

Venue Managers Meeting

- **Client References**
 - Is this something that we need to look at?
 - More venues are doing this, especially for new clients
 - Discussion about rental requirements
 - Disseminating information to those who are actually in the space
 - How do we refuse a rental?
 - Public-owned venues have a hard time saying no to a rental – they are not allowed
 - Ensure you are following all human rights protocols
 - Remember controversial speech is not necessarily Hate Speech
 - Have a strong Code of conduct
 - Safety trumps all – if it is not safe don't do it
 - Document everything – if you have an issue with a rental client document everything to ensure you are covered to refuse service.
- **Small house profits – are there any?**
 - Discussion around the viability
 - Do any of us make any money or break even?
 - Those with multiple spaces depend on the bigger space and rentals to cover the losses on the presentation in the smaller spaces
 - Hard to do without sponsors and grants
 - Low numbers from COVID & current economy are hurting this slice of the sector
- **COVID Recovery**
 - Rentals are back up for the most part, but audience numbers are still down
 - Accessing funding is hard – some are gone, while others have shrunk
- **Discussion around setting rental rates**
 - Balancing the access needs vs. the costs
 - Knowing what other venues near you charge
 - Having various rental rates for commercial, not-for-profit, etc.
- **Issues with ticket scams**
 - Contests/raffles that are run for fake tickets
 - Scammers selling fake batches of tickets
 - Need to educate our patron on some of the security features we have

Box Office & Front of House

1:45 pm to 2:30 pm – Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Moderator – Chelsea Boan

AGENDA

1. Ticket pricing

Kathy Robinson – Port Theatre

- Rental Roadhouse
- Average Price \$50
- More Expensive prices \$70
- Pretty consistent throughout her region

Attendees are coming back.

Christine (Shadbolt) – Ticket buying is different – not planning as far out – tickets are selling closer to the performance – lots of door sales – mood-based purchases.

- Also allowing refunds for anyone who is showing COVID Symptoms.

Jessica (Chilliwack)– Is seeing more advance purchases by early bird discounts – instead of last-minute discounts and less stuck refund policy – building trust with audiences – but seeing more people purchase early.

Ticket-selling reports give data on how ticket sales are trending

- 25% off (Mid Nov – Dec 24)– promoting New Year's shows.
 - Patron Programs – 15% off – Chilliwack <https://www.chilliwackculturalcentre.ca/patron-program/>
 - Opt-in for Rental Clients for promotion but at 10% discounts or whatever the client wants.
- Under 30 Tickets / Under 40 Tickets - Rolling out under 30 at Rotary Centre for the Arts
- Benefit the struggling youth
 - Bring out younger groups – new scenes

Indigenous Discounts

- How do we best proceed with that as a community standard?

Software used:

One Note, Microsoft Office,
Theatre Manager
Spextrix

2. Junk fees crackdowns any impact on ticket sellers and handling fees

- Junk Fees Law – The ticket price (final price) - needs to be the advertised price going forward. This is to deal with Ticket Master. \$150 advertised vs \$200 at the door.

Marketing & Development

AI:

- RCA Kelowna: graphic designer integrating AI, can see possibilities.
- Aimee Venables using the help of ChatGPT for press releases
- Using ChatGPT for blog posts
- The consensus is that ChatGPT is helpful as a prompt for certain areas but not a replacement.

Audience Segmentation:

- RCA Kelowna using age groups.
- CCC U28 group affordable ticketing for under 28 years
- CCC Patron Programs
 - U28
 - Discover
 - Discover RED
 - Joy Years
- Marketed directly to high school and university students.
- Discussed the discounts to the patron programs and the benefits, signing up through box office.
- Evergreen has some specific ticketing advantages, student ticketing for post-secondary.
- Family series:
 - Evergreen
 - added additional show for the winter presentation.
 - Spring and summer activities are promoted together.
 - Venables Theatre
 - struggling to fill its 400-seat theatre with family shows.
 - circus camp may help with cross-promoting.
 - Tribute shows sell out
- Hard to get people out of their houses and get out to experience culture.
- RCA Kelowna working on a campaign with the city to encourage experiencing the cultural sector
- Behavioral and financial changes to all communities
- Chilliwack Cultural Centre
 - 30 days to use 50% off pre-season sale
 - Ticket guarantee
- Subscription Services
 - RCA Kelowna next season presentation 3 for and 5 for, mixing it up within the genres rather than a single genre
 - CCC doing a dance subscription in the new year
 - The Port did subscription service a few years ago, became tricky with cancellations (COVID), next season could be considered, has to be easy to understand.
 - Evergreen: early bird 30% off 8 shows, 4 pack, 6 pack etc. for the remainder, clients can pick their seats for the series. Matinee subscriptions: multiple purchases give deeper discounts. Variety subscriptions: include shows like dance, comedy etc. Cross-promoting with local craft breweries.

Difficult shows:

- Immerging
- International

New Audience Outreach:

- Evergreen: no longer have print (newspaper) options locally, using transit, using visual and digital, direct marketing with newsletters, building volunteer base for postering.
- RCA Kelowna: postering is difficult as not a lot of surfaces, have a partnership with Staples, keeps cost down, digital, email/newsletter, google ads and social media.
- The Port: using the newspaper to do “impress branding”.
- CCC: still using a lot of print (newspaper), use radio ads, we have discounts as sponsorships.

Fundraiser Events not happening as much.

CCC cancelled the fall fundraiser.

The big notes are:

- Where do we put the resources (staff)?
- Has to be strategically planned.
- Donor event after a show.

Technical & Production notes

Here are the brief notes from the production / technical session.

1: Safety

Worksafe is knocking on the door and doing site inspections (3 of the 6 venues represented)

WCB likes a proactive venue, which is aware of its issues and working towards resolution, rather than not being aware and forcing a write-up (7 in 1 venue).

WCB: looking at missed JOHSC meetings or minutes from meetings (get that paperwork done!)

Catwalk railings and mid-rails, Fall Arrest from catwalks if needed.

First Aid: it's good if all crew/staff are OFA 1 trained, but regulations required someone/a position NAMED AND POSTED as the First Aid person in case.

If there are safety orders for modifications, there is no specific outside funding source to fix the issue: it's the General Operating Budget of the venue/ company.

Maybe govt grants for facility upgrades, but that is a multi-year process.

How to prep for a WCB visit?

Do a building inspection, look at it with fresh eyes, have someone else walk your venue

Note every deficiency, blocked door, missing extinguisher,

Shared a draft version of a building inspection document designed for Performing Arts Venues (15 pages)

When to inspect?

(1 venue: Yearly for Chain Motors / Lifts/pit lifts as per regulation; Monthly walk around for all venues.)

Building inspections don't need to happen all at once; could do in segments or sections every 3 - 4 months, to break up time commitment.

Also: empower staff to bring up safety issues / broken equipment. Listen to their expertise and experience.

Have money available to FIX IT RIGHT AWAY, or remove it from service and replace it.

Training of New Hires for Safety:

Yes

Most venues are doing orientations in the building, job expectations;

Paid time for training

Some venues are paying for training courses (first aid, elevated work platforms, Fall Arrest) as well as staff hourly wages.

Daily top-of-call safety briefings for staff/crew; can include rental clients as well.

First Aid:

Some venues are required only FOA 1 level in-house; others are FOA 2 level.

Some venues have all staff (hourly/full time, production and admin) trained of OFA 1

Some venues have OFA staff, plus OFA 2 in the lobby area during events; can request of renters to supply OFA 2 as well, for their # number of staff.

WCB wants to see a designated, named, posted position or person as the First Aid Person.

1 employer = Stage Door Person is Safety Office / first aid.

2. Staffing Issues.

Question about wages, and attracting staff.

Some wages were mentioned, but our group ranged from Maple Ridge, Kelowna, West Van, Vancouver & UBC, and Nanaimo.

City and Location (West Van, Maple Ridge, UBC) have some effect on what is a “reasonable” wage (for distance travelled). The fact 1 employer is a charity, and FT staff are 20% less than typical, isn’t an argument:

- 1) all performing arts = charity
- 2) technicians’ rent and bills don’t accept a 20% discount because we work in the arts.

Venue rates:

\$22 – \$26

\$26 - \$31 (\$38 for a 10-year employee, “ATD” ability)

\$39 - \$42 Civics

Chan - \$20 for Usher, \$27 for acting FOH Coordinator (hourly staff in supervisor position)

Chan - \$28 for basic stage tech, \$32 for console op / acting head of department, heads are \$35 - \$39

That’s my notes.

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