

# No Bums on Seats? How to develop an audience for your event

The Middle East Event Show, Dubai  
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# Seminar Outline

- Understanding your audience: How to identify and fulfill their needs
- Developing audience recruitment and management strategies
- Helping your event to maximise its audience and develop organisational capacity



# What is Audience Development?

‘Audience Development is about ambition. It is a planned and managed process that involves taking proactive steps to develop audiences.’

Heritage Lottery Fund, UK, 2010



# What is Audience Development?

- This can involve
  - Increasing the commitment of existing audiences, with a greater number of people engaging more frequently, or getting more actively involved
  - Attracting new and wider audiences, including first timers and under represented groups; and
  - Developing more enriching experiences for all audiences



# Why is it important?

- **Being Fair:** Moral obligation for organisations with public funding to ensure that benefits are spread as widely as possible.
- **Maintaining Appeal:** Vital if events are to remain relevant and keep their appeal.
- **Income Generation:** Audience numbers and ticket sales may be a key component in the budgeting for your event



# Why is it important?

- **Cementing wider relationships:** Provide opportunities to develop partnerships with other organisations and agencies and contribute to wider community goals.
- **Building stronger organisations:** It is about sound management. It is critical to building confident, dynamic and sustainable events for the future.

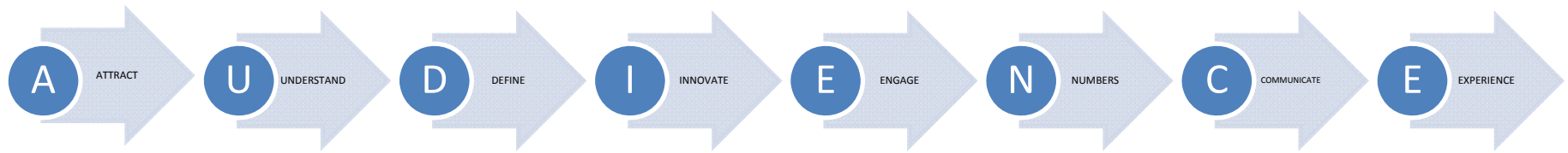


# How can we generate demand?

- *Education and Outreach* – school visits, embedding in the curriculum
- *Context Manipulation* – taking your product to familiar settings
- *A Focus on Families* – developing and marketing family friendly offerings
- *Representation* – non tokenistic content, staffing and participation
- *Community* – co-creation, consultation and engagement
- *Creating pleasant surprises* – attending to quality, focusing on the experience, varied festivals and events

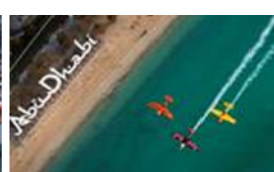
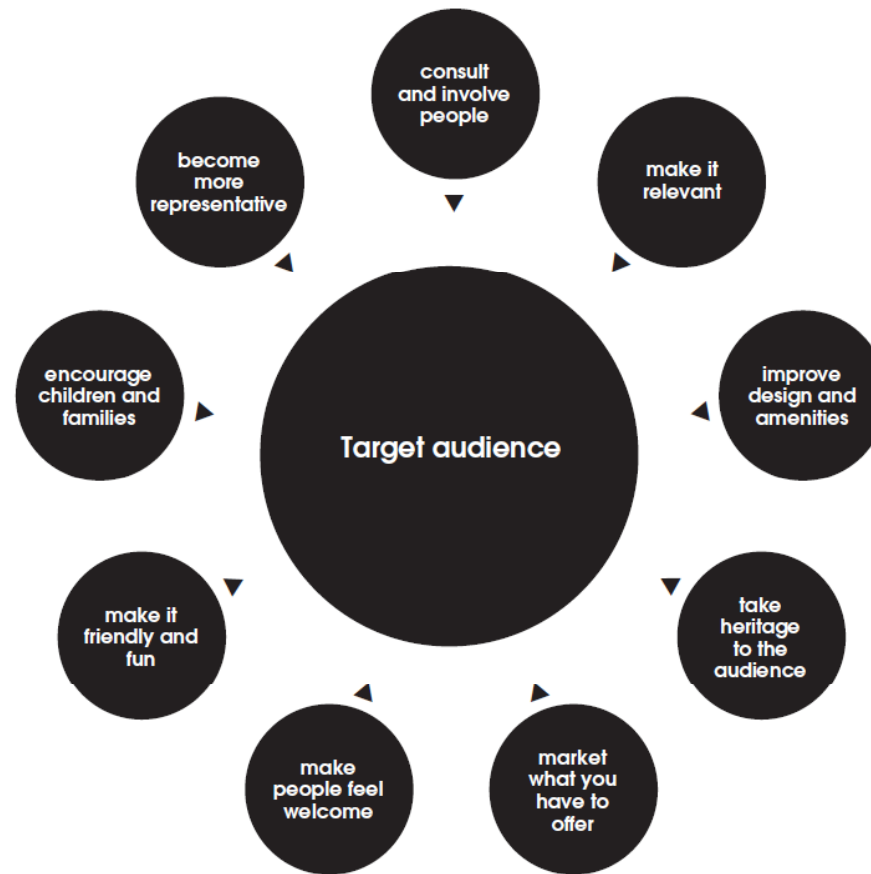


# Audience Development



# Attract

Ways to attract and retain your audience





# Understand

UNDERSTAND

- Know your existing and potential audience
- Identify their needs and motivations
- ...where things could be improved





# Define

DEFINE

- Who are they?
- Where do they come from?
- What are your key market segments?
  - Older people (empty nesters)
  - Younger people (Gen X,Y)
  - Families
  - DINKIES
- Why do they come?
- What are their expectations?

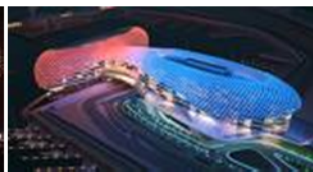




# Innovate

Innovate

- Be creative!
- Identify innovative ways to reach your audience in the cluttered event marketplace
- Use inventive marketing mediums and messages
- Original programming, venues and production

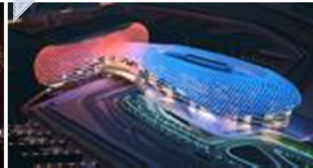




# Engage

## Engage

- Putting people 'centre stage'
- Interact with them on their level
- Adopt different approaches
- Identify barriers to engagement i.e physical, sensory, cultural, intellectual, financial



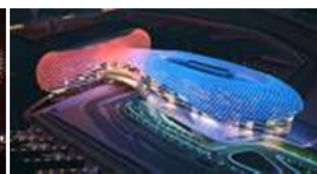


# Numbers

## Numbers

- What attendees levels are you looking for?
- Monitor ticket sales, exhibition space, website hits, customer database, media coverage
- Evaluate your audience satisfaction – visitor surveys/ focus groups
- Develop meaningful, motivational research

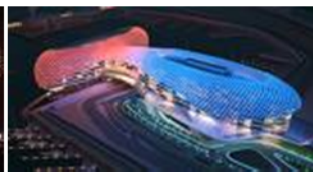




# Communicate

## Communicate

- What is the most effective way to communicate with the audience?
- Role of social media i.e podcasts and twitter
- Internal communication – needs to be championed at a senior level, good communication between all people responsible
- Communicate the benefits

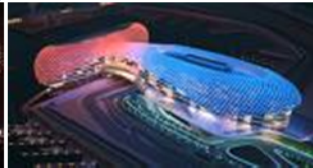




# Experience

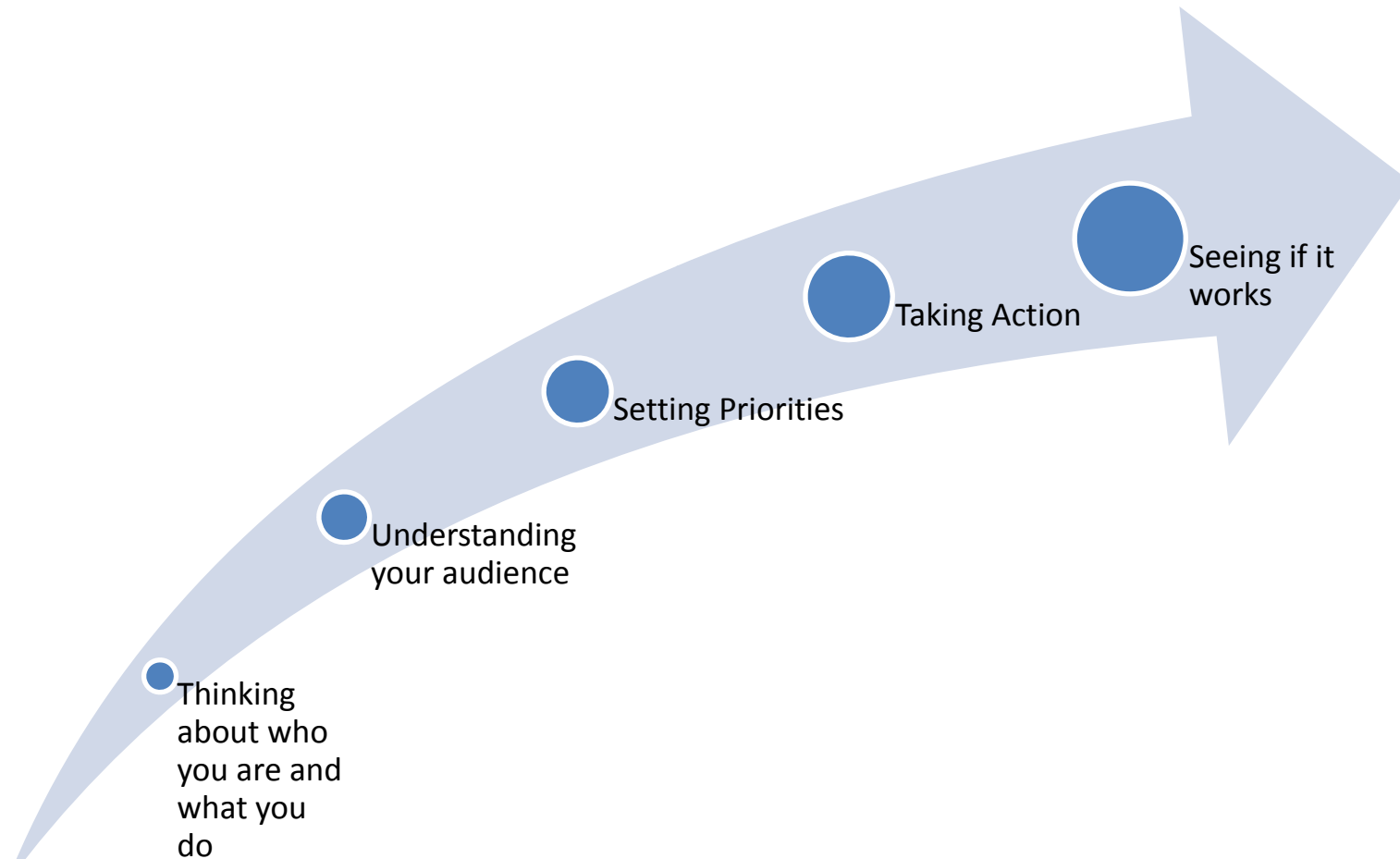
## Experience

- Need to provide audiences with memorable experiences that attract, engage and entertain
- Audiences need to feel a sense of ownership and involvement with the event
- Ensure that the experience you create is truly sensory: how does your event feel, look, sound, taste and smell?





# The Audience Development Process



# Final Message

‘Stop selling tickets, develop relationships.’

Doug Kinzey, Senior Director of Audience Development, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra



# Interesting Resources

- RGA (2006) Blackpool Grand Theatre Audience Development Plan, 2006 – 2008.
- Heritage Lottery Fund (2010) Thinking about....Audience Development.
- DCMS (2007) Culture on Demand: Ways to engage a broader audience

