



Family Arts Campaign

Case Study The Woodville

After attending the [Family Arts Campaign](#) launch conference in Birmingham in 2013, I was keen to use their momentum and profile to push forward plans for a more family-friendly [Woodville](#).

The Woodville has presented family based activities and entertainment during both the 2013 and 2014 [Family Arts Festivals](#), and this year we've added free face painting, a [Big Draw](#) in the foyer, and a back stage tour. Families are the biggest growth market and they are our biggest audience – they're at the heart of everything we do.

The Woodville has signed up to the [Family Arts Standards](#) as we believe it is better to work to a national framework than to create our own; easier for the audience to understand how we benchmark our service and facilities. Being part of a national campaign also creates consumer confidence: adding the Family Arts Campaign logo has given our events the stamp of approval and national coverage via press and website.

Since its rebranding in 2012, all areas of the Woodville are programmed complimentary - art gallery, studio theatre, main auditorium, foyer and food and beverage spaces - and this cohesive approach is made easier by consulting the Family Arts Standards during planning and delivery.

We identified areas for improvement and implemented changes to our family offer; reviewed ticket prices for small children, emailed venue information prior to visit, created a garden space, offered more family-friendly food, better seating for toddlers and babies. and increased staff training.

We now see more visitors attending multiple performances through the year and are able to offer rewards for their loyalty. Families return because they know, like and trust our product.

Our key indicators are number of tickets sold, the number of repeat customers and the responses to customer questionnaires. All new activity must drive business forward but We also want to present affordable family events within our regular programming and build our audience from our local community, including by consultation with them. It is vital that all in the family group find things to do independently and together at the venue. Our aim is to increase attendance from an average of 57% (it was 42% in 2012) to 80%. It takes time to build customer confidence and loyalty, though - we expect to see the benefits of participating in the 2014 Family Arts Festival realised in 2015/16.

We expect challenges such as engaging commercial touring companies, attracting an audience for the less commercial activities, budgeting, and allocating time (and expertise) in an already stretched team.

It is easier to involve families when they are able to participate in the same activity together; along with the Family Arts Festival, Halloween provides us with a uniting theme. For

example, many families get dressed up and go trick or treating together at this time of year. To capitalise on this, we provided a space where they could get arty together. The space was a success and proved one of the best turn-outs to our open access events.

To measure impacts, the Woodville uses box office data, audience surveys, Google Analytics and social media data, tracking areas such as the percentage of audience members from a particular demographic group and the conversion rate from website visits to actual bookings.

Data collection is important and could be shared with other organisations locally to ensure more accurate reporting and identification of demographics based on ticket sales. Smaller venues and regional organisations now need to explore such practices in order to embrace their local community and ensure a real legacy.

Tips for engaging a family audience:

- Make family events affordable
- Ensure the venue suits their needs, including refreshments
- Identify key performance indicators from families and track their progress

Neil Chandler
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