

'Standing Room Only' Hints and Tips for Promoters 2006



1. Know your audience

Who do you actually want to come?

Most of you will already have an idea of your audience. It could be those from your village or the general public. Try and think in more detail about the type of audience you want to come, their lifestyles and activities. This will help you to choose the correct show and market it most successfully.

Examples of audiences:	Possible motivators:	Competition	Issues to consider:
Families	Entertainment, experience, socialising	TV, local attractions, cinema, other commitments	Cost for whole family, other activities e.g. football practise etc, age range
Mature couples	Entertainment, socialising, new experience, recognisable act, entertain extended family	Theatres, art centres, TV, pub, restaurants	Free time, disposable income, visiting family
Working couples	Local entertainment, new and exciting, recognisable, a good night out.	Pub, theatres, arts centres, cinema, TV, gym, yoga etc	Getting home from work, weeknights more available?, like to meet others?
Couples with young children	Local entertainment, easily accessible, interesting and entertaining	TV, children, home activities	Babysitting expense, travel, meeting friends
Students	Entertaining, exciting, linked to studies	Pubs, clubs, cinema, TV, friends, arts centres, theatres.	Disposable income, travel, would want to come with friends
Young mums	Break from the norm, entertainment, outing, something different	Home, pre school groups, local attractions and activities, parks	Travel, children, timings – days may be better, cost

You don't have to just target one of these groups it could be a mix, but keep the considerations for each audience in mind.

If you already have successful shows, think about developing your audience, and whether any of your community is missing out? Also consider what would happen if a large section of your core audience couldn't come e.g. due to sickness, it's good to keep encouraging audiences.

2. Choosing your show

Now you've had a good think about your audience and who you would like to come, think about choosing the show that will be best for your audiences, and give the best return for your efforts.

Use the Take Art menu brochure, which will give you lots of information to help you decide, but don't forget – **don't assume – ask**. Frank down the road might go Salsa dancing once a week! Also you may think that no-one in your village would be interested in theatre, but if they love the local panto, they will also probably enjoy some other theatre. Don't think about theatre being repetition or competition to the local Am Dram society, a theatre show for them to watch, rather than participate in, can be a great source of ideas! Equally, if you have a lot of music nights in your local pub, try and offer a completely different experience for people, otherwise, they won't know why they should come to your night.

Scheduling is also important when choosing a show. Although Friday and Saturday night may seem the best, remember that may be pub night for some people. Also Friday and Saturday are high demand and high prices for babysitters!

Also consider **time limitations**, if members of your desired audience work, they will need to have time to come home, eat, get ready and go out – unless you are providing food.

3. Marketing your show

Box Office – Make yourself as **available** as possible. That could mean putting a specific answer machine message on your machine if you have one, or have a day and evening Box Office number if you work. Think how annoying it is when you phone your bank and you can't get through to the right person, or you're not sure if you've dialled the right number. Similarly if you're using a Box Office number in a school for example, make sure everyone knows about it. It could scupper your ticket sales. if someone calls and they're told they've called a wrong number!

If you're using **ticket outlets**, which prove effective for lots of you, give them as much info as possible this includes letting people know if a supper interval will be included in the evening. Be aware that members of the public will also book tickets, and will not be aware of your 'usual' way of running things. Also get them **enthused about the event**. They can **encourage people** to book tickets as well as just selling them. They can also work as gossip mongers to talk about your show in the village.

If you're struggling with getting village members to come to an event, it may be that they are viewing the show with suspicion and are not sure of the quality. If you can **get people talking about it**, some of this mystery and suspicion can be removed. It will also encourage the magic '**word of mouth**'.

Mailing Lists – These really work for people that use them. It can just be a case of asking people that book by phone for their contact details and asking for permission to contact them in the future. It means at your next show you've got specific contacts to target, which is great! Another tip from promoters is to make this contact personal. Send them personalised letters, it will make them feel special and may encourage them to come.

Promotion – Everyone loves posters and flyers, and proliferation seems the key. What I would suggest is to think carefully about where you distribute your promotional material so it is not wasted. Think about the audience you want to attract and where they are likely to go. If they're not likely to spend time in the library limit your distribution there and concentrate more on the pub for example. Think outside of the box and consider shops your audience might visit, for example if you're having a music group put posters and flyers in music shops in local towns.

IDEAS

Locations: Pubs, Local Shops, Local Schools, Libraries, Hairdressers, Dentists, Doctors, Coffee Shops, Tourist Information, Book Shops, Music Shops, Colleges, Staff Rooms, Offices, Buses and Bus Stops.

Distribution: Give out leaflets at shopping centres in local towns e.g. Clarks Village, coffee mornings, markets, quiz nights (anywhere where people congregate on mass). Leaflet drop through local letter boxes – offer discounts with flyer, give bundles to people to carry around (this works well in Bishops Lydeard)

Press - Take Art will continue to send regular listings to the papers, but lets work together to make some more newsworthy stories and get better coverage. Think of links with community e.g. local musician or actor in cast, or stunts connected with the show e.g. dress in costume and pose! Use your local publications such as the Parish Magazine, and use our Press Releases and images from the new web pages.

Concessions – Make them relevant to your audience, or they won't encourage people to come. Also make the difference in cost enough to be an incentive. If you know the majority of the village can afford a more expensive ticket, raise the main price and make the discounts relevant to those who may not be able to afford to come. Think outside of traditional concessions to make them work for you.

IDEAS:

Discount tickets for couples, or discounts for 4 so that friends can come together.

Encourage group booking if ticket sales are low. 4 - 6 ticket discounts can be applied to families with out the restriction of two parents, it can include Grannies, Aunties and Cousins!

Bigger group discounts only really work if you can attract school groups, or other large structured groups so avoid unless relevant.

If you have problems with people booking early offer Early Bird Discounts, or make the price more expensive on the door, to discourage last minute buying, and more certainty for you.

If you don't want to do concessions, make one price which you know is accessible to all.

Repeat Attenders – These are a fantastic resource, which most of you seem to have. Hold onto them by rewarding them every so often with a free glass of wine etc, but also utilise them. If you have 10 core attenders and if you can encourage each to bring along a friend, colleague or relative, you will have doubled your core audience! Offer them a discounted ticket, free glass of wine or raffle ticket – sell them more when they get there! They can also be used as great advocates to get that valuable word of mouth going!

4. The Experience

Don't forget that marketing doesn't stop once they've bought their ticket and are through the door. If you can make the whole night a wonderfully memorable experience they'll come back! This encompasses everything from being friendly and welcoming when they arrive, to the atmosphere in the hall, seating, a bar, lighting, socialising, but also the fantastic show itself! If they really enjoy the whole experience, even if they're not sure about your next show, they may well come along for that.

5. Support

Don't forget to talk to each other! There are 80 village promoters out there and you have fantastic experiences to share! Become part of the Take Art Promoters 'Support Group' to share your concerns, advice and experiences with others who are going through experiences like yours! Use Take Art and the new website (when it's launched) for lots of helpful resources and advice! To join the Promoters Support Group please contact Becci - becci@takeart.org.

HAVE FUN, GOOD LUCK AND IF YOU WANT TO PICK MY BRAIN CONTACT ME AT WORK ON 01460 249450.
BECCI WATKINS