

New Zealand Test Drive the Arts



Australia Council Arts Marketing Summit,
Melbourne, 3 & 4 July, 2008



Why Test Drive?



UK – estimated 6M empty seats = £80M
NZ – 50,000 empty seats = \$1.8M

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Empty seats are a precious resource

- 84% of “low attendees” in NZ are interested in the arts even though they don’t go much
- Removes the risk of price perceptions
- Cuts through customer inertia and marketing clutter
- Test Drive is ‘Trysuming’, everyone’s doing it...

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New Zealand Test Drive pilot organisations



Auckland
Philharmonia
Orchestra



AUCKLAND
THEATRE
COMPANY



THE
COURT
LIVE THEATRE

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THE PRESS – Test Drive Ad design 3

- Invitation designed to attract non-theatre-goers
- Avoids devaluing phrases like “FREE TICKETS” and upsells the limited nature of tickets (increasing value).

Preliminary NZ Results

- 10% conversion to paying customers (highest conversion 22%)
- average ticket price per ticket is \$31
- Majority are female but younger age skew (40s, not 50s)
- Conversion likely to be higher when taking into account people who buy a ticket through e.g. Ticketek
- From new audience member to subscriber after one Test Drive experience!

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“It was a delightful experience - one we'd like to repeat”

“I have not had the opportunity to experience theatre and was unsure how easy it would be to access it. I felt well informed and thoroughly enjoyed the experience”

“I often read the reviews but never actually got a ticket or make the time. This test drive has made me get up and get active”

“Test Drive is a very good idea to get people like us to experience the theatre. Something we would not normally consider. We are also now telling other people how good the theatre is.”

“The information on parking etc. was more than helpful. Without it I would have been driving around the block a few times”

“I would not have gone if I had not received this offer. I'm glad I did as the show was great!”

“An excellent idea that will no doubt see us coming back - we didn't even know that Skycity had a venue for live shows”

Key Learnings

- Test Drive should be incorporated as part of long-term marketing strategy not a “bolted on” audience development tool
- Dedicated Test Drive Co-ordinator
- Phone contact (telemarketing) produces the best follow-up results

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Key Learnings

- Test Drive is labour intensive
- HR costs for the pilot are nearly two-thirds of the investment
- Early investment in email and electronic surveying equipment saves a lot of time
- Set-up costs are around 10%

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Resources

- New Zealanders and the Arts research www.creativenz.govt.nz/files/arts-survey-06.pdf
- New Zealand Test Drive case study on fuel4arts (includes Test Drive Tip Sheet) www.fuel4arts.co.nz
- Arts About Manchester: a summary of its Test Drive: North West audience development project undertaken in 1998 www.newaudiences2.org.uk/downloads/testdrive_northwest.doc

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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