



Australian Government



Market research on a shoestring

..using research to understand and
grow your audience

Merryn Carter

ADVICE

audience data and visitor

information collection enterprise

www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Tim Roberts

ARTS Australia

Arts Research &

Ticketing Services

www.artsoz.com.au

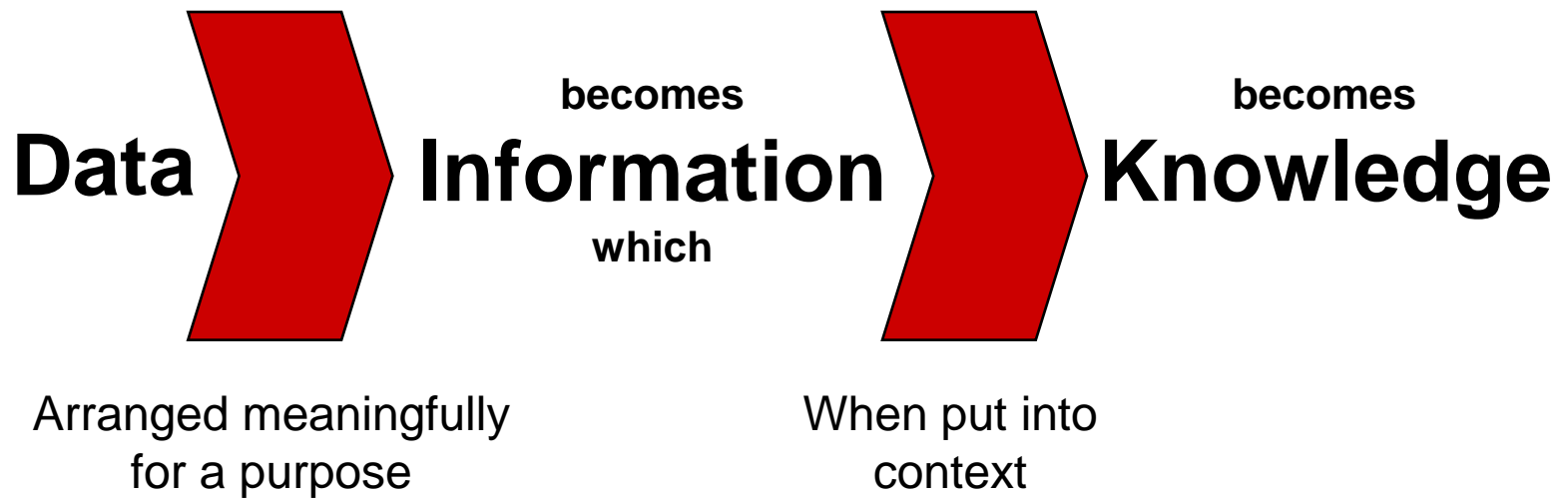
What is Market Research?

- **Market = Audience S**
 - current audience (regular and infrequent)
 - potential audience
 - lapsed audience
 - sponsors
 - donors
 - volunteers
- **Audience Research** is the systematic collection of useful information about an organisation's (or venue's) customers, to facilitate decision-making.

Market research ≠ filling shelves



What do we need to make decisions?



Audience Research

Involves:

1. the planned and organised collection of information
2. Using that information in practical ways to make decisions.

why do we need market research?

- what do we know about our audience?
- what do we know about what they buy, how and when they buy, even why they buy?
- where do we start with our marketing planning?
- how do we know where to best invest?
- who are we reaching and how well are we satisfying them?

research can help answer the basic marketing questions:

- what are we selling to whom?
- how do they feel about us?
- how can we increase their commitment to us and our value to them?
- how are we going to find more of the same?
- how can we develop a new audience?

4 basic types of answers through research:

- **descriptive (who)**
- **analytical (how & why)**
- **predictive (what if) and**
- **tracking (longer term trends)**

2 types of data collection

- **secondary** — pre-existing data, e.g. ticketing data
- **primary** – gathered specifically for the research

providing 2 types of information:

- **quantitative**
 - how many, what type, how strongly, e.g. 40% of audience members live within 5 kms of venue
- **qualitative**
 - attitudes, motivations, opinions, e.g. exploration of reactions to different repertoire, purchase decisions

primary research:

- **focus groups**
- **in-depth interviews: phone or f2f**
- **surveys: online, phone, hard copy, f2f**
- **experimentation: split runs, testing**

secondary research:

- **other published sources** (e.g. LPA, ABS & ADVICE)
- **box office data** (e.g. Vital Statistics)
- **website logs** (e.g. Google Analytics)
- **email click-through statistics** (e.g. trends & anomalies)
- **PABX/IVR/ACD statistics** (e.g. trends & anomalies)
- **customer feedback** (e.g. trends & problems)
- **blog analysis** (e.g. SentimentMetrics www.sentimentmetrics.com)

The 4 basic types of answers through research

1. Descriptive answers, e.g.

- how many people
- from which demographics
- and what attitudinal profiles
- how they heard about the event
- what features/benefits are important or preferred

2. Explanatory answers, e.g.

- which demographic or attitudinal profiles are associated with ‘frequent attenders’? does this help explain their frequent attendance?
- lapsed attenders were shown to be more dissatisfied with the repertoire than the price increases
- the most important influences on customers’ decisions to re-attend in order of perceived importance are:
 - program/repertoire
 - availability of good seats
 - price

3. Predictive information e.g.

- would more customers attend if we lowered the price by 25%?
- would more people buy more events if we offered them preferential seating?
- if we did a return season of that play, how many people might come again?

4. Tracking, trend analysis e.g.

- how many of our first-time customers last year, attended again this year?
- have we attracted more people from that geographic area over the past 2 years?
- is our audience ageing?
- is customer satisfaction increasing?

Qualitative methods

1. focus groups

- used to explore audience members' attitudes, motivations, decision-making
- groups of 8-10
- use the group dynamic to stimulate richer/varied responses, challenging thinking, clarifying conflicting views

2. In-depth interviews

- used to explore audience members' attitudes, motivations, decision-making
- one on one
- interviewer has more control of subjects discussed, less time wasted
- phone or f2f options
- can be cheaper than focus groups

Quantitative methods

1. hard copy surveys

- cheap to gather data – put them on the seats or hand them out
- clunky to analyse – data needs to be coded and entered consistently and accurately
- data input and analysis can be time consuming and/or expensive

2. telephone surveys

- good sampling control
- can be quick to get results
- requires trained interviewers
- data input/analysis required
- can be expensive

3. online surveys

- tools are cheap
- can be quick to get results
- data input/analysis built in
- limited range of functionality

4. f2f or 'intercept' surveys

- good sampling control
- requires trained interviewers
- data input/analysis required
- can be expensive
- can be slow

5. analysis – ticketing data

- can provide a detailed picture of purchasers
- but only collects information of purchasers and purchases
- requires good rates of collection of customer name and address
- requires identification of customer accounts to build a customer history
- need standardised event description and setup
- need access to database analysis skills or tools

how can we best do research?

- you need time and brain-space to consider the issues, work out the questions
- avoid research by committee (elongated wish-list)
- you need access to data gathering and analysis tools, interpretive skills
- you need research knowledge and experience

the shoe-string bit

- find a market research professional interested in your artform or organisation – donor or volunteer (you could use AbaF's adviceBank)
- find a market research company interested in the arts and do a sponsorship deal
- share the project costs with a partner organisation/s (also more heads are better than one, but coordination can be an issue)

...how do other people do it?

the shoe-string bit

- not many arts organisations are doing regular market research
- how can we do more?
- some affordable online tools:

www.surveymonkey.com

www.surveymethods.com

www.zoomerang.com

www.esurveys.com.au

shoe-string case studies:

- Auspicious Arts
- Australian Brandenburg Orchestra
- Brink Productions
- DanceHouse
- Feast
- Gasworks
- NETS
- Spare Parts Puppet Theatre
- The Street Theatre, Canberra
- Urban Theatre Projects
- Vitalstatistix



Australian Government



Thank you

- Questions?

Merryn Carter

ADVICE

audience data and visitor

information collection enterprise

www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Tim Roberts

ARTS Australia

Arts Research &

Ticketing Services

www.artsoz.com.au