

Quest 2016 – Splus 15 Theatre & Conference Guidance Notes

Issue 4 – July 2016



Outcomes

- To create a programme that is varied, popular and attracts as many members of the community as possible
- To support local arts and culture programmes and stakeholders
- To deliver effective and efficient services

Suggested Guidance

| MV |
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| General observation (not scored) |
| EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Sale Information• Sale/ Booking• Experience – secondary sales |
| SUGGESTED GUIDANCE <p>Pre-Sale Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion literature is comprehensive, attention grabbing and correct• Web site is informative and easy to navigate• Telephone calls are dealt with proactively and enquiries handled professionally <p>Sale/Booking Ticket Sale/ Booking Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transaction process is simple and straight forward• Attempts are made to provide information on similar performances• Seating position and prices are explained clearly• Buying theatre tickets for children, senior citizens or disabled people is straight forward• Booking a conference is straight forward |

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Guidance Notes



Experience

Theatre Secondary Sales

- Opportunities to purchase merchandise are well promoted
- Bar orders can be pre booked for intervals and / or served quickly
- Sweets, snacks, food and drinks offer good choice and value for money

PLAN

What plans are in place to deliver the outcomes?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Objectives are included in the business plan and linked to corporate goals; actions are in place to achieve the objectives
- There is a planned approach to customer and market research
- There is a specification that sets out what the venue can be used for
- There is a strategy/ programme of events which cover a range of genres for the theatre and accommodates small and large meetings, seminars and conferences
- A marketing and communications plan is in place that uses the findings of research
- The marketing/ promotional plan highlights all planned activities with costs and resources
- The specific needs of people with disabilities are considered and the events are fully accessible

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Does the business plan include specific objectives for the theatre and conference activities; are these aligned with the corporate purpose and vision; are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) actions in place to achieve the objectives
- Is there a planned approach to customer and market research which includes users, non-users and competitors, and does this involve the use of primary and secondary research methods
- Is there a specification that sets out what the venue can be used for, and does this describe what type of business to attract
- Is there a strategy/ programme of events for the theatre and conference shows/ events; does the strategy cover a range of genres for the theatre and cater for both small and large seminars and conferences; are qualitative and quantitative targets set within the strategy/ programme of events
- Is a marketing and communications plan in place that uses the findings of the research to identify how to reach target markets in the catchment area and beyond, and are the key messages to be delivered identified
- Does the marketing/ promotional plan highlight all planned activities with responsibilities, costs and resources allocated
- Does the planning process specifically consider the needs of customers with disabilities and are the events fully accessible

DO

How do you communicate your programme to customers, team and stakeholders?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- A venue brochure is available giving details of up and coming shows/ events

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- The website is easy to navigate and links to booking processes. There are virtual tours, video clips and the opportunity to leave feedback
- Electronic communications are used to promote and communicate
- Everyday venues are used to raise awareness of shows/ events
- Customer data is used to let customers know about shows/ events

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Is there a venue brochure detailing up and coming shows/ events with relevant information, for example the shows and events, prices, booking policies and any linked offers such as discounted meals
- Is the website easy to navigate, and is the information easy to understand; is there a link to an online booking process, or clear instructions on box office use. Does the websites offer virtual tours, video clips of shows and provide forums for customers to leave their feedback
- Is electronic communication used, for example Facebook, MySpace, emails and text messages, to promote and communicate with staff, customers and stakeholders
- Are everyday venues used to raise awareness of shows/ events, for example local schools (for young people), local shops, supermarkets, GP surgeries, libraries and community venues
- Is customer data held by the venue used, for example direct mailing to customers who have shown interest in a particular genre/ event

What resources have you put in place to deliver your plans?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- There is a finance plan that sets out targets with an action plan to achieve this
- Staff are allocated time to carry out the required work
- Contracts that provide flexibility are considered
- Volunteers are part of the team development and communication process
- Succession planning is in place to ensure continuity
- Use of space is maximised
- The venue is fully accessible
- Contracts with agents, promoters and hirers are clearly set out
- There are set up plans for the different type of shows/ events

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Is there a finance plan that sets out profiled targets; is an action plan in place to achieve the financial objectives, detailing expenditure and are the actions delegated to staff
- Staff are allocated the time to carry out the work to achieve the plans and actions for the venue
- Are contracts that provide flexibility (for example annualised hours contracts) considered to reflect the business needs such as weddings in summer and pantomimes in winter
- Is the volunteer programme and volunteers part of the team development and communication process
- Is there succession planning in place to ensure continuity, for example to ensure that venue 'experts' such as programme managers share knowledge and

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develop others

- Is the use of space maximised, for example are there areas that can be used for different activities such as exercise classes, art displays, meetings and training
- Is the venue fully accessible, for example automatic doors, dedicated spaces within the venue for wheelchairs and carers to sit, accessible toilets, hearing loops, braille signs and programmes in large print
- Are contracts with agents, promoters and hirers clearly set out, for example who will do what, what the payment options are, cancellation agreements and riders to include technical, staffing and equipment requirements
- Are there set up plans for the different types of shows/ events, detailing equipment and the needs for each event

What training is in place to develop your programme and team?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Staff have the relevant qualifications and experience to ensure the programme works
- Marketing and promotional staff hold Chartered Institute of Marketing qualifications and are experienced in promoting theatre and conference venues
- Sales training is given to staff
- Staff are trained in relevant policies and procedures
- Specialist training is carried out

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Do staff have the relevant qualifications and experience to ensure the programme works
- Are staff who carry out the marketing and promotional activities qualified through the Chartered Institute of Marketing, are they experienced in promoting theatre and conference venues
- Is sales training given to help staff convert promotions into ticket and venue sales
- Are staff trained in policies and procedures, for example customer care, usher emergency action, food hygiene, working at heights, and use of electrical equipment
- Is specialist training carried out, for example theatre technicians; electricians, projectionists and master of ceremony

What guidance and good practice have you considered?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Management and staff participate in networking groups to share best practice
- The Arts Council funding and guidance is used to influence planning and development
- Maximum capacities are set for each show/ event
- Appropriate licences are in place
- Pre event briefings are held
- Noise risk assessments are carried out
- Industry updates and industry related media is received and reviewed to improve the services

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SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Are management and staff participating in networking groups, (such as the Theatre Managers group) to share best practice and get advice, (for example the ratio of ushers per numbers of customers); and is information collated on shows, agents, promoters and pricing
- Is the Arts Council funding and guidance used to influence the planning process and support the development of the programme
- Are maximum capacities for each show, event, conference and other bookings set
- Are the appropriated licences in place, for example Performing Rights Society, Entertainments Licence, Television Licence, British Film Institute, Radio Microphone Licence and PPL
- Are pre-event briefings held with contractors and staff for each show/ event
- Are noise risk assessments carried out for front and back of house staff on duty
- Is regular industry updates and industry related media received, and are they readily available on site, for example Encore, Arts Professionals and Sightline with the Association of British Theatre Technicians; are they reviewed and used to improve the service delivery and programme

MEASURE

How do you measure?

EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE

- A range of quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators are in place
- Weekly/ monthly budgets and measured
- Staffing costs are compared against target? Performance levels are known
- Performance levels are known
- Customer feedback is proactively gathered

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Is there a range of both quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPIs) in place, for example ticket sales, head counts of the number of people attending each event, percentage of capacity, customer satisfaction levels, compliments and complaints, subsidy per head, income and attendance per type of activity, subsidy per head of the catchment population, secondary sale per user and utilisation of seats
- Are the weekly and/or monthly budgets measured? Are all costs and income associated with each activity, for example secondary and promotional costs
- Are all actual staffing costs compared against target, and previous months/ years
- Are management and staff aware of how well the venue is performing
- Is customer feedback proactively gathered, for example customer satisfaction surveys, customer comment trends, group and user forums

REVIEW

How do you review what you measure?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Benchmarking is carried out with similar venues
- Reviews are carried out to ensure targets are being met

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- Operational processes are reviewed
- The programme is reviewed regularly

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Is benchmarking with similar organisations carried out, for example to compare performance, to provide guidance on performance, share best practice and identify areas of improvement
- Reviews are carried out to ensure targets are being met? Are actions being taken if targets are not being met? For example are targets amended, is further promotion carried out, and are plans changed? Are subsequent and/or additional actions delegated to staff in order that the desired outcomes can be achieved? Is support provided to staff to achieve the outcomes
- Are operational processes reviewed, for example is the current planning process and pre event meetings working? Are customers happy with the venue and are the team able to deliver all that is required of them
- Is the programme for shows/ events reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that occupancy/ capacity is being achieved and is the programme meeting the needs of customers/ stakeholders

IMPACT

Has what you have done made a difference?

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

- Business plan objectives are achieved
- Results of customer satisfaction surveys are improving
- Repeat bookings are generated
- There is demand from promoters and agents
- Shows/ events sell out quickly due to marketing activities
- The Local Authority is reporting a strong arts and culture heritage
- Local tourist usage is increasing

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE

- Are the objectives (including financial objectives) within the business plan being achieved
- Are the results of customer satisfaction surveys improving, is there evidence that customers are recommending the venue to friends and colleagues
- Is repeat business generated, for example are customers requesting the same booking next week, month or year
- Is there demand from promoters and agents, does this help increase utilisation and capacity
- Is there evidence that shows/ events sell out quickly; is there evidence to show that this is linked to good marketing/ promotional activities
- Is the Local Authority reporting that there is a strong arts and culture heritage and future within the area
- Is the venue aware of increased tourist usage, for example more bookings for accommodation, restaurant usage is up, and more tourists in the area; is there evidence linking this to audiences attending shows/ events