

A decorative purple floral wreath with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the text 'Appendix C'.

Appendix  
C

**Audience Development  
& Activity Ideas**

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# 1. Audience development – an overview

## What is an audience?

The audience for a heritage venue includes:

- Visitors to the site
- Special event and partnership project participants (on and off site)
- Virtual visitors (website, social media etc.)

The heritage sector typically breaks audiences into groups or types, including:

- Adults
- Children
- Young People (15-25 years)
- People with disabilities
- Older people
- Families
- Community groups (e.g. Brownies, holiday clubs, care homes)
- Schools (Primary and Secondary)
- Further and Higher Education students (colleges and universities)
- Teachers
- Groups (e.g. package tours, society outings)
- Private hire (e.g. weddings, birthdays, corporate events)

## TRADITIONAL AUDIENCES VS. NON-TRADITIONAL AUDIENCES

Who is the traditional visitor? Generally, the higher a person's income and level of education, the more likely they are to visit heritage venues (which is also the case with all cultural activities, with the exception of theme parks and zoos, which appeal equally across all social groups). They are likely to have been taken to heritage venues as a child, and will take their own children on similar outings.

Who is the non-traditional visitor? Non-traditional audiences are the people you might not expect to drive through your gates, or who currently visit in low numbers. While visitors to heritage venues have increased across all social groups, the numbers of visitors from particular sections of society still don't represent their percentage of the UK population as a whole. The heritage sector is working hard to engage these audiences so that they will become traditional audiences.

Non-traditional audiences to your venue might include (but are not limited to):

- People on low incomes
- People with disabilities
- Ethnic/religious minorities
- NEETS (young people aged 16-25 years Not in Education, Employment or Training)

People's reasons for not visiting a heritage venue often include:

- It's not open when I can visit
- I don't know it exists
- I believe I won't be interested in its subjects or themes
- It's probably too expensive for me
- I can't get there by public transport

## **WHAT IS AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT?**

The Audience Agency (a national consultancy working with cultural organisations) defines audience development as:

*"...a planned, organisation-wide approach to extending the range and nature of relationships with the public, it helps a cultural organisation to achieve its mission, balancing social purpose, financial sustainability and creative ambitions."*

Audience development for your venue is about making an organisation-wide commitment to engaging with people, whether or not they are currently your visitors, for the short and long term, by providing experiences, services, programmes and opportunities that benefit and engage them.

An ongoing process, audience development is based on the same principles as marketing, but it is about increasing the range of audiences, not just increasing visitor numbers. It can include aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care and distribution.

What does the audience development process involve?

1. Identifying who is already visiting you/using your services (including your website)
2. Identifying who isn't visiting you/using your services (including your website)
3. Deciding which audiences you want to focus on – your 'target audiences'
4. Developing a Strategy for how you will increase those target audiences

5. Deciding how you will measure the success of your plan
6. Putting the Strategy into action
7. Evaluating the success of your Strategy (using the measures you set out earlier) and making adjustments/improvements

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT?**

By helping you to understand and know your existing and potential audiences, audience development will help you to:

- Develop a relationship with them
- Communicate effectively with them
- Increase the number of return visits
- Attract first timers
- Broaden the range of people who attend and participate

## 2. Writing an Audience Development Strategy

Writing an Audience Development Strategy involves gathering and analysing lots of information, consulting widely with colleagues (staff, volunteers, trustees etc.) and external stakeholders (including your existing and potential audiences) and making decisions with consequences for the whole organisation.

Before you start writing, decide how this Strategy document is going to be used. For example: to help raise funding, to plan future programmes of exhibitions and events, to guide the development of new marketing and publicity, or a combination of these. Most importantly, this document must provide clear, measurable and achievable goals and be of practical use to the people using it.

It's also vital to the success of your plans that you enroll everyone in the organisation right from the start, including the drafting of the Strategy document, to ensure that they feel involved in the process, understand why it is happening and want to help it succeed.

To get you started, here's a structure suggestion to help you draft your Strategy:

### **i. Where we are now:**

- A summary of your organisation – potted history, purpose, values, aims
- Aspirations for the future
- Detailed information about your current audience – who they are, what they do, want and need, as well as visitor numbers and, if applicable, any change in the number of visits over the last five to ten years (see How to involve people in your audience development below)

### **ii. Vision**

(As a result of this Strategy, what visible difference will there be to your venue/organisation?)

### iii. Aim and Objectives:

- The Aim is an overview of what you want the Strategy to achieve.

#### Example

To establish a plan for developing audiences at [name of your venue], which is both measured and achievable, and which will be reviewed in 2019.

- The Objectives define the specific results you need to achieve to fulfil the Aim.

#### Example

- a) Identify existing audiences
- b) Identify the needs and expectations of existing audiences
- c) Identify the needs and expectations of non-users
- d) Identify target audiences
- e) Identify barriers to [name of your venue]
- f) Suggest ways those barriers may be removed
- g) Suggest ways to increase the number of people visiting [name of your venue]
- h) Suggest ways to improve the quality of the experience at [name of your venue]

### iv. Timetable:

What do you intend to do by when? (Most strategies cover a 3–5 year period before review. Do not tackle too much at once. Put ambitious objectives in Year 3 and onwards with preparation work in the preceding years.)

### v. Action Plan:

Outline the main work needed to achieve each of your Objectives.

### vi. Assign responsibility:

Name who does what and provide contact details.

### vii. Resources:

human and financial – in-house, externally, funding

### viii. Monitoring and Evaluation:

What do you need to count, record or measure to prove you have achieved the Objectives? Ideally you should carry out ongoing research with visitors from new and existing audiences to measure their responses to the changes you're making.

### ix. Risk Assessment:

What might go wrong and what procedure you'll put in place in case it does.

### x. Appendices:

Any background information that's useful to have, but would clutter the main document, including:

- Budgets
- Business plan
- Mission statement
- Marketing strategy
- Annual report

Because no site can offer everything to everybody, choices must be made. Planning for specific groups is more effective than planning for one large undifferentiated audience.

### Remember

This Strategy is the overall plan for developing your audience – each step, event or project that you choose to support your Strategy's aims will need its own Plan (see **Planning events/activities for audience development**).

### Getting to know your target audiences

Before you can decide exactly what you're going to offer your target audiences in order to meet their needs and inspire them to visit you (hopefully many times), you'll need to find out as much as you can about them.

**Question:** What is the NO. 1 BIGGEST MISTAKE made when planning a public event/activity?

**Answer:** Not knowing who your target audience is and what they need, like and want.

Without knowing enough about your target audience, you can't:

- Know where they are or where to reach them with your marketing
- Understand why they would want to visit and how to fire up their curiosity

- Speak to them in their 'language' in your leaflets, advertising and on social media
- Plan a realistic budget

To create an effective audience development programme of events and activities you're going to need most, if not all, of the following information about your visitors and non-visitors (and possibly some other things too):

- Age (and the mix of ages within family, school and adult groups)
- Socio-economic status
- Ethnicity
- UK or overseas resident
- Whether they understand English
- Whether English is their first or second language
- Whether they've visited you before and how frequently
- Where they live, or staying while on holiday
- How they travelled to your venue
- How they found out about your venue
- Who made the decision/suggestion to visit you
- What they are/were hoping to see and do during the visit
- Which other visitor attractors they have recently visited (and might have visited that day)
- What aspects of your site – views, exhibitions, events, shop, café etc. they like or dislike, why and how they feel it could be improved
- Perception of your venue's value for money – admission charges, shop, café, any charged-for attractions or events that they attended

There is plenty of useful demographic and heritage visitor data already available online about local your community and region, as well for the UK as a whole. Official and professional organisations have done a lot of the number crunching for you. See **Useful links** below.

However, your organisation will also need to do its own 'coalface' information gathering, including current and potential visitors' opinions and ideas specifically in relation to your venue, as well as your general visitor statistics. Examine existing or potential barriers to people visiting your venue more frequently, or visiting at all, and how these could be overcome. Involve your target audiences in the discussion (see **How to involve people in audience your development** below).

A useful tool for identifying where changes might need to be made to help audience development is a SWOT analysis of your venue:

1. Strengths
2. Weaknesses
3. Opportunities
4. Threats

A SWOT analysis examines your venue in terms of its current and potential appeal to visitors, as well as what might be standing in the way of that. This analysis needs to take into account all public areas, exhibitions, live events, café, shop and staff, location, access to public transport and who your competitors are. It's very important that you include the opinions of your current and potential new visitors in the SWOT analysis. For information about carrying out a SWOT analysis, see Useful links below.

## HOW TO INVOLVE PEOPLE IN YOUR AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Make it possible for as wide a range of people as possible, including staff, volunteers, visitors and the local community, to contribute information about themselves, as well as their opinions and ideas about your venue, to your audience development. Doing this will build relationships and partnerships, and give you the vital information you need to develop successful provision for your target audiences.

Provided here is a selection of ways in which you can give people opportunities to contribute to your audience development, while gathering the important data you need to achieve the Objectives in your Strategy. Use as many methods as you need to in order to get a complete picture of your target audiences:

- Audience profile survey (2-3 minutes) – short interviews with visitors as they enter your venue, gathering basic information, including who they are, where they come from and what their expectations are.
- NB. collecting this data from school groups requires a different approach, e.g. interviewing teachers during lunch time or after their visit via the phone.
- Visitor satisfaction survey – interviews with visitors as they leave the building, or self-completion questionnaires handed to and collected from visitors.
- Focus group interviews (about 1.5 hours) – discussions with groups of 6-10 visitors led by a moderator; it's vital that members of the group have things in common, e.g. are all parents with children aged under 12.

- In-depth on-site interviews (15-30 minutes) – interviews with 1-4 visitors at a time.
- Accompanied visits (observation) – a member of staff/volunteer joins a family, adult couple or school group and accompanies them around your venue. The member of staff/volunteer interviews and observes the visitors during their visit in a neutral capacity.
- Street surveys (2-3 minutes) – staff/volunteers interview members of the public in a high street or shopping centre (e.g. who they are, what they enjoy doing in the leisure time and why they do or don't visit your venue).
- Online survey – anyone can complete a survey in their own time via the internet. Add it as an option on your website, as well as inviting participation via social media, your printed generic leaflets and local press. This option is particularly useful for teachers and young people. You can create an online survey easily and cheaply (even if you're not of the generation born with a mouse in your hand) using one of the many survey provider websites, such as Survey Monkey (see Useful links below).
- Brain-storming sessions with your front-of-house staff/volunteers – get their vital feedback about the experiences of your visitors and ideas about how to improve your offer.

Once you have carried out audience research and, perhaps, a SWOT analysis, you'll use the information to plan what you need to do to develop your target audiences as well changes you might make to remove existing barriers. These might include:

- Developing new permanent exhibitions and/or update existing ones
- Developing an on-going programme of temporary exhibitions and high profile live events
- Extending the opening hours of your gardens – e.g. late-night summer opening for adults
- Running a programme of outreach activities in local schools and communities to promote your venue
- Changing the brand identity of the venue to appeal more directly to your target audiences
- Launching press, publicity and marketing campaigns to raise the profile of the venue and increase understanding of what it has to offer
- Changing the pricing structure for admission, temporary exhibitions and events

## 3. Planning events/activities for audience development

The Strategy (see **Writing your Audience Development Strategy** above) is the overview for developing your audience. Events and activities are some of the tools your strategy will use.

Below you'll find a basic example of an outline for an activity at a venue with grounds landscaped by Capability Brown, once you have identified your target audiences and found out as much as you can about them (see **How to involve people in audience development** above).

For this purpose of this particular example, Families have been identified as the target audience we want to develop:

### Event type

Guided tour of grounds

### Target audience

Families with children aged 5+ years

### Aims

(What do we want this event to achieve for audience development?)

Adults and children will:

- Be able to recognise characteristics of Capability Brown's style in the landscape
- Be able to name types of feature used in Brown's landscaping e.g. 'ha-ha' (sunken fence)
- Learn to identify different tree species
- Have fun together in an outdoor environment

### Objectives

- How will we achieve these Aims?
- Who will do what?
- When will they do it?
- How will they do it?)

- **Who**

- Tour guides – Staff/volunteers
- Managed by – [name/job title of person responsible for ensuring that this activity runs to plan]

**What**

- A guided tour of selected areas of the grounds landscaped by Capability Brown for families with children aged 5+ years.
- The tour will include characteristics of Capability Brown's style, the types of feature used in Brown's landscaping, a hands-on exploration of tree varieties used, word and observation games and opportunities to use a handheld telescope of the type used in Brown's day.
- Tours will start and finish outside entrance to main house
- Duration: 40 minutes
- Groups of up to 20 visitors per tour
- Free – Included in admission charge

**When**

- Saturdays and Sundays in August
- 11.00am and 2.00pm

**How**

Volunteer guides must be trained in:

- Tour guide skills
- Engaging young audiences
- The history of the site
- Capability Brown's work on the landscape
- First Aid

**Resources**

- Staff/Volunteer guides x 2 (per day)
- Handheld telescope
- Map of grounds
- Props for games – e.g. laminated word cards, pictures and observation sheets, clipboards
- Portable First Aid kit
- Radio

## HOW WILL THE EVENT HELP TO DEVELOP THIS TARGET AUDIENCE?

- Provides opportunities for families to learn together while having fun outdoors
- Provides opportunities for children to engage with a historic site at their own level
- Families already visiting the site will see other families having fun on the tour and want to take part
- Children will want to come back to do the tour again because it was fun, unique and memorable
- Families who have enjoyed the tour will tell other families that they should do it too

## ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

- Trails for families – printed sheets of clues or a map to help them explore your site
- Tours
- Nature walks
- Activity backpacks for families
- Outdoor live concerts
- Outdoor drama/dance performances – professional as well as performers representing local community organisations (e.g. youth groups, ethnic groups, schools and colleges)
- Costumed actor interpreters
- Curriculum-based sessions for schools – led by staff/volunteers
- Community partnership projects – resulting in work for display at your venue
- Illustrated talks by special guests and in-house experts
- Talk & Tour for students in Further and Higher Education – on themes tailored to their courses, led by staff/volunteers
- Festivals – link in with an established local or national annual festival
- Treasure hunts
- Exhibitions – e.g. art, history, architecture, gardens, nature, photography, sculpture, Capability Brown
- Touring exhibition – a portable display about your venue and its stories for libraries, shopping centres, schools, community halls etc.
- Fairs – antiques, artisan/traditional foods
- Courses and study days – e.g. gardening, landscaping, nature, life drawing, creative writing, sculpture, architecture, 18th-century society and culture

## Useful links

### Audience development and research

Audience Finder is a national audience data and development programme, enabling cultural organisations to share, compare and apply insight

<http://audiencefinder.org/about>

The Audience Agency

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org>

Taking Part Survey – Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part>

Official statistics reports by Dept. of Culture, Media & Sport

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-culture-media-sport>

Cultivate – online survey service that enables heritage organisations to collect, analyse and compare audience data

<http://www.cultivate-em.com/audience-development.html>

Audience Development planning – using evidence (The Audience Agency)

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/audience-development-planning>

Using evidence for setting audience metrics (The Audience Agency)

<https://www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/using-evidence-for-effective-planning>

Survey Monkey – online survey platform

[https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/?ut\\_source=header](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/?ut_source=header)

Mosaic UK

<http://www.experian.co.uk/marketing-services/products/mosaic-uk.html>

Acorn|

<http://acorn.caci.co.uk>

### Marketing

Arts Marketing Association

<http://www.a-m-a.co.uk>

## Event organiser resources

Heritage Open Days

<http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/get-involved/register-with-us>

Natural England – *Nature Based Trial Activities* (PDF for downloading)

[http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiy377i\\_bDLAhVDSRoKHdIlgAhQQFfgguMAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Ffile%2F6611256916049920&usg=AFQjCNG21mfAu1\\_4YJ0kxMk7ierv64ZRRA](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiy377i_bDLAhVDSRoKHdIlgAhQQFfgguMAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Ffile%2F6611256916049920&usg=AFQjCNG21mfAu1_4YJ0kxMk7ierv64ZRRA)

Natural England – *Access to Nature: inspiring people to engage with their natural environment* (PDF for downloading)

[http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiy377i\\_bDLAhVDSRoKHdIlgAhQQFghAMAY&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Ffile%2F5557933643399168&usg=AFQjCNGS02xDBuRoKOQImxuAWxnfuENW2Q](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=7&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiy377i_bDLAhVDSRoKHdIlgAhQQFghAMAY&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpublications.naturalengland.org.uk%2Ffile%2F5557933643399168&usg=AFQjCNGS02xDBuRoKOQImxuAWxnfuENW2Q)

The Capability Brown Festival events page

<http://www.capabilitybrown.org/events>

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

<http://www.lotc.org.uk>