

Segments and insights

James Doerer of Arts Council England delves into refreshed *Arts audiences: insight* segmentation

As a researcher I'm fascinated by human behaviour. In what ways are we different; in what ways are we similar? These are big questions: but important for understanding how people engage with the arts. One way to reach some answers is via segmentation.

There is nothing new about segmentation. It's been a routine part of the arts marketing toolbox for many years. There is now a marketplace of different segmentations. There are generic population segmentations like ACORN and Mosaic; sector-specific segmentations like Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's *Culture Segments* and the *Arts audiences: insight* model; and then there are bespoke segmentations that are created by organisations for their own use (often derived from data they have gathered themselves).

This article focuses on Arts Council England's *Arts audiences: insight* segmentation, which was updated last year. The *Audiences Insight* segmentation was originally created in 2008 to inform our thinking about the different ways in which the population of England engages (or does not engage) in the arts. The model has 13 segments, with two highly engaged groups such as Traditional Culture Vultures, seven somewhat engaged groups like Dinner and a Show, and four not engaged groups such as Time-Poor Dreamers. We updated the 13 segment profiles last year in order to better reflect the way people encounter the arts today.

The segmentation is built on data from the *Taking Part* survey (a national survey of cultural and sport participation) along with data from the TGI survey on people's lifestyles and consumer behaviour. Our approach to segmentation has three key features: it covers all English adults, not just an existing audience group; it starts with the arts – while existing population-wide segmentation tools (e.g. ACORN and Mosaic) are based largely on the socio-demographic characteristics of different groups, this segmentation is based on the arts; and it looks across the patterns of both arts attendance and participation – the events people go to see as well as the activities they take part in at home or with friends.

The segmentation research tells us that people approach the arts in different ways. People's response and behaviours tend to be patterned. Barriers to engagement do not follow single characteristics like age and gender – the patterns of engagement tend to be very complex. It tells us that the core audience for arts and culture is very small (less than 10% of the population) and that a large proportion of the English population tends to dip into the arts as part of a wider mix of cultural or leisure activities. It also suggests that over a quarter of the population neither attend nor participate in the arts. So as well as finding out how to reach existing audiences, the report has lots of practical information about how to reach the different types of people that do not tend to engage in the arts.

It is a truism of marketing that when you communicate everything to everyone you end up communicating nothing to anyone. The segmentation provides us with a much more sophisticated understanding of how the population engage (or do not engage) in the arts. Each of the segments has a distinct pattern of arts engagement and attitudes towards the arts, what is effective for one segment will not necessarily work for another. Segmentation offers a means to be strategic. It has significantly enhanced the way we think about audience development at Arts Council England. More specifically, we have been encouraging the organisations that we fund to think more about their audiences, using the segmentation as simple mechanism for this.

The important thing is to use the segmentation as one tool among many others, including local knowledge about what people want, and experience of what will be suitable for a specific area. Audience segmentation will not give you all the answers to your marketing questions! However, it enables arts organisations and policymakers to develop marketing strategies (and even fundraising or programme work) in response to their target audience.

It has taken a few years for people to appreciate the power of segmentation: sometimes it challenges how people think about the world. Although not everybody behaves the same way, there are

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(Right) FirstStop-
Bristol Harbourside Festival, Cirque Bijou
Millennium Square, Bristol, 2005
Photographer: Kevin Clifford

still patterns in human behaviour. By effectively deploying audience segmentation we can bolster our customer relationship management and widen the audience for the arts thereby making a positive difference to more people's lives.

Arts audiences: insight 2011 resources can be found at: www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/arts-audiences/arts-based-segmentation-research/

Dinner and a Show case study

Dinner and a Show is a mainstream group consisting of a significant proportion of young and middle-aged people. With two-thirds employed and a third comfortably off, this group has disposable income to spend on leisure activities. Young or young at heart they enjoy life – eating well, socialising and going on outings related to music.

Engaging with Dinner and a Show

Infrequent attendees at a limited number of arts events, the challenge with this group is to provide opportunities that fit their lifestyle. Overall, they are likely to respond to offers that position the arts as entertaining, relaxing and sociable. Given their high propensity to be online, using this as a tool to engage with them initially or to follow up with them to encourage repeat attendance may be helpful.

Targeted multi-ticket offers might encourage this group

to attend more often. Bundle offers (e.g. '4 for 3') combining mainstream events with more adventurous ones could also reduce the financial risk of trying out something different. Marketing activities at large-scale venues where they are currently attending events is another potential route for reaching this group.



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