



GLOBAL Arts Live

TESTS NEW FORMAT,
NEW NAME TO DRAW
NEW AUDIENCES

A DISCUSSION GUIDE

This guide explores insights from Global Arts Live's audience-building efforts as part of The Wallace Foundation's Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative



ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

As part of The Wallace Foundation’s Building Audiences for Sustainability (BAS) initiative, Global Arts Live, formerly World Music/CRASHarts*, a Boston-based performing arts presenter, sought to attract and retain younger audiences while increasing brand visibility. In March 2019, the foundation released a written and video story titled *New Format, New Name to Draw New Audiences*, the fifth installment in the foundation’s Building Audiences for Sustainability (BAS) Stories series that records early-stage efforts of performing arts organizations to expand their audiences.

The core approach applied in the BAS initiative was the idea of continuous learning. This approach had two formative steps: first, the identification of a target audience to attract and second, the use of research and analysis to learn about the target audience, challenge assumptions, and design and test activities to suit their needs. Once implemented, organizations tracked results, made adjustments based on evidence, and continued to retest and refine. World Music/CRASHarts, along with the other organizations involved in the initiative, have applied this principle throughout their work.

Central to the story is how the organization addressed two pressing problems, using an approach of continuous learning in which data becomes part of an ongoing learning process, based in market

research and implementation lessons. Like many nonprofit performing arts organizations across the country, the organization has observed that their audiences are aging and newer audiences are not attending frequently enough to take their place. Specifically, the organization was looking to attract 21- to 40-year-olds, to better reflect Boston’s demographic. Also, the organization’s leaders realized they had a branding problem: Because they host dozens of music and dance performances but have no permanent space, audiences tend to attribute these performances to the venue, rather than to their former name, World Music/CRASHarts. Moreover, the name was cumbersome and included the vague term, “world music,” that can mean almost any type of music. In June 2019, the organization rebranded itself as Global Arts Live.

The purpose of this Discussion Guide is to help arts administrators, board members and arts practitioners working in different disciplines and with a range of budget sizes to better understand and apply lessons from another institution’s experience to their own. The guide can serve as a teaching aid for small-group discussions, as well as individual study. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the written and/or video versions of the story available at www.wallacefoundation.org/crasharts

This Discussion Guide was created in collaboration with the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP). Serving thousands of member organizations and individuals since 1957, APAP works to strengthen the field and advance careers through professional development, grant support, advocacy, networking and the annual APAP|NYC conference.

**Throughout this guide, Global Arts Live is referenced by their former name, World Music/CRASHarts, for consistency with the accompanying story and video.*

DOWNLOAD THE STORY AND VIDEO

Prior to completing this Discussion Guide, read the written story and watch the video that describe World Music/CRASHarts’ use of market research to more effectively target millennial audiences. The story and video are available on the following web page: www.wallacefoundation.org/crasharts



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

A THE AUDIENCE GOAL

- a.1. Just as World Music/CRASHarts identified that their current audiences were aging and that younger people were not taking their place, is your community facing similar issues? What factors could be contributing to the trends you are seeing?
- a.2. World Music/CRASHarts wanted to ensure they were able to attract a new audience while not alienating their current audience. Does your organization have similar challenges? How do you know?
- a.3. In what ways are World Music/CRASHarts' audience demographics similar or different to shifts in audience participation within your own organization?

B INITIAL ASSUMPTIONS

- b.1. What assumptions did World Music/CRASHarts make about their target audience?
- b.2. What assumptions might you be making about your target audience(s)? What assumptions are you making about your *current* audience(s)?
- b.3. World Music/CRASHarts assumed that it is more challenging for a presenting organization with no space of its own to build audiences because of brand confusion. While this may be true, how can “venue-less-ness” be an audience-building opportunity?
- b.4. What assumptions did World Music/CRASHarts make about their brand identity and its ability to captivate new audiences?
- b.5. What were some of the shortfalls of World Music/CRASHarts' brand identity? When you think about your brand identity, what do you see as its strengths and weaknesses?

C MARKET RESEARCH

- c.1. Of the assumptions World Music/CRASHarts made about their target audience, which were supported by market research?
- c.2. What data does your organization have that would help you identify the preferences of your target audience? In what other ways could you collect information?
- c.3. What specifically did World Music/CRASHarts hope to discover through market research?
- c.4. What research tools could your organization use to better understand your current audiences?

D THE FINDINGS

- d.1. World Music/CRASHarts aimed to address some of its brand identity issues by creating CRASHfest. What was the rationale for using a festival over other strategies, and how do you think this could have strengthened its brand?
- d.2. World Music/CRASHarts found that its name presented several branding problems. What were they?
- d.3. Take a look at your organization's name. How does it accurately reflect your organization, its goals and its brand? What are the challenges or liabilities with the name? What are your most pressing brand awareness issues and why? How might you address any confusion or shortfalls?

E DESIGNING NEW STRATEGIES

- e.1. What strategies did World Music/CRASHarts implement to attract their target audience? What new strategies have you tried?
- e.2. What did World Music/CRASHarts learn from their first CRASHfest? How did they use this feedback to improve the festival the following year?
- e.3. What did World Music/CRASHarts identify as the goals for the organization's new name?
- e.4. In the article, Mark Minelli of Minelli, Inc. says a new organizational name needs to be a beacon. "You don't want the brand to be the anchor trailing behind you. You want it to be the North Star...." How is your brand the anchor or the North Star for your organization?
- e.5. As it relates to engaging new audiences, how might your organization benefit from a process of exploration, experimentation, evaluation and refinement?
- e.6. What other experiences in conjunction with performances may strengthen your brand identity (décor, retail, venue location, food and beverage, audience giveaways, etc.)?

F IMPLEMENTATION

- f.1. World Music/CRASHarts was fortunate enough to find a venue partner through the suggestion of a research participant. What are other ways they/you can find community partners?
- f.2. Aside from putting their name up all around the venue, how could CRASHarts work with future venue partners/artists on promotion?
- f.3. Should World Music/CRASHarts consider hosting events at the same venues each year to bolster continuity and branding, or is their model of selecting a new location each time effective? Which model do you think might be more impactful in your community?
- f.4. Aside from funding resources, what are some barriers to implementing some of these ideas in your organization?



ASSESSMENT

- g.1. While attracting younger audiences was the first priority for World Music/CRASHarts, diversity was also a benefit. Which of these is a priority for your organization?
- g.2. Research showed that familiarity with artists was among the most important factors determining attendance. What are some ways you can familiarize your audiences with a new artist ahead of a show? How would you know if your efforts are on track?
- g.3. World Music/CRASHarts emailed surveys to past ticket buyers and conducted focus groups as part of their market research. What are other ways of getting the feedback you need?
- g.4. In what ways did World Music/CRASHarts capture contact information from attendees? Could you implement any of these practices at your performances? What are some ways to market future performances using the collected information?

ABOUT GLOBAL ARTS LIVE

Global Arts Live (formerly, World Music/CRASHarts) brings the best international music, contemporary dance and jazz from around the world to stages across Greater Boston. By putting the spotlight on artistic excellence from all corners of the globe and reflecting the diverse and vibrant community that is Boston, we aspire to transcend borders, cultivate community and enrich lives. To be as inclusive as possible, foster experimentation and support a diverse community of artists, Global Arts Live is not bound by walls. Instead, we feature outstanding artists in the most appropriate settings—from intimate 200-seat clubs to 2,500-seat theaters and everything in between. Each year, we present over 60 concerts in more than 15 different venues across the city. With just a T pass (Boston transportation pass), anyone can explore music and dance from Mali, Ireland, South Africa, Brazil, India, Colombia and beyond. Every

February, we transform the House of Blues into CRASHfest, a global music festival featuring more than 10 international artists performing music without borders. We launched our new name, Global Arts Live, in May 2019, to reflect our founding mission and our ongoing commitment to the power of live artistic expression to create resonant memories and forge shared understanding through shared experiences.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

The Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) is the national service, advocacy and membership organization for the performing arts presenting, booking and touring field and the convener of APAP|NYC, the world's leading gathering of performing arts professionals, held every January in New York City. Through professional development programs and member

services, APAP provides opportunities for artists, agents and managers, presenters, and producers to make the connections and gain the information, skills, and resources they need to make the arts a vibrant, valuable and sustainable part of everyday life. APAP supports and educates today's and tomorrow's performing arts leaders.

ABOUT BUILDING AUDIENCES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Global Arts Live is one of 25 performing arts organizations that participated in The Wallace Foundation's Building Audiences for Sustainability (BAS) effort, a six-year, \$52-million initiative aimed at developing practical insights into how arts organizations can successfully expand their audiences. Building Audiences for Sustainability (BAS) continues the foundation's 25-year history of support for the arts, with a particular emphasis on building audiences.

Representing a spectrum of organizations — from dance and opera companies to orchestras, theaters and multidisciplinary arts institutions — the selected partners receive financial and technical support from the foundation to research and develop their audience-building work. The evidence gathered from these organizations will be documented and analyzed by an independent team of researchers at

the University of Texas, Austin, providing valuable insights, ideas and information for the field.

The effort is structured around continuous learning. Each organization's audience-building project is informed by research, implementation, assessment and revision.

ABOUT THE WALLACE FOUNDATION

Based in New York City, The Wallace Foundation is an independent national philanthropy dedicated to fostering improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and the vitality of the arts for everyone. It seeks to catalyze broad impact by supporting the development, testing, and sharing of new solutions and effective practices. At www.wallacefoundation.org, the foundation maintains an online library about what it has learned, including knowledge from its current efforts aimed at: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement, helping selected cities make good afterschool programs available to more children, expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens, providing high-quality summer learning programs to disadvantaged children, enriching and expanding the school day in ways that benefit students, and helping arts organizations build their audiences.

If you are interested in learning more about using market research to better understand your audiences, ***Taking Out the Guesswork: Using Research to Build Arts Audiences*** is a practical guide to conducting market research with low-cost solutions applicable to organizations of all sizes and disciplines. Download the free guide along with other Wallace resources here.

This marks the fifth resource in the Discussion Guide Series. The full series can be accessed at www.wallacefoundation.org/buildingaudiences

