

National Endowment for the Arts

How the Arts Affect Audiences – Pilot Study

Data Collection Guidelines: **Online Survey Administration**

Background of the Study

In October 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released a strategic plan establishing a new set of goals, outcomes, and performance measures for the Agency. Under the plan, a critical NEA goal is to “engage the public with diverse and excellent art” so that three specific outcomes are achieved. The first outcome is that “Americans throughout the Nation Experience Art.”

To track its performance in achieving this outcome, the NEA will conduct a survey of audiences at NEA- funded arts events nationwide. The survey will allow the NEA to measure the percentage of audiences “affected” by attendance at NEA-funded projects.

The rationale for this measure is simple: individual encounters with art can prove transformative. As NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman has stated: “Art works on and within people to change and inspire them; it addresses the need people have to create, to imagine, to aspire to something more.” As a partial measure of its success, the Agency plans to gauge the quality, depth, and nature of audience responses to NEA- funded projects.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate essential information to participating grantees, including instructions for creating a sampling plan, and guidelines for surveying audiences that will maximize the probability of successful data collection efforts. WolfBrown (www.wolfbrown.com) prepared these guidelines for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Survey Administration

The online survey approach requires you to send out an email (sample language below) with a survey link to your ticket-buyers for the selected event during or immediately after its conclusion. In other words, if curtain time is 8:00 p.m., the email broadcast should occur at approximately 9:00 p.m., so that people who check their email after performances will find the survey invitation. You should email all ticket buyers for whom you have email addresses. WolfBrown will provide the survey link.

Ticket buyers, in this case, are defined as those who have purchased tickets in advance of the performance (i.e., they do not include walk-ups the evening of the performance), for whom you have email information.

Subject Line: Please Share Your Feedback on Today’s [Event/Exhibit] of [Program Name]

Dear Patron,

Your feedback on today’s [Event/Exhibit] would be very helpful to the National Endowment for the Arts. Please complete the survey as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours afterwards, while the memory is still fresh. Your feedback helps us understand the affect of our work on stage. Please be as candid as possible. Your answers are anonymous and confidential.

To take the survey, [click here. \[hyperlink\]](#) or paste this link into your browser: [insert full survey URL here, in case people receive their email in text-only format and the hyperlink is not active].

Thank you for your cooperation.

Rocco Landesman

Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

Staffing Requirements and Responsibilities

A staff member should be identified to liaise with WolfBrown on preparing and sending out the emails. General responsibilities include:

- Liaising with WolfBrown
- Setting up timed emails to be sent after events selected to be surveyed
- Preparing and overseeing Response Enhancement Efforts (see below)
- Tracking open and click rate of emails (if possible)
- Submitting online Reporting Requirements (see Reporting Requirements)

Response Enhancement Efforts

The following efforts are suggested to increase the likelihood of cooperation and response.

1. Lobby Signage. At surveyed performances, several large signs should be placed on easels at key locations in the lobby saying “Audience Survey Tonight – Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!” with the NEA logo.
2. Curtain Announcements. An announcement from the stage 10 minutes prior to curtain, welcoming patrons to the theatre and asking for their cooperation with the survey. You may modify the following language to suit your venue as an addition to the script of your regular pre-curtain announcements (e.g., asking patrons to silence cell phones):
[10 minutes prior to curtain]. “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to tonight’s performance of [Title]. The National Endowment for the Arts very much needs your feedback on tonight’s performance. If you receive an email requesting your feedback on tonight’s performance, we kindly request your cooperation. Thank you in advance, and enjoy the show.”

Reporting Requirements

After the survey administration, please submit the following information using the online reporting system:

1. Name of event
2. Date of event
3. The final audience count
4. The actual number of tickets sold
5. The number of emails successfully sent out to ticket buyers
6. If possible, the open and click rates of emails (if email system allows)