

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Engaging audiences through onsite and online practices

Wallace Excellence Awards Event – June 30, 2009

YBCA CURRENT ONLINE PRACTICES

YBCA Website

Enhanced web content

- Video trailers and interviews with artists
- Artists bios
- Links to websites, reviews, articles, interviews
- Podcasts of public programs
- Patron reviews and blog posts (to be completed in early July)
- My YBCA – web camera and computer station in lobby so people can give us video feedback on our programs which will be posted online

Emails

E-Marketing Emails

- Sent to previous YBCA patrons and anyone with a specific interest code
- Emails have embedded links to videos, online ticket purchase, YBCA website

Follow up Emails

- Sent to all first time YBCA patrons with information about other upcoming performances and 2 for 1 ticket discount
- Email also includes link to a quick survey and request for information about their interests to help target future emails

E-zine montly newsletter to everyone in our database – 38K

Web Marketing

Banner ad component for all print buys as value added

Flavorpill enhanced listing; exploring expanding this to SFist

Social Networking Sites

Facebook

YouTube

Twitter

Art Babble (a consortia of museum content providers who generate a lot of video)

YBCA CURRENT ONSITE PRACTICES

(does not include regular onsite print resources – i.e, playbills, posters, flyers, gallery guides, newsletter, etc)

LCD screens in theater lobby and outside box office with trailers for upcoming events

Post-show Q&A after every Friday night performance - advertise via web and box office sales people

Overlapping programs – Big Idea Night scheduled on a performance night to cross pollinate audiences

More opportunities for audiences to engage directly with artists in both formal and informal settings (i.e., artist talks vs. receptions)

Artists in residence (upstairs galleries); open rehearsals (Margy Jenkins); open studio (Wallworks)

Free or free with gallery admission programming

OTHER GOOD THINGS TO THINK ABOUT THAT ARE FREE (in addition to our regular ad/PR schedule)

Partnerships

- Program partnerships
 - co-presenting this season with SF Performances
 - Master classes at LINES; lectures with MJDC
- Promotional partnerships
 - List in our newsletter in exchange for listing in yours
 - Send email with discount offer to our patrons in exchange for email to your patrons
 - Ticket discounts to YBCA performances for your subscribers/members as a subscriber/member benefit

Comps/Discount Tickets

- Strategic Comping
 - Select prospects whom you want to become regular attendees – students, teachers, professional groups – and invite them to be your guests at a performance
 - Do this BEFORE you find out you need to paper the house
 - Think of it as an advertising expense – you are hopefully going to generate good word of mouth and also potential future audiences
 - If you have the money, do a pre-show reception, talk about your programs, give them a behind the scenes tour, etc.
 - FOLLOW UP thanking them for coming and offering them a discount on their next ticket
- Rush tickets
 - Advertise them so people know about them

- Don't worry if you always have "rush" patrons, they are still loyal patrons and you are providing access to people who otherwise might not attend your shows and filling empty seats with paying customers rather than last minute papering comps
- Discount ticket outlets
 - SF Arts
 - Goldstar
 - Gets your name out to people who may not know you
 - Better to sell discounted tickets than paper the house at the last minute

TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO BE DOING REGARDLESS OF SIZE OR BUDGET

1. Always collect emails from all of your patrons
2. Follow up, follow up, follow up – particularly with first time attendees. Be sure to include a discount offer and a suggestion of a similar program they may like and make sure it goes out within a week of their visit.
3. Drive people to your website – make sure your web address is on everything
4. Give people a reason to go to your website – provide as much information as you can for your patrons and be sure it is updated regularly
5. Provide a way for people to "talk back" to you – via patron reviews or even post it notes on a bulletin board in your lobby
6. Conduct online surveys with your patrons at least once a year to find out what they are thinking, what they like and don't like, how they find out about your programs, etc. – then use that information to adjust your behavior to meet their needs – Survey Monkey costs \$100 per year
7. Use video and blog posts (with images!) to go behind the scenes – this makes people feel like insiders
8. Make it a priority to have enough staff to keep your website and social networking sites current and to provide video content for you – if you don't have the money to hire someone, get interns. They not only are up to speed on the state of the art technology, they usually own whatever equipment you might need. You can also build a highly functioning, 2.0 website in Word Press for free.
9. Create partnerships with other arts and community organizations and cross promote each other's programs. It's free and generates a lot of good will.
10. Be strategic with your comps – view them as cultivation tools and distribute them to whom people you want to be part of your audience – i.e., residents or businesses in your neighborhood, professionals, students, teachers, influencers