

# Nuts and bolts

- Not a genius at marketing
- Not a business whiz
- No fancy, expensive POS system.
- Small operation; smallest of the small shops.
- Just tactics here and there to help bring people in.
- Small things can add up to big effects

# What's the context?

- Pork Filled Players
- Asian American sketch comedy group
- Founded in 1997.
- One full length show each year  
Two-three one night shows

# Basic Principles

- Solid info beats theory
- *because your interpretation of theory may not be right*
- Be flexible, be nimble  
Keep your eyes open  
Don't be afraid to change in mid stream
- Put your best face to the world  
People give to people, people buy from people

# Know your audience

- Kinda obvious, but....
- Remember...more than one audience
- You can always survey...
- But just ask!

# Keep a database

- Names, names, names
- Reservation lists
- Brown Paper Tickets
- Sign ups
- Raffles!

# Plus....one other thing

- Keep track of which show they attend
- Voila - cheap ticketing system!
- A handle on the hard core fans
- Just as important....
  
- NEW AUDIENCE MEMBERS!

# New Audience members

- Write a thank you note!
- Get it done soon!
- Also...for email

Opt-in

Bribe with a ticket discount offer

# Other tricks

- Parking maps
- Restaurant maps
- ATM maps
- Postcards, if room  
Web site, if not



# Audience Churn

What is audience churn?

The technical definition:

“An analytical procedure for quantifying the degree of audience turnover, based on evaluating and comparing the rate at which new audience members are acquired, and existing audience members are retained or lost.”

Practically: 80-90% of your new audience members come once and NEVER COME BACK.

# What does this mean?

- Consistent across arts groups.
- Symphonies, Theatres, Dance groups, Art series
- Some of this is natural
- Some of this you can't help.
- But the upshot:
- You have a bucket with a hole in it, constantly leaking audience.

# What can you do?

- Two Solutions
- Keep what you've been doing...  
but harder.
- Or.....  
Do something smarter

# Components of an audience

- Hard Core fans
- Casual/Occasional attendees
- New folks
- Percentages vary, but—  
At any given performance, new folks are in  $x\%$  of seats

During season, new folks buy  $x\%+y\%$  of tickets  
(Often  $y = 2x$  or more)

# Key strategy

- If you can convert some (not necessarily all) of new audience members to at least occasional attendance, you've grown your audience.
- Can this be done?
- YES!

# Key finding

- If you get a new audience member to attend a SECOND time...
- ...you have a 50% chance they come for a third and fourth time.
- Bingo!
- But...how to do?

# Oliver Wyman Group Study

- What are the differences between hard core fans and new attendees?
- Studied eight major symphonies
- Examined the differences between the hard core fans and new attendees.

# What do fans want?

- Content:  
During the season, the selection of works is appealing  
During any given performance, the selection of piece(s)  
is appealing
- Content:  
Stimulate me  
Connect me with artists and attendees  
Quality of work; world class; prestige



# What do new folks want?

- Content:  
Appealing content
- Music information:  
Initiate me, but don't make me feel like a dummy
- Social experience  
Have fun with others!
- Exchanges – painless!
- Access and parking – no hassles!

# In short....

- New folks want a seamless and social end-to-end experience.
- From parking to the lobby to the end of the show.
- Seal the deal--make an offer to come back.

# What else helps?

- Target Resource group study:  
**Invite New-to-File Patrons Back!**
- 1. Act Quickly:
  - Don't give them time to cool off!
- 2. Acknowledge their participation
  - Say "Thank You"
  - Let them know you know they are new
  - Be helpful, suggest something they would like
- 3. Provide an incentive to return – aka killer offer
  - Discount commensurate with risk
  - Seat preference for hot shows
- 4. Make experience-appropriate offers
  - Don't propose on the second date (expect subscription)
  - Do match what they saw to what's next they might like

# Wait a minute...

- Callback! To the nuts and bolts!
- Post audience interviews – socializing!  
Faces of the organization
- Ticketing  
Find out who the new audience members are.
- Access – parking maps and dinner spots
- Quick thank-yous  
And offers!

# References

- [http://www.trgarts.com/knowledge-center/PatronRetention\\_WinningStrategyforthe21stCentury.pdf](http://www.trgarts.com/knowledge-center/PatronRetention_WinningStrategyforthe21stCentury.pdf)
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