Introduction

Relationship marketing and audience retention have implications in terms of authenticity. The importance of this matter is predicated on the view that the search for authenticity is one of the main drivers for building relationships and retaining audiences in cultural organizations. It is also predicated on the view that the arts represent a dynamic and increasingly important arena for expressing identity. It is audiences which provide the basis for building relationships. Audiences can be formed from local and tourist segments of the market. Building relationships with cultural audiences can have major impacts on audience retention. However, it is an area little researched in the arts, although recognized as important in tourism research.

There are three key assumptions about the arts and about consumer experiences on which relationship marketing research rests. First, arts audiences desire authentic experiences (Cohen 1988; Prentice 2001). Authenticity is defined as a higher level of cultural experience for the audience provided by spiritual fulfilment and self-actualization through participation in arts events and experiences. In other words, audiences are taken 'back stage' rather than relying on only 'front stage' views. Authenticity is evident in the object, the consumer experience of brand essence and in identity construction and confirmation through physical attributes. Object authenticity is when objects have a link to the special world and when they physically resemble something that is authentic, whereas staged authenticity presents the audience with a controlled experience. Some argue that museums, heritage centres and cultural performances provide a controlled and hence 'staged' experience (Higham and Hinch 2004), while others see these organizations as providing an 'evoked' authenticity (Prentice 2001). We follow Prentice (2001) in arguing that the arts generally and museums particularly provide evoked authenticity.

As the provenance of the word ‘authenticity’ is in the museum, where objects are what they appear to be, it is appropriate to use the words ‘evoked authenticity’ for cultural experiences (Cohen 1988). Here audiences participate in a less contrived experience. Consumers’ participation is perceived to be authentic when the object and its ownership have provenance, thus providing an ideal standard and preservation of brand heritage (Leigh et al. 2006). This has been argued particularly strongly in relation to museum audiences (Prentice 2001), but is equally true for other types of arts audiences, such as in the performing arts and at festivals and events.
Evoked authenticity is seen to be offering an experience that has provenance in that it is providing knowledge and liminal experiences of the world, whether old or modern, such that a true engagement with a culture is evoked in audience members.

This leads to the second point. Marketing strategy in arts organizations is in a period of major reassessment. Until recently, the focus of both organizational energies and funding support was directed at product development. While this focus has allowed the development of a world-class product, creativity and innovation need to be extended to the managerial realm for further organizational development. Since the late 1990s, there has been a shift in focus to relationship marketing in arts organizations. This change in focus is being encouraged to ensure the long-term sustainability of arts organizations. Attention is being directed at building new audiences and at consolidating existing audiences. While attention has been directed at developing loyalty ladders for arts audiences (Rentschler et al. 2002), little work has been done in identifying the types of experiences that arts organizations desire.

Third, authenticity is contrasted with commodified experiences which lack depth, originality and a sense of place. Commodification is seen to destroy the authentic and replace it with contrived, staged authenticity (Cohen 1988). Commodification in this chapter implies cultural activities spoiled by commercial relationships. In contrast, authentic experiences are seen to be true to the experience intended. For example, in the museums' literature, Disneyland is often cited as a commodified experience, but, in the marketing and tourism literature, there is now recognition that Disneyland has developed to the point of becoming an authentic experience which is representative of North American culture (Higham and Hinch 2004; Wang 1999).

Relationship marketing is not enough any more. Authenticity is the way to go. This scan of the literature, while enlightening, is far too scant in relation to a new dimension to relationship marketing. Future research needs to examine in more depth the authentic arts experience. Are there differences in the art authenticity experience of museum and gallery visitors, art investors, cultural tourists, orchestral music or theatre aficionados? Do youth market segments differ from more mature audience segments? Is authenticity affected by the experience, information, knowledge of arts audiences or the context of the arts experience? Does authenticity only occur at the satisfaction of higher-level needs? Or is it an experience that can occur with satisfying lower-level needs? Is authenticity exhibited in audience values or audience experiences? This new field of knowledge is deserving of further research.

This chapter explores the theme of evoked authenticity through relationship marketing – the development of audiences. The chapter applies authenticity to the arts organization context, identifying the changing environment which has led to recognition of the importance of marketing. It then explains the concepts of relationship marketing and its pertinence to authenticity. Finally, the chapter presents a new model of relationship marketing, not simply a loyalty ladder. The structure is modelled as a dynamic conceptualization of the relationships between audience needs and artists' needs to assist audience retention outcomes and the sustainability of arts organizations.

Background

Relationship marketing is defined as an association or connection between two parties which benefits both of them by creating trust in the quality of services offered (Garbarino and Johnson 1999; Shirastava and Kale 2003). Its focus is on long-term relationships rather than short-term transactions. With particular relevance for the arts, building relationships is about creating links between producers, distributors and consumers of art – whether contemporary
art, performance art or event (Chong 2005). Importantly, Chong argues that art consumption is inherently experiential and that the relationship between consumer and product has a cumulative effect on future consumption: ‘The more you know, the more you appreciate it. This is to say that a self-reinforcing system exists: arts consumption increases with the ability to appreciate art, which is a function of past arts consumption. Satisfaction from arts consumption rises over time’ (2005: 87).

According to Chong, the arts consumer has a relational bond to both the current product(s) and to the future production and consumption of like products. This is rationalized through personal taste and is realized through the stakeholder advantage: ‘Collectors of contemporary art, who are buying on personal taste, can have an impact on shaping the permanent collections of museums of modern art, which may represent national views of taste through donations of art works’ (Chong 2005: 99).

Experience suggests that managers in arts organizations are very interested in the concept of audience retention but need tools to judge its impact on their own organization. This view is reinforced by government interest in arts organization sustainability, as in many western countries the funding dollar is being spread across more nonprofit arts organizations and those organizations are being asked to find a greater amount of money by means other than direct government grants.

The important feature of relationship marketing, according to Petkus (2004), is its memorability in experience-based consumption. This point links relationship marketing to authenticity. Following Cohen (1988) Leigh et al. (2006) situate authenticity as a personalized and experiential phenomenon for consumers. We call it evoked authenticity after Prentice (2001). They call it existential authenticity. With particular relevance to the performing arts, Leigh et al. outline Wang’s (1999) evoked authenticity as ‘activity based’, arguing that it shares important links with Urry’s (1991) proposition that, for postmodern consumers, the ‘staged experience’ represents the most authentic experience, as they recognize that authenticity now only appropriates a sense of reality.

Leigh et al. summarize Urry’s evoked authenticity as follows (but name it existential authenticity, as explained above):

Existential authenticity is activity driven and coincides with postmodern consumers’ quest for pleasure and fun. This form of authenticity involves personal or subjective feelings activated by the liminal process of activities [. . .] In such liminal experiences, consumers feel more able to express and be true to themselves than in everyday life.

(Leigh et al. 2006: 483)

According to the authors, consumers’ desire for authenticity stems from a drive for self-actualization, self-creation and self-realization: ‘Hence, in the context of existential authenticity, individuals feel they are in touch both with a “real” world and with their “real” selves.’

This is further emphasized in the work of Lewis and Bridger (2001) who described the process of consumer need for self-actualization and quest for authenticity. They used four elements of the new consumers – individualistic, involved, independent and informed – to build a new model of authentic loyalty based on authenticity. Authenticity is defined as a product or service considered authentic if it can be trusted to do what is claimed for it (Lewis and Bridger 2001: 194). Importantly they described the personalization of authenticity arising out of each individual’s personal experience and response. ‘One cannot mass produce authenticity. Rather, it has to be introduced on an almost person-to-person basis, with individual needs, desires, expectations and interests being fully accounted for’ (Lewis and Bridger 2001: 194).
194). Audiences are consumers, and arts audiences clearly represent Lewis and Bridger’s ‘new consumer’. They have moved up Maslow’s pyramid of human needs, seeking personal fulfilment in artistic experiences. They are intent on closing the gap between the person they are (the real self), and the person they want to be (the ideal self). This self-actualization is the outcome of the quest for authenticity. Lewis and Bridger claim that if the producer can meet the needs of consumers with authentic experiences (products and services), then authentic loyalty is achieved, which transcends the pseudo-loyalty given by other consumers, easily tempted by better offers. The shift in the analysis of authenticity reflects a shift in focus from the authenticity of objects to the authenticity of subjects, and to the links between these two fields of relationship marketing and authenticity. This model of relationship marketing is proved in research for this chapter.

Critics argue that authentic experience is destroyed by staged experience, allowing audiences only to experience ‘commodified culture’ (MacCannell 1973). This argument has been echoed many times, particularly in the heritage and museums sector (e.g. Macdonald and Alsford 1995). It is often heard that museums are being ‘Disneyfied’, always used as a negative term to denote a staged authenticity which degrades the real purpose of museums that is to deal in the collection and exhibition of authentic objects. The performing arts parallel is manifested in unwelcome breaks from tradition, especially in relation to contemporary or abstract art breaking previous ‘rules’ of performance or painting. There have been particularly robust arguments on the authenticity of indigenous art, which has broken away from tradition and thus moved from anthropological object to high art, using ancient symbols but modern techniques (Myers 2002).

These changes in relation to indigenous Australian art provide one example of more flexible interpretations of authenticity where it is appreciated that change can occur and objects can remain authentic, often through negotiation. This view is supported by research on tourism and authenticity (Higham and Hinch 2004). This view is consistent with Cohen’s (2000) view that authenticity may be ‘emergent’, thus reflecting the gradual growth of authenticity through the eyes of the audience. Higham and Hinch (2004) give the example of Disneyland, used as a term so disparagingly in museums, becoming an ‘emergent’ form of authentic US culture. Museologists would be appalled to consider views on emergent authenticity as being paralleled in both indigenous art and in Disneyland!

With tourism initiatives encouraging the development of authentic experiences, with a shift in focus to the importance of marketing for artistic success, and with Disney-style theme shows and blockbusters overtaking subscription activity, the need to review arts organizations’ approaches to building audience loyalty through evoked authenticity is urgent (Gill 1996; McLean 1995; Prentice 2001). Blockbuster entertainment shows have customer care and entertainment values at the forefront of their ethos, even if significant authors do not consider their entertainment as authentic. Arts organizations are competing with these events for the leisure dollar of their audiences, and while the leisure environment is expanding and developing, competition is also increasing (McLean 1995).

This chapter offers a perspective on relationship marketing for arts organizations which may be a solution to the issues identified above. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, the authors surveyed over 500 audience members and held three discussion groups in Melbourne and four in Brisbane, Australia, in 2006. These interviews were in the performing arts, with audiences, artists, producers, curators, administrators and industry stakeholders, such as consulates and government representatives. An overview of the results discussed below highlights strategies identified from the research in the field.
Research from the field

Arts organizations, such as orchestras, performing-arts centres and small performing companies, are facing financial pressures threatening their survival. This is a worldwide phenomenon. For example, performing arts centres cannot be sustained as venues for hire and are seeking to reinvent themselves to counter competition in the environment from other entertainments, be that a day at a tennis grand slam, viewing a new film or walking in botanical gardens.

The usual response by nonprofit arts boards and managers is to bemoan reduced government funding, suggesting that this funding is a responsibility of government for the purpose of maintaining the cultural integrity of the community. They also point to declining audiences as the traditional arts audience is ageing. But the marketing strategies adopted are usually flexible subscription packages, partnerships with non-classical music groups and non-traditional performers to attract new and younger audiences, and sending a reduced company on tour to attract regional audiences. None of these recognize the demands of the new consumer for authenticity and closer engagement. Our research outlines four significant challenges facing performing-arts organizations in the twenty-first century. It demonstrates how these challenges can be resolved through an enlightened approach to relationship marketing.

The four challenges are the reconfiguration of repertoire, competition from cinema and stadium rock concerts, technology-driven distribution channels, and the need for commercial business models based on new approaches to marketing.

The first is the challenge of repertoire. In the nineteenth century, access to concerts by a professional orchestra was very limited for most people (Philip 2004). It was highly unusual to have the opportunity to hear a work more than a few times in one person’s lifetime. Thus the repertoire was not well known by most people. This pattern changed with the growth of classical recordings, especially during the second half of the twentieth century. In these early years of the twenty-first century, audiences are faced with the opposite problem, a well-known but tired and overexposed repertoire, with many of the great works available in hundreds of versions. This homogeneity of interpretation is stultifying the artform and limiting musical development. As performing-arts audiences get older, there has been a decline in attendance numbers (Kotler and Scheff 1997; Kolb 2001). The temptation therefore is to offer an ageing audience the product they want, and to increase attendance in a minor way from this same demographic segment. Similar patterns of change and development have necessitated new ways of working in other performing-arts areas such as theatre, ballet and the venues themselves. Theatre companies present modern and challenging interpretations of classical works, modern dance companies partner with classical ballet companies and share choreographers and repertoire. Venues are opening up concert halls and proscenium theatre spaces for alternative arts product and audiences.

This has made the marketing for performing-arts organizations increasingly difficult. One success in the classical repertoire has been the Australian opera ensemble the Ten Tenors and the Italian Il Divo which have focused on the attractiveness of the tenor singer, by investigating and testing ways of changing and reconfiguring the repertoire, while maintaining the essence of the tenor voice.

This leads to the second challenge: new competition. This performing-arts audience dilemma has taken place at a time when competition from other ‘art’ forms has been fierce: the large movie screen, the stadium rock concert, or both combined, can often give an audience a high-quality experience with musical substance. The didactic approach of the custodians of the orchestral and ballet tradition, for example, has resulted in a culture that is highly demanding of an audience. Incomprehensible scores, stark listening conditions and strict behaviour rules...
entice too few to make the experience viable economically. This does not mean that the only solution is to commercialize classical music or other performing arts as entertainment, but rather to seek multiple and nuanced solutions which will surprise and enthuse live and mediated audiences. The *Ten Tenors* international success derives from enveloping the new repertoire, presentation and distribution with a comprehensive audience development strategy (Arthurs 2004).

The third challenge is technology, which has opened up new possibilities in all areas of art and entertainment. It enables more spectacular events to reach more people while paradoxically producing work that can be more customized to individuals. In 2007 music can be broadcast to the world, yet pressed as small runs of CDs to suit a particular audience. It is anticipated that creative technological solutions to presentational modes will be fully embraced. This includes looking to other artform successes, such as film, where enveloping the audience in an immersive environment has proved irresistible (Arthurs and Vella 2003). Further innovative uses of technology, such as the use of projected live, recorded, preprogrammed and interactive images around the space and fully spatialized 3D audio will impact on music performance. There is also room for more theatrical experiences using technology, with better staging, lighting and stagecraft in both live and DVD environments (Arthurs and Vella 2000).

The fourth challenge is the development of new business models. New solutions need to be explored if the artform is to survive, artistically and economically. Research on cultural sustainability and productivity in the arts shows that sustainability is the point where the artistic effort is sufficiently supported by audiences such that the arts organization or artform is sustained for the next generation (Radbourne 2003). The challenge of globalization is a positive in terms of sustainability. The potential audience for performing arts has increased through the ability to distribute across the world. But it cannot be done merely by using the old product development and product extension models. Further research is required to investigate ways of presentation, direction of repertoire, medium of distribution, social patterns and future audience needs, including what is happening globally (Harding and Robinson 1999). Global markets themselves pose challenges for relationship marketing.

**Case study 1: new audiences for new orchestras**

As a process of developing a new orchestral model for the twenty-first century that embraced these four challenges, a test orchestra called Deep Blue was created. The experiment in Brisbane, Australia, explored new product development models in music which link the development of new repertoire in a responsive strategy to expressed audience needs and desires, guaranteeing a sustainable product. Deep Blue presented an eclectic selection of existing works and new compositions with projected visual images, player involvement and audience involvement, no conductor, no music stands and a shared performance and audience space.

Primary research through focus groups with the audience and the Deep Blue musicians, and through an audience survey, showed that the audience enjoyed the interaction between the performers and themselves, positively describing the experience of no barriers, the live enthusiasm, the feeling of engagement and stretching the boundaries of their relationship with music. The performance mirrored the changes and challenges of life in the early twenty-first century. Participants talked about the animation of the musicians generating energy, and the appeal of the physical staging. However, the audience felt that the repertoire in the test orchestra was not innovative, as it included familiar elements of classical repertoire and rock performances. The survey revealed that music is a personal experience provoking an emotional experience, yet participated in with friends. This audience claimed that they would not buy a
CD of the performance, but that the venue, ambience and audience behaviour were strong contributors to the experience.

The Deep Blue musicians enjoyed the freedom, innovation, diversity and audience interactivity of this orchestral performance model. They wanted to be able to share intellectually, emotionally and physically with the audience, as the response factor was needed for their best performance. They revealed a lack of interaction with the other performers which was necessary to heighten their interaction with the audience. The musicians also wanted some ownership of, and involvement in, the production process. This calls for new thinking on the issues of intellectual property and content development. The findings from this early research pointed to some form of connectivity as critical to a new orchestral model.

Further audience research using the same survey questions and focus group questions was conducted with orchestral concert performances by the established Queensland Orchestra (TQO) in their classic ‘Maestro’ concert series presented in the state’s major concert hall, and in the early evening contemporary music series (sci-fi) presented at the city hall. There is an important difference between the TQO concert audiences and the Deep Blue audience in regard to their preferred style of music. While the Deep Blue audience had classical music as the highest selection, there was also a large number of people preferring jazz and rock music, while the TQO audiences predominantly preferred classical music. This shows that a choice of polystylistic music repertoire would be more of a success in a Deep Blue concert than in a TQO concert, given their different target audiences.

In all concerts, the musicians or performers were considered the best element of the performance. This indicates that irrespective of the different audience demographics, it was important for people to connect and engage with the performing artists. In fact, the TQO concerts had a higher percentage than the Deep Blue concert, which shows that traditional classical audiences still need to relate to the performers and this supports the attraction of attending a live event. If classical musicians were able to demonstrate a greater connection with their audience, rather than being hidden behind their music stands, this may help to increase audience numbers. This is also supported by the high popularity of well-known musicians/soloists and their ability to attract an audience. The fact that the Deep Blue concert did not score higher in this area is disappointing, as the role of the musicians was one of the main elements promoted in this concert.

Buying a CD/DVD of the performance was not a very high priority for the audiences of all concerts, highlighting that attending a live performance provides more of an ‘experience’. The data showed that the importance of context (venue, ambience, behaviour of audience) on the meaning of a performance was high for all the concerts, and can contribute to building loyalty for performances, orchestral or otherwise. Audiences attend concerts not just for the music, but for the holistic experience. There was a good response for all concerts concerning performer and audience interaction, supporting the need by audiences for authenticity and involvement. In fact, the Maestro audience scored highest for this question, indicating that interaction can be more fully developed for a traditional audience, as well as for the Deep Blue-style concert.

The influence of the audience’s social network was demonstrated by the way people find out about a concert and also in the way they attend a concert. Data suggested that the information need of the new performing arts consumer can be captured in the shared experience. Attending the concert with friends was the most popular way for all concert audiences and this information can be used to build relationship-marketing strategies.

One of the highest-rating questions was in relation to the role of the audience. Most participants indicated that they were an ‘emotional listener’. Although all the concert repertoire, venues and productions were quite different, it appears that an emotional connection was


Table 14.1 Orchestral audience responses to experiential authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Maestro concert</th>
<th>Deep Blue concert</th>
<th>Sci-Fi concert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of the audience in a musical performance nominated 'emotional listener'.</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A musical performance evokes an emotional response in the audience (mean score on scale 1–5).</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

established with the audience, irrespective of the style of music and performance. Self-actualization was therefore common for all music attendees. Respondents were asked to nominate the role of the audience in a musical performance from a list of six roles: spectator, emotional listener, passive listener, co-producer, active participant, or other. The highest response for every concert, that is, type of orchestral performance surveyed, was 'emotional listener'. Question 10 in the survey presented a series of statements with which respondents rated their agreement, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Statements covered the use of visual images in the performance, the influence of a person's musical background and experience, pre-performance information, the venue and ambience, the emotional response of the audience, and the interaction between audience and performers. The emotional response statement received significantly higher agreement than all the others (see Table 14.1)

These responses have been selected for this research because they directly explore authenticity. Musical preference, repertoire, age, education or occupation had no significant influence on responses.

Overall, all the concerts were a success based on the response that most participants would come again to such a performance. This suggests that all the concerts were correctly targeted for their respective audiences. A conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that different audience demographics provide niche markets with different expectations for authenticity. Relationship-marketing strategies which reflect this are most likely to sustain audiences and the company.

**Case study 2: new and diverse audiences for traditional venues**

A second case which embraced the four challenges is the creation of Mix It Up at the Arts Centre in Melbourne, Australia, in 2006, a partnership in creating new repertoire and new and diverse audiences with Multicultural Arts Victoria. Mix It Up was a diversified programme of local, national and international artists (800 in total) from 23 nationalities over 96 events. It attracted 160,000 visitors to the Arts Centre – 47,000 to major events plus a further 113,000 to the free exhibition Meeting Place Keeping Place. The innovative and successful repertoire led to two state government awards for leadership in public programmes and excellence in multicultural affairs. The research project that led to this case study was funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, the federal government's arts funding and advisory body. The strategy entailed seeking to meet audience needs through both product and audience development, guaranteeing a new approach for an organization which was seeking to diversify its activities (Rentschler 2006).

Research entailed interviews, focus groups and surveys with the musicians, artists, curators, administrators, wider stakeholders and audiences. Results showed that the audiences enjoyed the participation in the events and performances, the freedom to dance in theatres where seats
had been removed for this purpose and the representation of ethnic foods and wares in theatre foyers, things that had never been done before in the Arts Centre. Audiences positively described the sense of ‘theatre coming alive’ and ‘rocking’ to the music, breaking boundaries from the traditions of quiet audiences sitting in seats and clapping politely. Performances paralleled the changed tempo of life in the twenty-first century. Artists and other musicians talked about the enthusiasm, the full houses and the energy of the performances. Curators talked about the risks taken and the successes achieved: ‘the Arts Centre took a risk and I bless them for it’ said a music programme curator. Another said: ‘it [Mix It Up] brought a lot of young people into the Arts Centre who had never been before and that was a huge success.’

Mix It Up enabled international and local artists in diverse performance programmes to engage and excite new audiences and regular visitors alike. The programme was an organic, participatory learning experience for people from the Arts Centre and Multicultural Arts Victoria, their communities and stakeholders that addressed the need to confront competition in the performing arts.

In all performances and exhibitions, Mix It Up demonstrated the need to move beyond traditional methods and marketing channels to draw ethnic and minority audiences to the Arts Centre. Once there, audiences were delighted by experiencing the high-quality venues and production and the innovations used by the performers to entertain them. People commented on the connections made between performers and audience, irrespective of audience segment surveyed, illustrating the importance of connectivity with audience for authentic experiences.

Global markets themselves pose challenges for relationship marketing. This was certainly the case with Mix It Up. New ways of working and new marketing models emerged from the project by moving beyond the traditional channels used to market events, thus drawing in new audiences. As an administrator at the Arts Centre stated: ‘What we were agile enough to do in particular in the music was fairly quickly understand that the sort of marketing strategies that we had in place weren’t going to work for this market.’ Consequently, the large institution of the Arts Centre interacted with loosely assembled ‘business’ networks, linked by strategic alliances between partners. Expressed another way, the core institution was surrounded by satellite units to which functions were outsourced. Such arrangements allow small creatives to benefit from the superior management know-how of large institutions and conversely, large institutions to benefit from the flexibility and entrepreneurship of small creatives. The large institution has access to greater capital investment and distribution to mainstream markets. The small creatives have access to new ideas and grass-root networks, useful for a new type of street marketing.

One of the questions in the research asked audience members to rate their emotional response to performances attended. Interestingly, the emotional connection with the performances was significantly higher for the Mix It Up performances than for other Arts Centre performances. A challenging audience development argument is that it is about removing barriers to attendance to create audiences of the future. Creating an authentic experience to which people respond emotionally is part of meeting that challenge. The concerts, foyer entertainment and exhibition were unique in content and approach for Arts Centre events. Irrespective of whether the performance was from Africa, Brazil or Taiwan, or the style of performance, self-actualization through ‘exhilaration’ was approximated through Mix It Up events. Participants were asked to nominate how exhilarated they were at the events on a five-point scale (see Figure 14.1).

The graph shows that 82 per cent of audiences for the total performances were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ exhilarated on a five-point scale. The Canadian circus-cum-physical performance event, 7 Fingers, had audiences significantly more likely to have been left feeling very exhilarated (69 per cent), while Vive La Fiesta (26 per cent) and Cariba (22 per cent) audiences
had a lower propensity to have provided this rating. Indeed, audiences for Vive La Fiesta reported higher levels of feeling neither exhilarated nor bored (20 per cent) and somewhat or very bored (18 per cent). Feelings are very strongly linked with the impact that the performance had on audiences – those left feeling very exhilarated significantly more likely to consider the performance authentic overall. Of interest, females had a higher propensity than males to indicate they felt very exhilarated (51 per cent versus 37 per cent).

It was shown that the importance of context (venue, ambience, behaviour of audience) on the meaning of a performance was high for all the concerts, so this is an element that needs to be considered when judging authenticity of performances by audiences. Audiences attend performances not just for the music or acrobatics, but for the holistic experience. There was a strong response for all performances concerning performer and audience interaction, given the lively and engaging events that took place in the Arts Centre foyers, removing barriers between audience and performer, leading to rowdy, fun interaction between the two groups. Audience members surveyed said that the foyer 'rocked'. This supports the need by audiences for authenticity and involvement.

Overall, Mix It Up was a resounding success with a new round of performances planned for 2007. The results suggest that the performances were correctly pitched for the audiences targeted. Conclusions drawn from this case study suggest that different levels of involvement engage audiences to different levels of authenticity at different performances. Relationship-marketing strategies that reflect these differences are more likely to be successful with such a complex programme testing new ground.

**Conclusions and implications**

What has emerged from the research is that audiences are demanding, but discerning, and prepared to take risks if they can be involved. They want to participate and be free to express their engagement. They value creativity, innovation and the new technologies. But they want new repertoire and new musical and sensory experiences. They do not want to be removed from the production process. This directly represents Lewis and Bridger's definition of
authenticity: the desire to be involved in the process of production and consumption, wanting their own individual experience, making the decision to engage independently, and seeking information when making the decision to attend. The search for authenticity is a search for an original, unique and personal experience, that fulfils a spiritual quest for actualization which is the 'emotional response' role attributed to and by the audience.

The authors propose the following new definition of authenticity in relationship marketing as it applies to the arts. Authenticity in arts marketing is the evoked experience of each audience member engaged by artists and arts marketers to enable self-actualization.

Relationship marketing can influence sustainability if the audience is at the core of the production model. Audiences should not be removed from the development process. Musicians, actors, dancers and the other creative artists (director, composer, conductor, sound technician, lighting technician, film and image maker, projectionist, editor) are at once producers and consumers, and are also core to the business model. The research with models of twenty-first-century performance has established that without audience and performer connectivity, the performance does not work, nor is content created. Likewise, the distribution is multidimensional, serving a multidimensional space inhabited by multidimensional consumers.

A new model of relationship marketing in the arts is based on the flow of inputs and outputs for an outcome of audience retention. This new model of relationship marketing is not a simple loyalty ladder. It requires effort in the relationship-building to create the conditions for evoked authenticity. The effort requires immersive participation in the production and consumption of the performing-art event, as well as engagement bringing fulfilment to artists. Satisfying both needs provides the outcome of audience loyalty and artistic sustainability.

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