

Bounce Forwards

Using Audience Spectrum To... Plan for Reopening

Our *Using Evidence To...* route-maps are designed to help you navigate your own data and The Audience Agency's free resources to clear key hurdles for bouncing forwards.

We're facing not just an unprecedented situation, but an unprecedented task within it for our cultural and creative sectors. How will audiences respond as they exit lockdown and cultural venues and sites want to welcome them back? This is especially challenging, since we still often don't know when, or in what form, or in what (organisational and/or national) context that reopening can take place. We also don't yet know the impact that measures to ensure visitors' and staff members' safety will have on visitor experience.

As so often, when facing questions of how 'the audience' or 'visitors' will behave, an important way to add clarity is to differentiate between types of audiences and visitors. A tool such as Audience Spectrum can help, where we can draw on a wealth of previous information and research about different kinds of audiences. It's far easier to understand what a particular type of audience is doing, where you can differentiate their behaviour from other types, just as it's easier to hear one voice when you single it out from a background conversational hubbub.

Six Key Steps to Follow:

1. Understand the Audience Spectrum segments
2. Identify your priority segments
3. Draw strategic implications
4. Test your thinking with audiences
5. Develop an action plan
6. Monitor and respond to new information

1. Understand the Audience Spectrum Segments

- **Question** | How do you understand the Audience Spectrum segments overall?
Evidence | [Audience Spectrum](#) profiles; information about specific art forms etc. in [Audience Sector Reports](#); other sources on the The Audience Agency [website](#); mapping tool on [Audience Finder](#) platform.
- **Question** | How do you understand the segments' COVID-19 response?
Evidence | [Audience Spectrum in the Time of COVID-19](#).
- **Question** | How do you understand the segments in your own location?
Evidence | [Audience Spectrum](#) profile in your [Audience Finder](#) dashboard (if you have one), or via [Show Stats](#) (especially for touring organisations), or by profiling postcode lists from other sources; mapping of [Audience Spectrum](#) types in the [Audience Finder](#) dashboard (free upon registration) or locally via [Area Profile Reports](#).
- **Question** | How do you understand wider information about audiences (e.g. age, location, occupation) to infer the implications for different Audience Spectrum segments*
Evidence | [External Resources in The Audience Agency's Evidence Hub](#) and elsewhere.

2. Identify your Priority Segments

Draw out the implications and how they relate to your circumstances and key dependencies/challenges. For example, we might expect that a segment's likelihood to (re)attend will be related to a combination of how much they want to go normally and the specific effects of COVID-19.

More specifically, we could hypothesise that, for Arts organisations:

- Segments with relatively higher engagement and lower COVID-19 impact are likely to return most enthusiastically ([Metroculturals](#) and [Experience Seekers](#)).
- Segments with higher engagement but moderate COVID-19 impacts may still want to attend, but with greater mitigation/delay ([Commuterland Culturebuffs](#)).
- Segments with medium engagement and low to medium impact may be next most willing to attend ([Trips and Treats](#), [Dormitory Dependables](#)).

- Segments with medium engagement but high impact from COVID-19 present a particular challenge and are likely to be particularly noticeable in their absence ([Home & Heritage](#)).
- Segments with lower engagement will be less willing to return, but those that may be less affected by COVID-19 ([Facebook Families](#), [Kaleidoscope Creativity](#)) are likely to be easier to engage than those more affected ([Up Our Street](#) and, particularly, [Heydays](#), who will require particularly focused attention to be able to reach).

This picture will vary a little for Museums and Heritage organisations:

- Some segments are, on average, *more* enthusiastic about Museums/Heritage than Arts ([Trips & Treats](#), [Home & Heritage](#), [Up Our Street](#), [Facebook Families](#), [Heydays](#)).
- Some segments are, on average *similar* for both ([Metroculturals](#), [Commuterland](#), [Culturebuffs](#), [Dormitory Dependables](#)).
- Some segments are, on average, *less* enthusiastic about Museums/Heritage than Arts ([Experience Seekers](#), [Kaleidoscope Creativity](#)).

Look at how many of each segment there are in your local area and the extent to which you have existing relationships with them (or how far your previous offer was meeting their needs). How far would particular segments have to travel from the places where they live in highest concentrations? Is that journey going to be worthwhile for them, given their typical motivations, your offer and their other options? Think, too, about which segments are an important part of your community, as well as who has engaged with your work digitally during lockdown and might also want to visit in person, or who has supported you as donors or advocates.

- **Evidence to use** | [Audience Spectrum pen portraits](#); [Audience Spectrum mapping](#), [Area Profile Reports](#), [Digital survey](#), [competitor information](#).

Look too at the art forms, Areas of the country, and weeks of the year that different segments are likely to engage, digital confidence around online booking for time slots, their typical booking lead times and how that relates to your organisation and proposed plans.

- **Evidence to use** | [Audience Spectrum pen portraits](#); [Back Light report](#), [Cultural Trends article on spontaneity](#).

3. Draw Strategic Implications

Based on that analysis, draw out the strategic implications. This could take a variety of forms, depending on your circumstances, plans and constraints, but the key thing is that it's drawing together multiple specific analyses into an overall approach.

One way to do this would be using a revised version of an Ansoff matrix, as follows:

COVID Response Revised Ansoff Matrix				
New Other Audience Segments				
New Key Audience Segments				
Previous Other Audience Segments				
Previous Key Audience Segments				
	Offer as Before	Minor Changes to Previous Offer	Major Changes to Previous Offer	Different Offer

Having selected your key [Audience Spectrum](#) segments, work out which elements of your offer you can deliver for each segment of previous attenders 'as before' and which would require changes (whether minor or major) or where there's a need, or opportunity, for a completely new type of offer that might appeal to existing key segments or potential different audiences. Remember that this may be about wider elements of the offer than just the 'product' itself: thinking about the other 6 of the 7 'P's of marketing (price, place, promotion, people, processes, physical evidence) might be useful to identify different aspects.

Next, think about how that differs for those who are in the same groups, but who aren't current attenders:

- Would they need more reassurance, or information in advance?
- Are there particular reasons they've not previously attended that you could mitigate?
- Might their needs, or alternative options, have changed?

Repeat the process you went through for the 'Previous Key Segments', and then repeat again for 'Previous Other Attenders' and 'New Other Attenders'.

Review the overall picture:

- Are there recurring themes and common needs/barriers?
- What would the organisational implications be of potential changes?
- Are there particular offers that only work for specific groups and that might not therefore be cost-effective?

Combining the understanding you've developed about differing segments allows you to move towards a more strategic view of the approach you need to take to reopening:

E.g. For Performance: 'We mostly reach local Trips & Treats via our panto, for which they typically book late: so although we may need to wait until August to confirm whether it goes ahead, that would still enable us to reach that segment; but our summer 'theatre in the park' performances may work better as a family show than a more traditional Shakespeare, given the timing and the lesser travel distances and immediate impact of COVID on Dormitory Dependables and Trips and Treats. This is especially true compared to Commuterland Culturebuffs or Home and Heritage, who we'd be more reliant on for the more traditional Shakespearean performance. But we need to keep those segments engaged in the longer term, because they're likely to be a core audience again in the future. Perhaps we can keep them engaged via a new online offer... [etc]'

Or: For Heritage: 'We have smaller numbers of highly engaged and relatively affluent visitors who wish to visit the stately home who are Commuterland Culturebuffs and a few more confident Home and Heritage, but who will need more support from volunteer guides and relevant learning and heritage-based resources, as well as confidence that social distancing can be maintained. If we restrict entrance with ticketing and provide additional briefings to the guides, we can ensure there is no crowding inside and that they have an engaging visit, while using the income to support free family activities for Facebook Families in the gardens... [etc]'

Your reopening strategy should have the 'who, what, when, where, why' of a coherent story. Try to tell it from your audiences' varied perspectives, as well as your own.

Evidence to use | Our [Guide to Audience Development Planning](#) ; [This Way Up](#) marketing guide on Culturehive; Richard Rumelt [Good Strategy, Bad Strategy](#).

4. Test Your Thinking with Audiences

Once you've formulated an approach: test out your thinking by involving audiences and applying [user-centred-design approaches](#) (e.g. using feedback to help define the problem you're addressing, develop a range of options and using further feedback to narrow down a strategy that really works for their situation). You could also try test visits, or discuss approaches with a selection of previous visitors from key segments

Evidence to use | [This Way Up marketing guide on Culturehive](#); [Bouncing Forward User Centred Design](#)

5. Develop an Action Plan

Once you've formulated an approach, test out your thinking by involving audiences and applying [user-centred-design](#) approaches (e.g. using feedback to help define the problem you're addressing, develop a range of options and using further feedback to narrow down a strategy that really works for their situation). You could also try test visits, or discuss approaches with a selection of previous visitors from key segments

Evidence to use | [This Way Up marketing guide on Culturehive](#); [Bouncing Forward User Centred Design](#)

6. Monitor and Respond to New Information

The situation and what we know about segments' reactions will continue to develop. Explore your audience's attitudes, share learnings and reflections with peers and track initial bookings as they come in. This is particularly easy to do by segment if you have [box office tagging](#) with [Audience Spectrum](#), or [Activity Stream](#), but you can also look to see which areas people are booking from as a guide.

Evidence to use | [Audience Spectrum tagging](#); [Activity Stream](#); [Area Profile Reports](#); [Audience Spectrum mapping](#).

Think about changes you may need to make on four time-horizons:

- Immediately, within minutes and hours.
- Short term, up to three months ahead.
- Medium term, from three months to a year ahead.
- Long term, more than a year ahead.

Work with front of house and other teams to anticipate scenarios for new issues and challenges and agree how they can and should respond in the moment. Also put in place monitoring systems, e.g. ongoing user surveys; visitor feedback; and/or profiling of visitor by date range.

Evidence to use | [Audience Finder](#) box office and surveys; [Show Stats](#); [Audience Spectrum](#) profiling.

For segments that are/are not attending in usual numbers, consider (or do research to find out) whether this can be affected either by boosting your response to their motivations or by removing barriers (e.g. addressing particular safety concerns). Also consider whether attendance levels are a result of external factors, which may change (for example, government advice, local levels of infection, the threat of a second wave). Be prepared to experiment, and/or to respond decisively where you can see implications for particular segments' attendance.

Evidence to use | [Audience Spectrum in the Time of COVID](#); [Research Services](#).

Hopefully these six steps will help you to respond to the specific needs of your visitors and plot a more sustainable course than undifferentiated approaches would allow.

If you have feedback, or would like to share examples of how you've used any of these suggestions, please contact getintouch@theaudienceagency.org.