list?

The groups then worked together for 5-10 minutes discussing these issues with the results being presented.

Feedback

- We had an interesting discussion around what would you be brave enough to exclude – not from a measurement perspective but from a marketing perspective. This sort of evaluative process could help us to take out one element to test – to see if should still be in the marketing package. So, who is brave enough to drop direct mail for example?
- We don't do any direct mail or season brochures (The Roundhouse) and interestingly we are about to map out whether we might need to go back to season brochures. If DM and Season Brochures are proven to work we will then need to look at streamlining them in some of the ways you've suggested. *SG – this is what The Lowry found, they needed a season brochure, just not 100,000 copies, only 25,000. I once cut the advertising budget at an organisation I worked for – did it make a difference? Yes. Sales went up. That was brilliant because I could then go back to the doubters.*

Q. *What happened next?* A. We diverted some of our resources into outdoor advertising, tightly segmented marketing and then when the resources allowed, building up the brand with larger scale messages.

Presenting this information

There seem to be lots of measuring, but not so many organisations have consistent and effective ways of reporting it. So, there's lots of work being done but it's going into a vacuum.

Do

- Keep it simple
- Use the same information every time
- Use pictures/graphs. Many people in the arts like to see things visually
- Use quotes to bring it to life. It's really powerful.
- Make it a regular item on the agenda for meetings. Celebrate the good times.

Don't

- Present endless spreadsheets
- Apologise for it. The facts are there – they speak for themselves. The marketing manager does not need to be embarrassed.

So, what do you do with this information? Who needs to know about it? What do they need to know? How do they need to know it? When we were thinking about the best way to do this we decided it had to be a matrix. Sitting down and working out these questions lent itself to this sort of table.

Internally

Who	What	How	When/ how often
Finance Director			
Colleagues in marketing team			
Front of house staff			
Board			
Senior management team			
Chief exec			
Artistic director/ curator			

And externally

Who	What	How	When/ how often
Funder			
Key sponsor			
Local/regional media			
Donors/friends			
Audiences/visitors			
Other arts organisations			
Key decision makers			

Information about healthcheck, key performance indicators, case studies and more information about benchmarking is available at www.indigo-ltd.com It's free. Enjoy yourselves!