

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR CHEAT SHEET

In February, California Desert Arts Council presented an Audience Development Workshop led by **Leah Michalos**, principal of arts consulting firm Michalos Management LLC, offering strategies to diversify your audience, build connections that foster loyalty, and adapt to demographic shifts. She discussed tactics to secure audience feedback, leverage technology for marketing and ticket sales, and ensure the sustainability of your organization. **Here are the key tips and takeaways:**



1. FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- Shift focus from ticket sales to building community and a sense of belonging through engaging experiences.
- Offer behind-the-scenes content and interactive installations to enhance audience experiences.
- Host discussions or meet-the-artist sessions after events to deepen audience connections.
- Organize social events linked to performances, fostering a welcoming atmosphere for community attendance.
- Host exclusive screenings or digital content, enhancing sense of connection.
- Use branding and storytelling to create emotional connections with the audience, showcasing audience members in promotional materials.

2. CULTIVATE LOYALTY AND REPEAT ATTENDANCE

- Encourage early ticket purchases with subscription options and pre-sale access for the upcoming season.
- Offer discounts or free tickets for returning patrons or early buyers.
- Establish recognition systems to celebrate frequent attendees' contributions on social media.
- Create memberships for seasonal residents.

3. ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- Prioritize programming that reflects the community's demographics and identify barriers to attendance.
- Ensure venues meet ADA standards and provide sensory-friendly performances and interpretation services.
- Introduce flexible pricing models like pay-what-you-can or sliding-scale tickets; ensure marketing materials are multilingual.
- Clearly market sensory-friendly performances with detailed adjustments for comfort and accessibility for neurodivergent audiences.

4. LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS FOR GROWTH

- Collaborate with businesses to create VIP experiences and package deals highlighting the arts and local amenities.
- Partner with underrepresented community organizations to co-host inclusive events.
- Host events for hotel staff, especially concierges, to familiarize them with your offerings and equip them with promotional materials.
- Build partnerships with local hotels and Airbnbs to promote arts events and bundle tickets with local experiences.

5. ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING EFFORTS

- Communicate during the offseason: Engage audiences with monthly emails featuring highlights and artist updates.
- Use geo-targeted ads to alert past visitors of upcoming events.
- Maintain a strong digital marketing strategy, utilizing social media and emails to engage the community.
- Send targeted, personalized emails to enhance direct communication and post-event engagement.

6. PARTNER WITH SIGNATURE EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES

- Partner with annual arts festivals or cultural events to augment programming and promote your organization's offering.
- Organize pop-up performances or installations in public areas to attract new audiences.

7. MEASURE, ADAPT, AND OPTIMIZE

- Measure and adapt: Collect and analyze data on audience engagement and demographics to refine programs.
- Measure audience engagement using metrics such as return patron rates and digital interactions.
- Create a 30-day action plan with small, realistic steps that leverage early successes for broader initiatives.