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Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

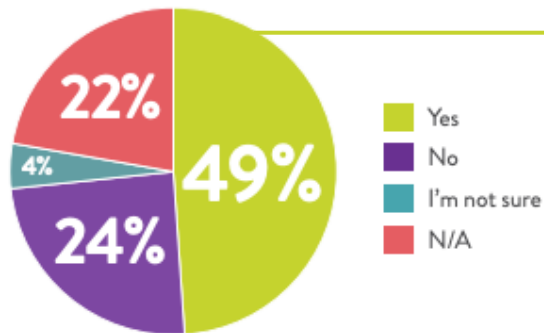
A/B Testing Frameworks for Arts Marketing

October 2023

Return Discounts On Tickets and Memberships Are a Powerful Lever

Many Found Success on Initiatives for New-to-File Ticket Buyers

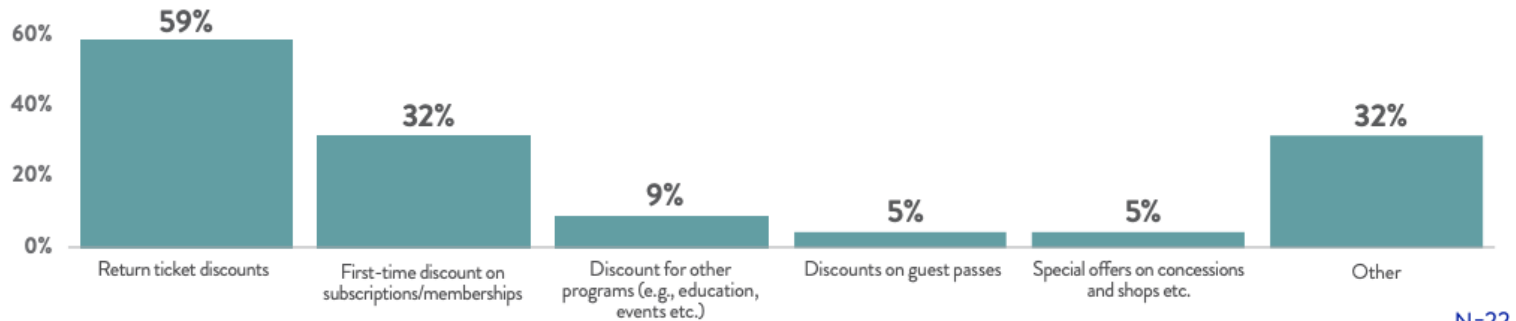
Has your org found success with initiatives to retain new-to-file ticket buyers?



N=45

Return Discounts Successfully Retain New-to File Buyers

Which have been implemented successfully?



N=22

While discounts on tickets and subscriptions are generally seen to be effective retention tools for new-to-file audience members, there are many possible variables when designing a discount program. **A/B testing** is a crucial practice to better understand which offers will most resonate with new audiences.

Questions To Ask When Building A/B Tests

- ❑ What do we already know about these audience members — what data do we already have?
- ❑ If we don't have actual data, what do we suspect based on past behavior or interactions?
- ❑ What hypotheses do we have about new audiences? Ideally, A/B testing will not only let us know which discounts are effective but will also teach us something about our audience members that can help us deepen our relationship with them.
- ❑ What kinds of tests can be put in place to help us know what is the next best communication / action? Remember to keep the tests simple!

Template

What do we know?

-
-

What hypotheses do we have?

-
-

Possible tests

- Provide promo codes for two different experiences:
 - Option 1:
 - Option 2:

Example 1: Family Member Attends an Education Program

What do we know?

- Likely have young children in their household or in their care
- Possibly young parents themselves

What hypotheses do we have?

- They may be interested in a date night / escape
- They may be interested in experiences for their whole family

Possible tests

- Provide promo codes for two different experiences:
 - **Option 1:** adult experience/date night –tickets to a more mature show
 - **Option 2:** experience for the family –tickets to a family-friendly show

Example 2: First-Time Attendee Purchases a Single Ticket to a Musical

What do we know?

- Has a strong enough interest in the arts to attend a show alone
- Likely enjoys musical theater

What hypotheses do we have?

- They may be looking for a way to engage friends in their interest in musicals
- They may be an arts “experimenter” interested in experiencing new art forms

Possible tests

- Provide promo codes for two different experiences:
 - **Option 1:** tickets for them and a friend to another musical
 - **Option 2:** discounted single ticket to their choice of a non-musical play

Case Study: Make the Decision To Return Simple

In the Wallace Foundation study of Minnesota Opera, the team noted that “[too many options can overwhelm unfamiliar consumers](#), causing them to avoid choosing anything at all.” Armed with this knowledge, the Opera put two structures in place to encourage friends of patrons to return.

- **Restricted seating:** promotions for these new audiences were limited to certain areas of the theater, which alleviated stress over not knowing which seats are best to experience the opera. Taking away options can have positive impact for unfamiliar customers.
- **Buy before you go:** when new visitors through the referral program were leaving their first performance, they were offered a discount on a subscription if they signed up before exiting the theater. Catching new audience members when they are most connected to what they just saw can spur an “impulse buy” reflex.

These programs were a success: the opera saw 100 new subscriptions as a result of the restricted seating offer, and each night of the “before-you-go” initiative resulted in 100 new subscriptions.





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