



Suitable training can demystify data and help your marketing budget go further, as ADUK shows.

Dazzled by Data



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Audience Data UK (ADUK) is a project which was developed solely with the aim of helping arts and cultural organisations to understand their audiences. It provides support and advice on gathering, processing and examining audience data through a range of channels, including the website www.aduk.org, and through its training programme Dazzled by Data.

The recently re-developed website, www.aduk.org, is the main touch point for the project and clearly directs users to a variety of tools for all levels of experience. The tools include a news section to keep visitors up to date with the latest activity in audience research, resources and case studies, a directory of useful organisations and bodies, and a jargon-buster to clarify audience development terminology. A brand new section on benchmarking provides tips and advice on the benefits of benchmarking and how to go about it. The website also keeps visitors informed of key future opportunities such as training, benchmarking groups, conferences and events.

After a successful pilot programme, the Dazzled by Data training is rolling out. The 2008/9 training has so far been well received, as is reported here by independent evaluators, Annabel Jackson Associates: "Told me everything I need to know. For once in a course, I felt enthused about going back and applying what I had learnt to improving my use of audience data." This is the verdict from one of the participants on the Dazzled by Data training programme.

The Dazzled by Data programme was set up in 2007 with funding from the Arts Councils of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It is delivered by the Arts Marketing Association (AMA) for ADUK, with partnership support from Network, the UK umbrella organisation for audience development agencies.

Dazzled by Data is a package of five one day training courses for arts organisations of any size

or art form. Small organisations might only need to send one member of staff to some of the days. Larger organisations might send different people to different days of the course so spreading understanding of the value of audience data across the organisation. Part of the course (unit two) is specifically designed for visual arts and other venues without ticketing systems.

Participants have given positive feedback from the course. 86% of participants from the first two units have said that the course is inspiring. 91% of participants have said that they made useful contacts on the course.

Participants so far have gone away from the course and have learnt more about their audiences (buying triggers, customer values, lifestyles, demography, etc), analysed data more effectively (identifying different customer segments, booking patterns, the value of different marketing tools), strengthened the link between marketing and strategic planning, and fine-tuned their marketing and programming to target new audiences or strengthen relationships with key audiences. These

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benefits seem to endure. The AMA has surveyed 11 organisations that sent staff to all five workshops of the course last year. A year after the course, 89% of the sample said the course had increased their confidence in using audience data; 100% of the sample said that the course had increased their understanding of their audience; 89% said it increased their ability to interpret audience data; 89% said it increased their ability to predict and forecast based on data; 89% said it improved their ability to target their marketing; 56% said that it reduced their marketing costs and 0% said it

increased their marketing costs. There is tentative evidence of concrete results from these organisational changes. Across the sample, average ticket yield per attender increased by 9% over the year since the course, and marketing cost per attender fell by 25%. Other factors might have contributed to these results, but the figures are still highly encouraging.

In 2009, the courses are running in Bristol and Leeds. The first three units have already taken place, but there is still time to sign up to the last two. The course costs £65+VAT for each one-day unit. Everyone who has attended the first two units has rated them as value for money. You can get an idea of the content of the courses, and download some useful resources from the ADUK website www.aduk.org. This has copies of the training notes, practical guides to aspects of audience data use and analysis, case studies, articles, sample documents, and reference pieces.

So far, 72 people have attended the first two workshops in the 2008/09 series of Dazzled by Data, with a further 102 booked for the remaining units. The Bristol workshops are already full. However, although the demand has been very high, arts organisations don't want to travel far to the course, which limits the catchment area. The ADUK steering group has been considering ways of spreading the benefit from the course. Annabel Jackson Associates has been appointed to carry out an independent evaluation of the programme, reporting back in March 2009. This will be used to fine-tune the programme so that it can be expanded in 2010. The programme has the potential to contribute to the strategic objectives of all the UK Arts Councils. It can help arts organisations to reach new audiences and to strengthen their relationships with existing audiences. It can also provide an important route for discussion and collaboration between arts organisations for mutual benefit. ■

Courses with places available:

Hot Spots and Ice Blocks, Leeds, 10 February 2009

This workshop will help you to identify potential for developing audiences – who should you target and what is the best way to reach them?

Crystal Clear, Leeds, 10 March 2009

This workshop will enable you to select the right approach for your strategic plan and give you the advocacy tools required to bring others on the journey with you.

Dazzled by Data courses can be booked via the ADUK website or email anna@a-m-a.co.uk

