



photo by Jamie Bosworth

Tygress Heart Shakespeare Company, Portland, OR: "Twelfth Night" with Michael Fisher, Julie Gebron interpreting

Audience Development And Marketing

For most people, the decision to participate in cultural events is effortless; decide to go, then go. Potential patrons and visitors with disabilities must have that same choice or freedom to choose. This handbook's goal is to guide cultural administrators toward planning for inclusion so that people with disabilities can be full participants wherever they go for arts and cultural activities.

Another barrier to inclusion is attitude. If an organization does not communicate a welcoming environment to its community, the community's perception of the organization will not be positive.

Invite, Welcome and Respect

To develop any new audience, cultural organizations should take four essential steps:

1. Invite
2. Welcome
3. Respect
4. Repeat the process.

“We consider inclusive environments an opportunity for audience building and better constituency service. The New York State Council on the Arts formed an access advisory committee of staff, council members and people from the field (including artists with disabilities) to help us develop a three-year plan that would enhance the usability of the arts for all New Yorkers. We asked our arts organizations to tell us what they had already done and what they thought they needed to do. We also asked them how we could help. The most frequent request from the field was for information and resources. As a result we added a section on universal planning and accessibility to our Web site; we instituted an e-mail address you can use to receive information on accessibility; we began a regular column on accessibility in FYI; and we convened 17 workshops on accessibility around the state.”

Nicolette B. Clarke, Executive Director, New York State Council on the Arts

Build relationships outside the office and at the potential patron's or visitor's own premises. From there, develop a network of interested individuals and groups, then bring them into the organization's space and involve them in its activities. Go beyond legal obligations and think about the benefits and advantages of exemplary accessibility.

Ignoring potential audiences does not make good sense. Accessibility allows organizations to tap new audiences and to keep established audiences longer.

Develop trust and win the confidence of potential patrons and visitors who have disabilities so that they will become and continue to be part of the organization's audience. Invest time and energy building the organization's credibility. Commit to becoming a cultural organization that is welcoming and inclusive. Remember that audience development requires persistence, consistency, patience and time.

Basic Strategies and Tools for Marketing Accessibility

- Use the cultural organization's regular advertising and marketing materials to promote accessibility.
- Target specific groups. Identify organizations that provide services or work with people with disabilities and educate these groups about the cultural organization's programs.
- Be sure that communication instruments are fully accessible, including Web site and print materials.
- Include accessibility information in all marketing materials from brochures and posters to television and radio ads to Web sites and e-mail and listservs (e-mail-based mailing lists). Include as much detailed information as possible or at a minimum, always include a basic accessibility statement. For example:



“The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts welcomes patrons with disabilities.”

- Promote accessible features and programs with detailed, welcoming information. For example:

“Krannert Center is nationally known as a leader in accessibility because of our wide range of services. Krannert Center offers wheelchair and easy access seating in all theatres, plus usher assistance in getting from the parking lot to your seats. Infrared hearing amplification systems also are available in all four theatres. We will gladly arrange for a sign-language interpreter for any performance, and the ticket office can be reached by TTY for patrons

who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech impaired. For patrons who are visually impaired, we provide large print or braille programs plus audiotaped versions of our calendars and brochures. Three weeks advance notification for accommodations is requested. For more information call our patron services manager at (217) 333-9716 or (217) 333-9714 (TTY).”

- Do not overlook the powerful tool of “word of mouth” advertising. Promote accessibility through the staff and volunteers who have contact with the public—receptionists, docents, tour guides, speakers, information center workers, ticket sellers, house managers, ushers, board members and even other audience members.
- Launch a full-scale effort to inform existing and potential audiences, visitors, patrons and participants. Let them know that the program and facility are accessible and that the organization welcomes the patronage and involvement of people with disabilities.

Targeting a Specific Population or Group

Begin by involving people from the target group in the cultural organization’s efforts. They will provide the accessibility coordinator with advice, recommendations and introductions to members of the local community. Target agencies and organizations that are by and for people with disabilities with information they can share with their constituents. For example, when captioning is provided for a lecture, notify the local Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) organization or a similar organization.

- Compile mailing and e-mail lists of local service agencies, organizations by and for people with disabilities, schools, membership groups and social clubs.
- Search the Internet and the phone book for organizations and programs for people with disabilities. Obtain recommendations and referrals from accessibility advisory committee members.
- Use access symbols or pictograms that have meaning to people the organization wishes to attract as shorthand to indicate that accessible accommodations and services are available. Be advised that using these symbols promises accessibility to an organization’s facilities and programs.
- Create an information fact sheet, brochure, booklet or an accessibility map of the entire facility and all programs, accessibility features, services, accommodations, policies, procedures and how to take advantage of the accessibility features.
- Circulate accessibility information to everyone in the organization—include it in new employee packages and distribute to all staff, volunteers, docents, interns, directors, designers, performers and to patrons and visitors.
- Show up, support and be a visible presence in the community. Have the organization’s staff invited to speak at meetings, conferences and events;

set up booths and displays; and distribute literature. Be proactive. Do not just wait for people with disabilities to seek out the organization.

- Learn from the concerns and issues that people bring to the organization's attention. Do not make promises the organization cannot keep. Do not be afraid to say you do not know, but always be ready to find out.

And, finally, do it all again, and again and again. Audience development requires persistence, consistency, patience and time.

Useful Tools

Writing and Speaking about People with Disabilities and Older Adults

Always refer to a person first, rather than a disability; this emphasizes a person's worth and abilities. Vocabularies change constantly, but the following five "Never Uses" are here to stay.

- Never use the word "handicapped"; the word is "disability."
- Never use a disability as an adjective. It is not a blind writer, but a writer who is blind. Focus on the person, not the disability.
- Never use "special"; this separates the individual from the group. For example, information is not required regarding the "special needs of the group," but "needs of the group."
- Never use euphemisms, such as "physically challenged" or "handicapable." These are condescending.
- Never use labels: "the disabled," "the blind," "the deaf," "A.B.s" (able-bodied), "T.A.B.s" (temporarily able-bodied) or "normal." Labeling people is never acceptable.

Affirmative	Negative
People with disabilities A disability	The handicapped The impaired The disabled The unfortunate
Person without disabilities Non-disabled person	Able bodied Normal person (This implies a person with a disability is not normal.)
Person who is blind Person who is partially sighted or has low vision	The blind
Person who is deaf Person who is hard-of-hearing	The deaf or deaf mute Suffers a hearing loss (“Suffers” dramatizes a disability.)

Affirmative

Negative

Person who uses a wheelchair
Person with limited mobility

Wheelchair bound
Confined or restricted to a wheelchair
(People use wheelchairs for mobility and freedom.)

Person who has muscular dystrophy
Person who has multiple sclerosis
Person who had polio

Stricken by MD
Afflicted by MS
Polio victim
(“Stricken,” “afflicted,” and “victim,” all imply helplessness, and emotionalize and sensationalize a person’s disability.)

Person with mental retardation

The retarded

Person with learning disabilities

The learning disabled

Older person
Older adult
Mature adult

The aged
The elderly
Senior citizen










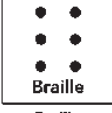


Person of short stature
Little people

Dwarf or Midget
Diminutive person

Disability Access Symbols

The 12 symbols at right may be used to promote and publicize accessibility of places, programs and other activities for people with various disabilities. These symbols help advertise access services to customers, audiences, staff and other targeted populations.

Language accompanying the symbols should focus on the accommodation or service, not on who uses it. For example, “Ramped Entrance” may accompany the wheelchair symbol. This is important because individuals with wheelchairs use ramps, but so do people with baby strollers and luggage. Language that fosters dignity is important, too. For example, “Reserved Parking” or “Accessible Parking” may be used with the wheelchair symbol to indicate parking spaces designated for people with disabilities.

		
Accessibility	Assistive Listening Systems	Closed Captioning
		
Large Print	Sign Language Interpreted	Audio Description
		
Open Captioning	Telephone Typewriter (TTY)	Access (Other Than Print or Braille) for Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision
		
Braille	Volume Control Telephone	Information

How to Communicate a Disability-Friendly Message

The following questionnaire should be easy to pass after reading this chapter. The following is adapted and used with permission from The Solutions Marketing Group SMG, 2334 South Rolfe Street, Arlington, VA 22202, www.disability-marketing.com.

While people with disabilities may require the use of an auxiliary aid or accommodation for independence, they also purchase the same products and want the same experiences as non-disabled consumers. Statistics indicate that organizations that include people with disabilities in their ads attract more people with disabilities and sell more products. They also get positive feedback from both people with and without disabilities.

Q. If an organization includes people with disabilities in general market ads, there's no need to advertise in disability specific publications or Web sites.

True False

A. False: Including people with disabilities in general market advertising is a first step in creating a disability-friendly message. However, an organization solidifies its credibility by making an investment in the disability community. This is accomplished by advertising in publications, Web sites and by sponsoring and attending conferences that are targeted at people with disabilities. Targeted ads must demonstrate that an organization understands the needs of people with disabilities.

Q. What must an organization do to effectively serve people with disabilities?

- A. Conduct disability awareness and customer service training sessions for employees.
- B. Wait until a lawsuit has been filed by a person or disability organization.
- C. None of the above.

A. Organizations must perfect their internal as well as external operations. Equip employees to serve people with disabilities effectively. Provide training so employees develop familiarity when interacting with people with disabilities.

Q. An organization should test market approaches and events, programs and services to people with disabilities.

True False

A. True: When creating new marketing approaches and programs, always include people with different disabilities within the development team. They are most familiar with their needs, uses for a program or service and the possibility for multiple applications by people with different disabilities. An organization that is serious about pursuing people with disabilities should never make marketing or program development decisions without testing the marketing approach and obtaining input to shape the strategy.

RESOURCES

Tools for Marketing

The Disability Access Symbols Project

The Graphic Artists Guild Foundation with support from the National Endowment for the Arts produced a collection of access symbols which can be ordered by mail, or downloaded.

Graphic Artists Guild Foundation

90 John Street, Suite 403

New York, NY 10038-3202

(800) 500-2672 voice

execdir@gag.org

www.gag.org/resources/das.html

“Guidelines for Writing and Reporting About People with Disabilities”

These guidelines represent the current consensus among disability organizations regarding preferred terminology and suggestions for appropriate ways to describe people with disabilities. For a complimentary brochure send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

RTC/IL Publications

University of Kansas

4089 Dole Building

Lawrence, KS 66045

(913) 864-4095 voice/TTY

(913) 864-5063 fax

rtcil@kuhub.cc.ukans.edu

www.lsi.ukans.edu/rtcil/guidelin.htm

Older Populations

National Council on the Aging (NCOA)

Although older people usually do not think of themselves as “disabled,” 20 percent of those over the age of 65 have some degree of disability. Older adults can benefit if people involved with cultural organizations understand their changing needs. Don’t overlook this large, lively and talented group of people as participants, volunteers and staff.

National Council on the Aging

409 Third Street, SW

Washington, DC 20024

(202) 479-1200 voice

(202) 479-6674 TTY

info@ncoa.org

www.ncoa.org