



Survey of Current Audience Engagement Practices

Research Commissioned by Dance/USA,
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Executive Summary

- The Survey of Current Audience Engagement Practices was conducted as an initial research component for Dance/USA's *Engaging Dance Audiences* initiative, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation.
- The core aims of this survey were to provide a snapshot of current audience engagement practices occurring in the dance field, and to gather insights about the field's philosophy towards audience engagement and thoughts on its future role to serve dance.
- The survey was open to Dance/USA members and non-members. Completion of the survey was required as part of the initial application for the grant component of *Engaging Dance Audiences*.
- A total of 232 responses were received. 96% of respondents were Dance/USA organization-members, and 64% of Dance/USA's organization-members responded to the survey.
- Dance producers, presenters and service organizations responded to questions about:
 - Types of engagement activities undertaken, and barriers faced
 - Planning and responsibility for, and evaluation of, engagement programs
 - Perspectives on "audience engagement" and "audience development"
- The survey asked about engagement activities organized around a dance performance, as well as general engagement activities that are not directly related to a performance. However, the survey questions emphasized performance-specific activities because they are thought to comprise the bulk of current audience engagement efforts. The survey inquires about performance-specific engagement activities that occur prior to, during, and after a performance.
- Although the survey does not include specific questions about avant-garde engagement practices, such as recruiting individuals from the street to be audience members, it includes a number of open-ended questions designed to capture information about the broad range of audience engagement activity happening in the field. Where appropriate in this report, we include verbatim responses from the survey's open-ended questions for illustrative purposes.

Executive Summary - Survey Results

- The survey results suggest that respondents are in a period of experimentation with new audience engagement practices.
 - 80% of respondents reported doing five or more different types of engagement activities leading up to performances within the past three seasons.
- Dance organizations represented in the survey appear to be in a phase of rapid development and adoption of activities and programs aimed to engage audiences. Most of these activities and programs are of several distinct formats:
 - Most pre-performance engagement activities are about listening and watching, or self-guided information acquisition. The most common activities include conventional practices of artist lecture/demonstration, master classes and open rehearsals.
 - Over half of all respondents reported providing audiences with spoken introductions of dance pieces from the stage at least once over the past three seasons. We do not know if this represents a trends towards more interpretive assistance, although we suspect so. Besides introducing pieces from the stage, few respondents have experimented with engagement activities during performances.
 - Most post-performance activities are “in-person” discussions - facilitated or not - although some online opportunities are provided.
- Fewer organizations reported offering general audience engagement activities compared to those who report offering performance-specific activities; however, on average, nearly two-thirds of respondents reported offering general activities. Producing organizations reported offering general activities more often than presenting organizations (71% vs. 51%, respectively).
 - The most common examples of general activities include: workshops/master classes, panels/lectures/discussions, open studio/rehearsals, social events with artists, community outreach performances, blogging, school-based activities, membership clubs/social groups, and email blasts.

Executive Summary - Survey Results continued

- Survey results suggest that a gap between presenters' needs and artists' capacities results in a barrier to offering engagement activities.
 - Nearly half of dance presenters identified 'artist availability or lack of interest' to be a problem. Encouragingly, four out of five respondents said that they have seen a new awareness and improved responsiveness to audience engagement programs amongst artists and managers, although some are concerned that this phenomenon is funder-driven and not organically motivated.
- Respondents' reported outcomes for audience engagement reinforce the EDA initiative's approach to evaluating these programs through *impact assessment* (for more information, see *Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance*, WolfBrown, 2007).
 - 68% of respondents report that engagement activities are undertaken primarily 'to heighten the impact of the audience experience'. The next most commonly reported outcomes of audience engagement were oriented toward audience development - increase audience loyalty (45%) and size (42%).
- Looking towards the future, over one-third of respondents expressed desires to develop new approaches to engage and connect with audiences, particularly through technology. Some express a desire to further integrate engagement programs into their everyday operations, while others express a hope to shift public opinion about dance as a relevant art form.

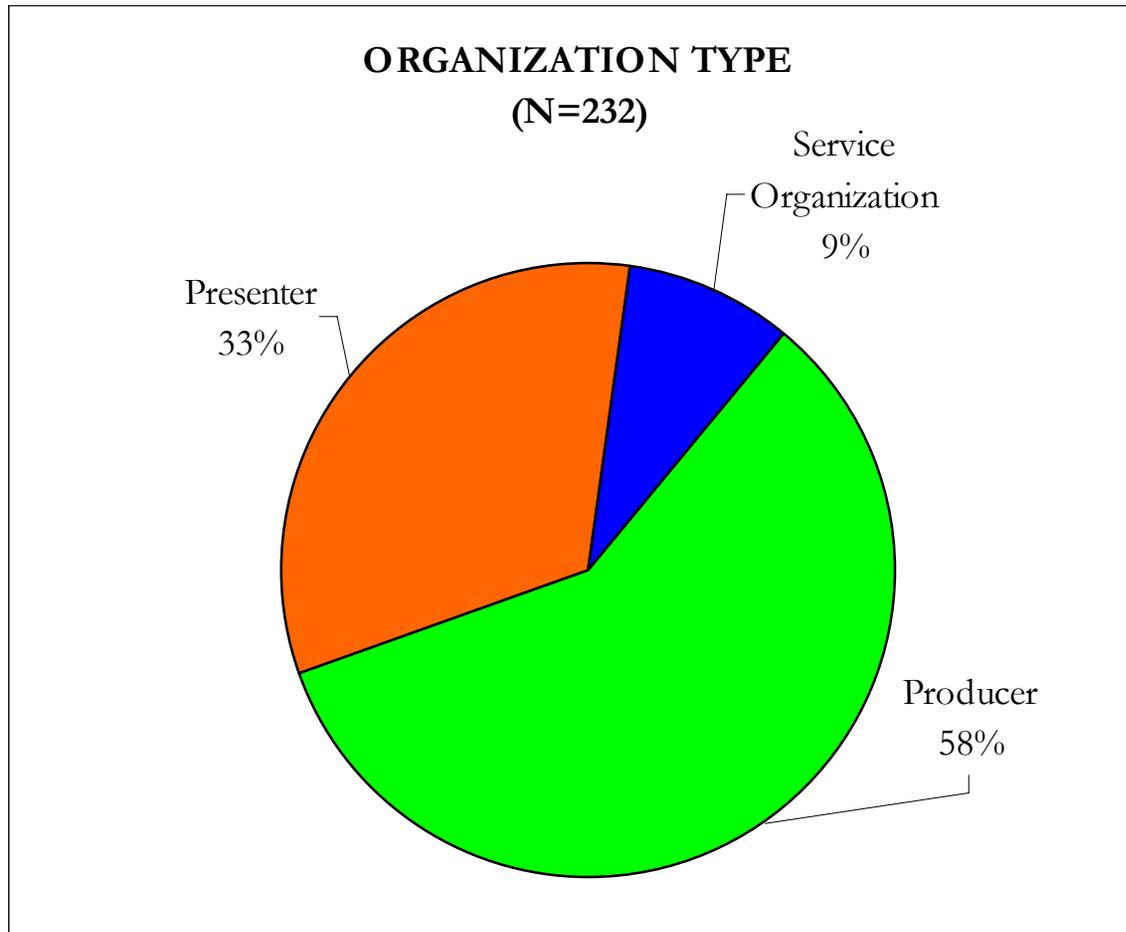
Questions for Further Consideration

- In past research, WolfBrown has observed that audience members who come early for pre-performance talks or stay afterwards for post-performance discussions are generally the ones who are already knowledgeable about the art form. The larger challenge, therefore, is figuring out how to engage audience members who are *not* knowledgeable about the art form, and who will *not* come early or stay afterwards. For them, the engagement must come during the performance, electronically or in some other form. What forms are effective?
- 64% of respondents indicated that they have conducted assessments of their engagement programs. This leads us to wonder if the field does, in fact, have a body of assessment data that remains to be discovered and synthesized. What lessons have been learned? How can this information be made more accessible for the dance field?
- Philosophically, respondents favor the notion that audiences can benefit from explanations of dance. No one answered absolutely that “Art speaks for itself. No explanation is necessary.” To what extent do these responses represent a field-wide shift in thinking within the dance field?
- There are lingering philosophical divides related to the trade-offs made when engaging audiences electronically (i.e., 2-D visual experience vs. the in-person 3-D experience), and unresolved questions about how to strike a balance between educating the public to appreciate dance vs. responding and being receptive to audiences’ interests, especially with respect to participatory engagement (e.g., social dancing). To what extent do these goals compete with each other? Or, are there strategies for the dance field that address each of these priorities?
- Many respondents view ‘audience engagement’ and ‘audience development’ as separate endeavors, while some see them as existing along the same continuum. How can the understanding of these terms be clarified, and how do these understandings influence the dance field’s strategies moving forward?

Survey Constructs, Sampling & Response

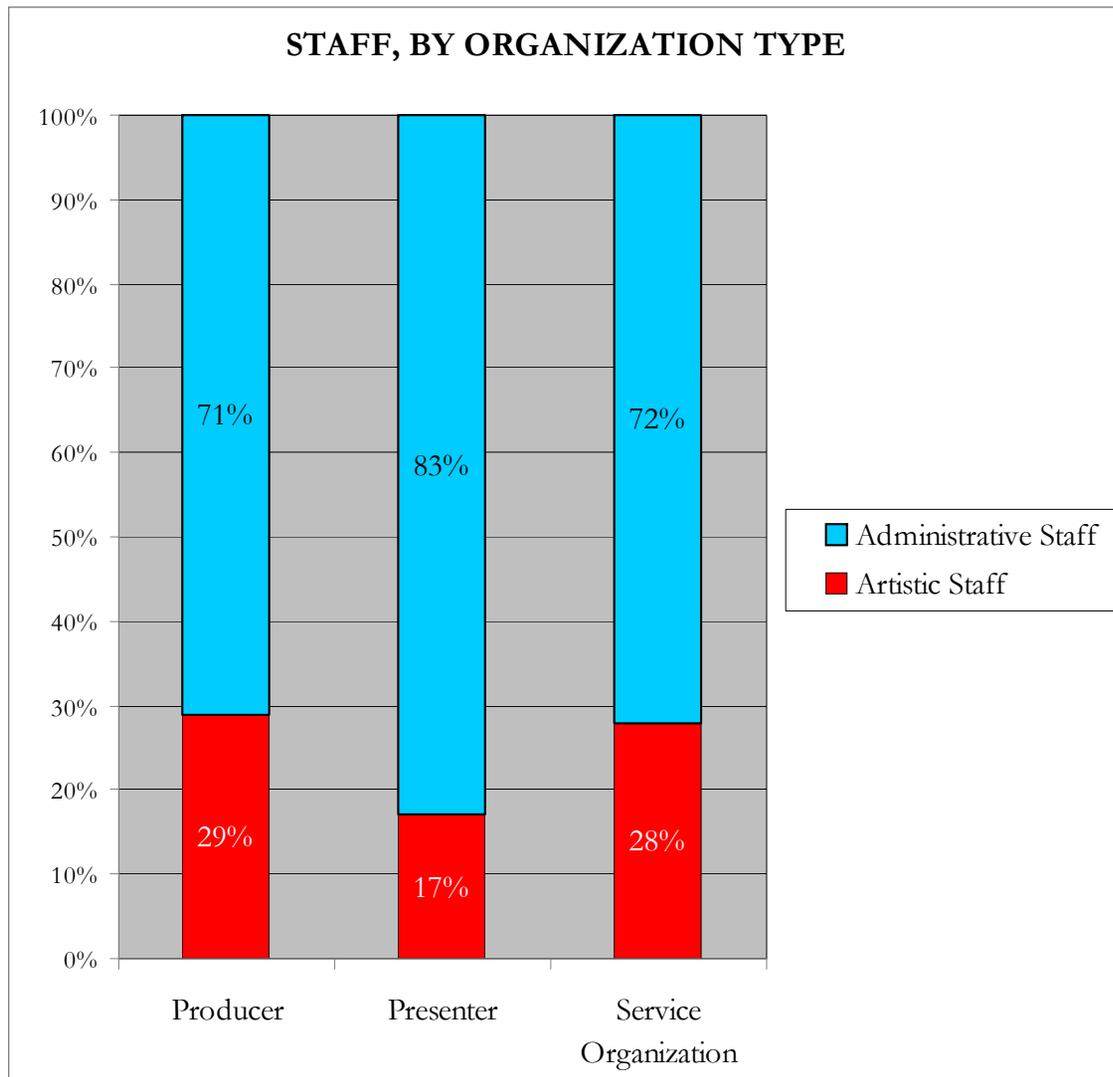
- The Survey of Current Audience Engagement Practices inquired about the following constructs:
 - Types of engagement activities
 - Planning, responsibility & evaluation
 - Perspectives on “audience engagement”
- The survey sample largely consists of Dance/USA organization-members
 - The survey was open to Dance/USA members and non-members. Completion of the survey was mandatory for those organizations submitting ideas for funding consideration through the Engaging Dance Audiences (EDA) grant program.
- The survey was administered online; 232 valid responses were received
 - 96% of respondents were Dance/USA Members
 - In sum, 64% of Dance/USA’s organization-members completed the survey
- Because the survey was completed in conjunction with a funding opportunity, some positivity bias towards engagement activities may be inherent in the responses.

Survey Respondents



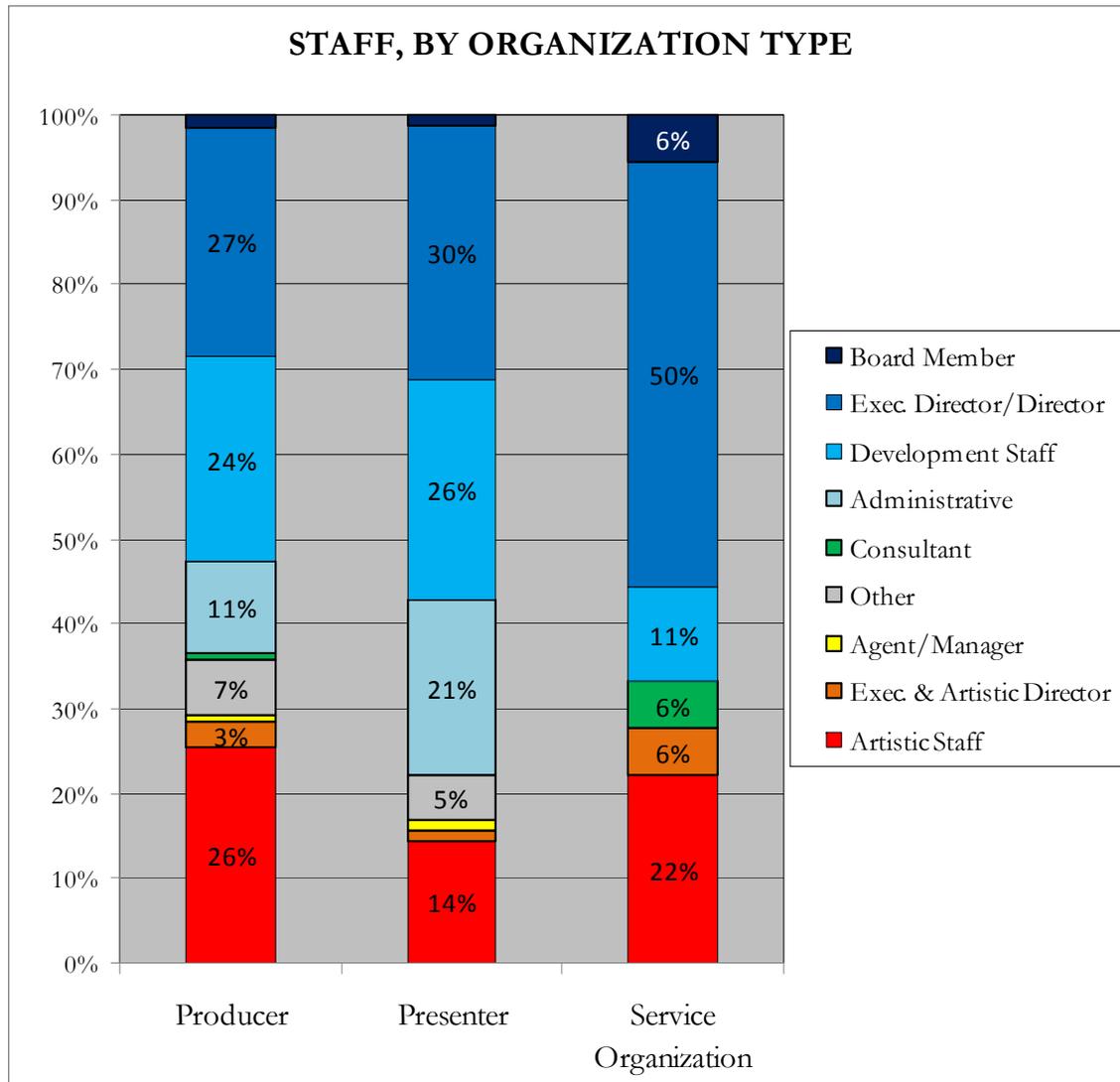
- With respect to organizational type, most respondents represented either Producers (58%) or Presenters (33%).
- Interesting differences among these three types of organizations are highlighted throughout this report.

Survey Respondents - continued



- On average, 75% of all respondents are administrative staff and 25% artistic staff.
- The graph on this page illustrates the split between administrative and artistic staff by organization types.
- Presenters were represented by administrative staff (83%) more so than Producers (71%) and Service Organizations (72%) were.

Survey Respondents - continued



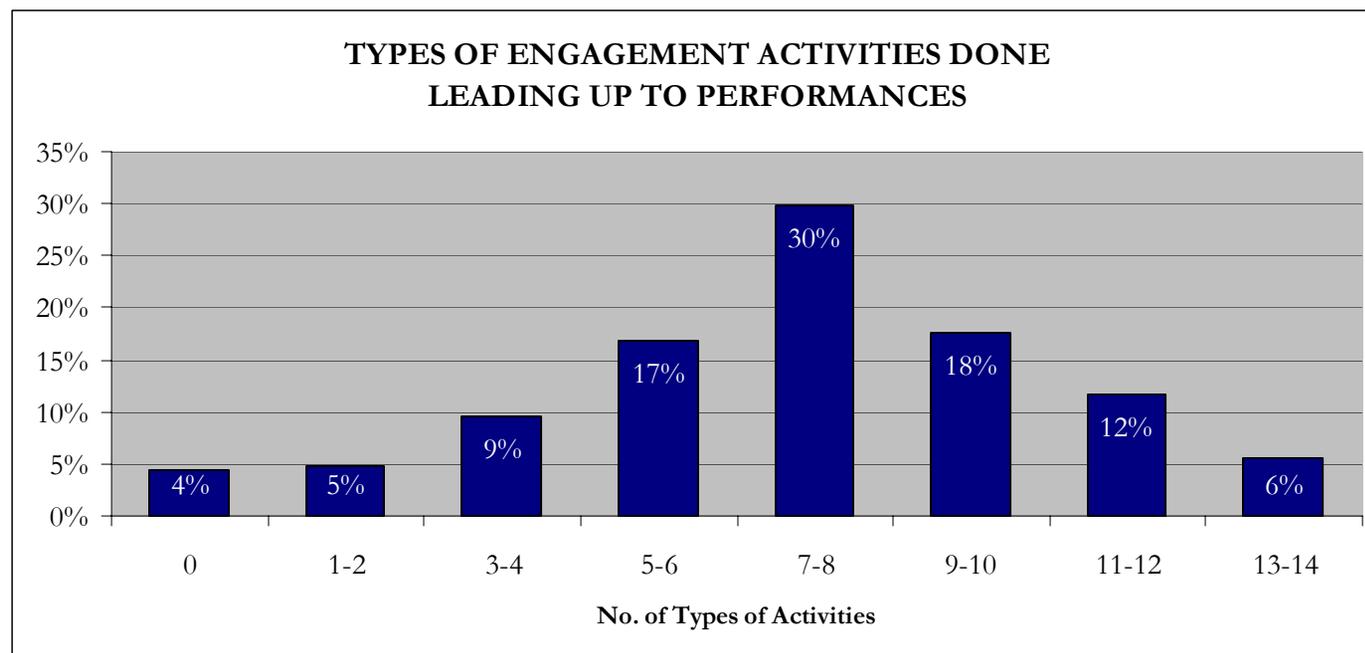
Categories with equal to or <1% are not labeled in graph due to space.

- This graph provides a more detailed look at what types of administrative and artistic staff provided responses to the survey.
- Executive Director/Director was the most represented position for each organization type, although many Development Directors and other administrative staff completed the survey.



Current Engagement Activities

Leading Up to the Performance



- The survey queried 14 different pre-performance engagement activities.
- 82% of respondents reported doing five or more different types of engagement activities leading up to performances within the past three seasons. On average, each organization reported doing about seven types of pre-performance engagement activities over the past three seasons, and many reported doing nine or more different activities.
- This breadth of activity suggests that the dance field is in a period of experimentation and development with respect to audience engagement, with many organizations trying many different approaches to audience engagement; however, organizations do not necessarily know which activities are most effective.

Leading Up to Performances

	Total
Lecture/discussion with artist	79%
Master classes	74%
Open rehearsal	70%
Provide other opportunities for online social networking, such as Facebook, Twitter, or photo sharing	69%
Artist demonstration	67%
Create web/online information resource about artists/performance (beyond promotional language)	63%
Provide links to digital video files of artists' work	62%
Lecture/discussion with a dance expert, but not the artist	58%
Provide other opportunities for live social networking such as pre-show receptions or light meals, discussion groups, or "clubs"	52%
Introductory dance classes	45%
Mail artist or performance information to ticket-holders and/or potential audiences (beyond promotional language)	39%
Offer a blog created and populated by the artist about the choreography to be presented	21%
Other	20%
Online dialogue to contribute to the creative process, participate in performances or show up for gatherings (such as flash mobs)	13%

- In the table at left, the types of pre-performance engagement activities that organizations are doing are listed by popularity, in terms of the overall percentage of respondents reporting that they have done the activity at least once in the last three seasons.
- Most pre-performance engagement activities are about listening and watching (i.e., not necessarily interactive), or self-guided information acquisition.
- “Other” activities include: Podcasts, backstage tours, outreach performances, and complementary visual art exhibitions to provide context for the dance performance.

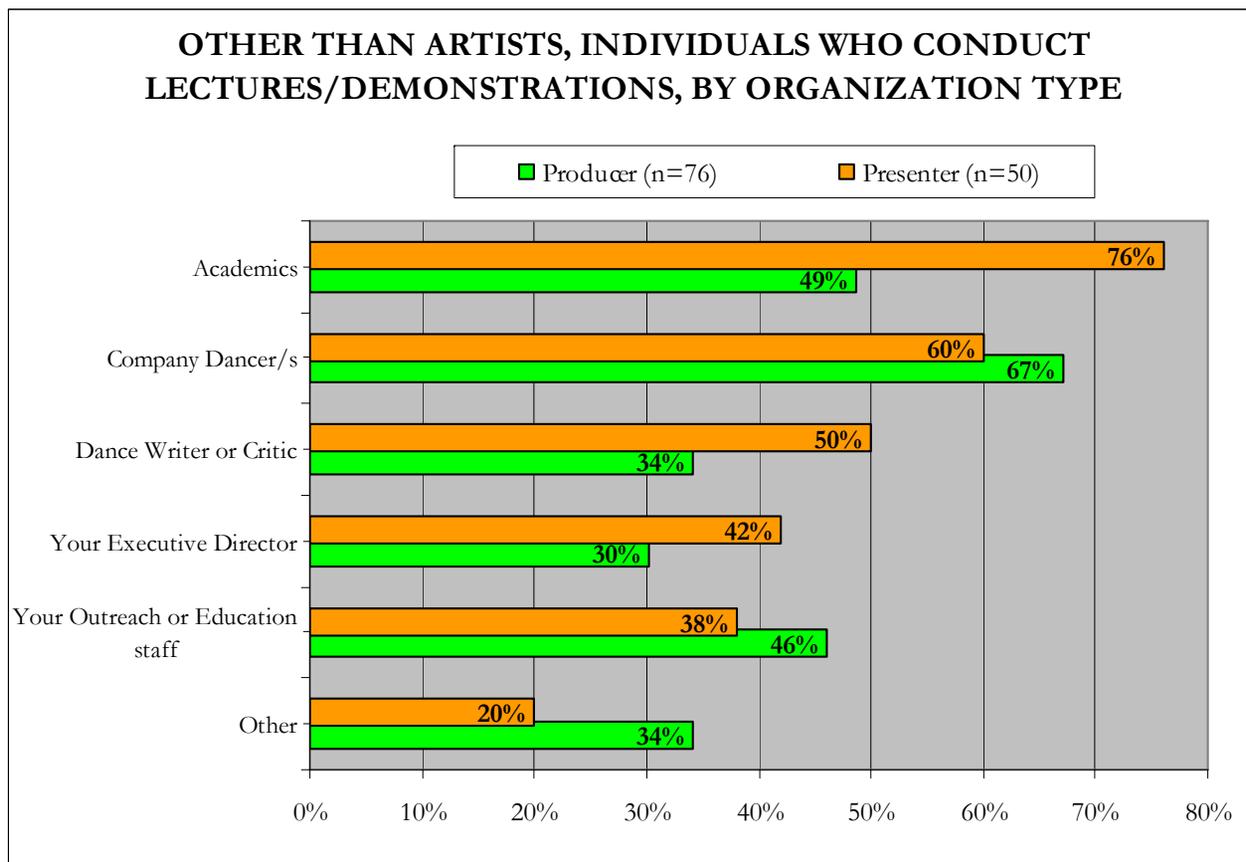
Dance Experts, other than Artists

If you checked "Lecture/discussion with a dance expert, but not the artist", please tell us the type(s) of experts you involve	Total (n=134)
Company Dancer/s	63%
Academics	59%
Your Outreach or Education staff	43%
Dance Writer or Critic	43%
Your Executive Director	37%
Other	30%

- In addition to artists, other artistic staff commonly participate in pre-performance lectures and discussions - company dancers (63%), and artistic directors (7%) and other artistic staff (19%), which were reported as 'Other' responses. The fact that company dancers are often tapped to lead audience engagement programs suggests a broadening of the skill sets that are required of dancers as they enter the field.
- The use of academics (59% of other dance experts) was higher than anticipated.
- 'Other' responses included experts who could speak to the topics encompassed in the dance performance, but not necessarily to the art form, as well as board members and audience members:

"We also engage our board members and advisors as well as "fans" (audiences) of the company's work in discussion as "dance observers" (experts with regard to their perception of dance). We have done this consistently to decrease the gap between experts of "the field" and those who enjoy the work "the field" produces while acknowledging the public perception of dance and how dance has the potential to be shaped by it."

Dance Experts, other than Artists



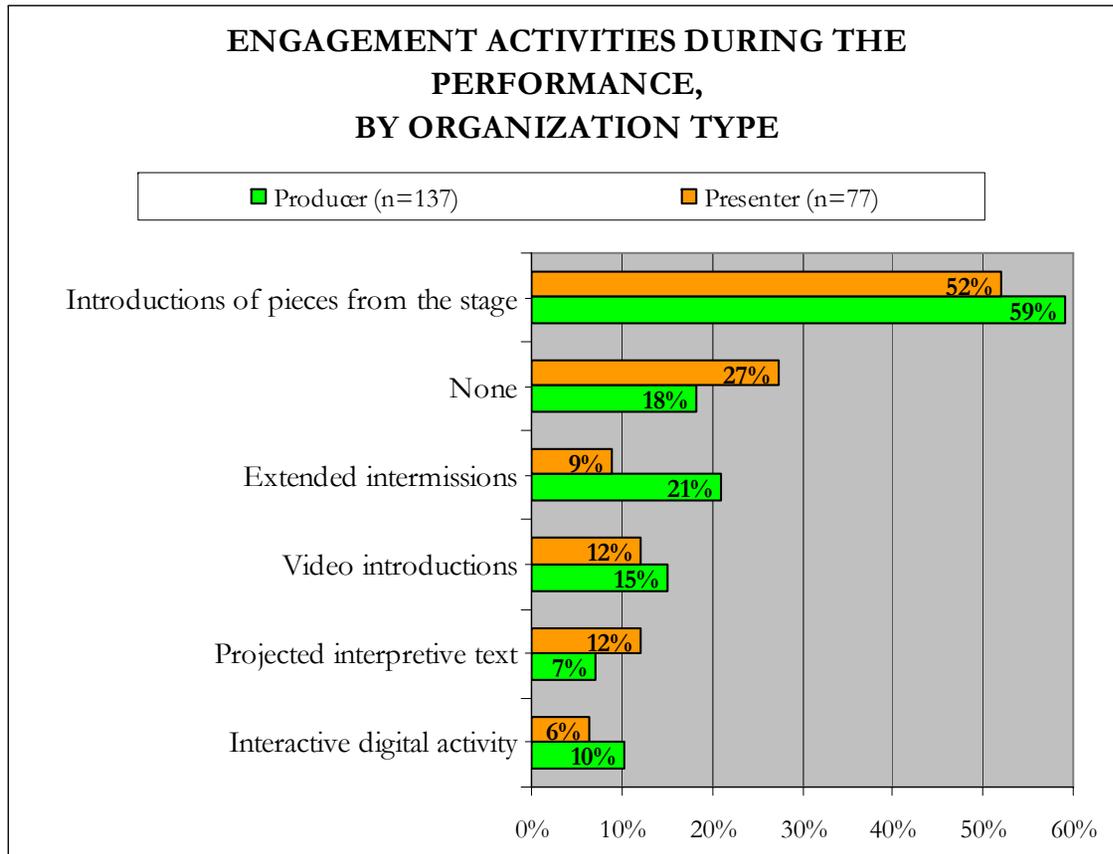
- As noted on the previous page, the use of Academics was reported at a higher rate than anticipated. Looking at this by Organization Type, we see that it is predominantly Presenters who are using Academics (76% v. 49%).
- Additionally, Presenters are more likely to use writers and critics, and Executive Directors than Producers. In contrast, Producers are more often using dancers, outreach and education staff, and other artistic staff.
- The data suggest that Presenters are more likely to facilitate critical dialogue, while Producers more likely to focus on the creative process and artist's vision.

During the Performance

	Total
Introductions of pieces from the stage by an artist or educator	56%
My organization does not do engagement activities during performances	22%
Other	19%
Extended intermissions to encourage dialogue	16%
Video introductions of pieces shown immediately prior to performances (not live)	13%
Interpretive text projected onto a screen during performances (like super-titles)	9%
Interactive digital activity during performances	8%

- Over half of respondents (56%) reported that they provided audiences with ‘introductions of pieces from the stage’ at least once in the past three seasons. While this figure does not indicate the frequency with which this activity is undertaken, it prompts us to wonder if this might indicate a sea change in thinking about the amount of interpretive assistance being given to dance audiences.
- Aside from introductions from the stage, relatively few engagement activities currently take place during performances. It should be emphasized, however, that this question provides a snapshot of current activities in the field and does not project trends of where the field is going.
- Among the ‘Other’ responses, survey respondents suggested that the nature of their dance performances were interactive and engaging to audiences, in and of itself. For example, respondents suggested that bringing audience members onto the stage, teaching audience members movement they can do at their seats, and voting or otherwise contributing content to the performance were all forms of audience engagement inherent to the design of the artistic work itself.

During the Performance



- The graph at left illustrates engagement activities during performances by organization type.
- In general, Producers seem somewhat more likely than Presenters to offer engagement opportunities during a performance.
- Presenters are more likely than Producers to report that they offer extended intermissions (21% vs. 9%, respectively).

After the Performance

	Total
Post-performance discussions with artists	76%
Provide spaces or facilitators for informal gathering and conversation after performances	54%
Provide other opportunities for online social networking, such as a blog, exchange on Facebook, or photo sharing	44%
Post-performance discussion with professional facilitators	41%
Provide other opportunities for live social networking, such as dinners, discussion groups, or “clubs”	33%
Post-performance discussion with professional dance writers or critics	24%
Invite audience members to react to the performance in an online forum or blog	22%
Other	15%
Email audience members after performances with information or links to educational resources	13%
Distribute questions that audience members can ask each other	6%

- ‘Other’ types of engagement activities include social events (e.g. receptions, toasts), helping audience members try some of the dances they saw, and methods for gathering audiences’ critical feedback, either verbally or written.
- There are no significant differences among presenters, producers and service organizations regarding activities after performances.
- Most post-performance activities are “in-person” discussions - facilitated or not - although some online opportunities are provided.



Planning for Engagement Activities

Who is primarily responsible for designing engagement activities?

	Total
Artistic Leadership	57%
Executive Director/Administrative Leadership	44%
Marketing staff	27%
Education staff	26%
No delineation between staff roles	23%
Outreach staff	22%
Development/Membership staff	20%
Other	13%
Volunteers, students, or interns	11%

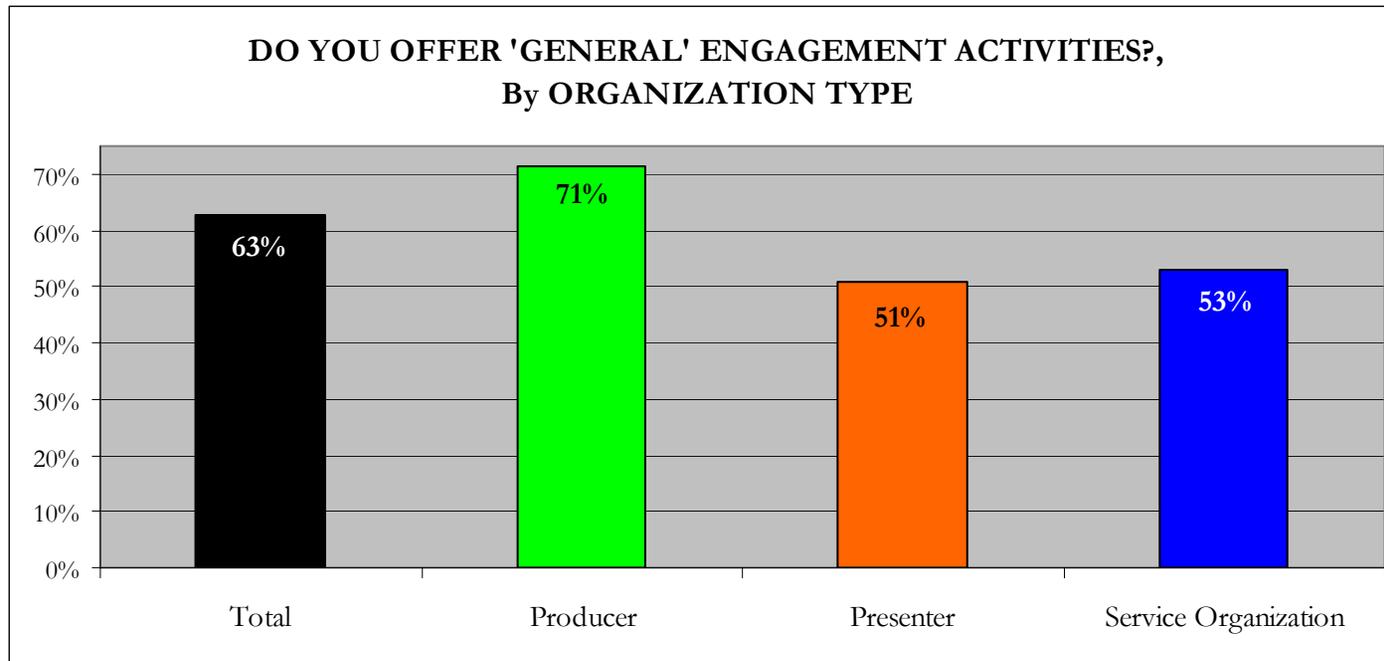
- In most organizations, two or three people are responsible for designing engagement activities.
- Executive Directors (EDs) and Artistic Directors (ADs) tend to work with other staff members at similar rates, except for Education and Marketing Departments. EDs tend to work with Marketing staff more often (38% vs. 28% of ADs); ADs tend to work with Education staff a bit more often (33% vs. 29% of EDs).
- Several respondents noted that Board Members play a role in designing engagement activities.

When are engagement activities planned?

	Total
Both	53%
Concurrently with the selection of artists/programs	29%
After the season is planned and artists are contracted	14%
Not Sure	3%
My organization does not do engagement activities	2%
total	100%

- Most respondents (53%) report that they plan engagement activities concurrently with the planning of the season, as well as after the season is planned. We do not know if this represents a change in practice (i.e., earlier planning and integration of engagement activities at the time of booking), although from anecdotal information we hypothesize that more dance presenters are planning engagement activities earlier than they were five or ten years ago.

'General' Engagement Activities (i.e., not associated with a specific performance)



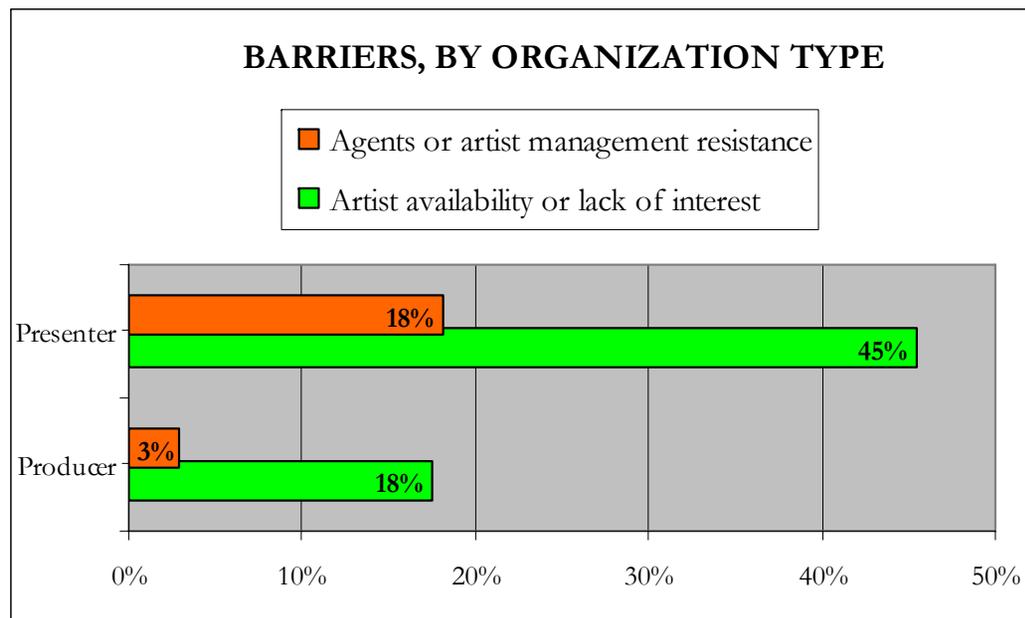
- 63% of survey respondents reported that they offer non-performance specific engagement activities, with producers leading presenters by a good margin (71% vs. 51%, respectively).
- The most common examples of these activities include: workshops/master classes, panels/lectures/discussions, open studio/rehearsals, social events with artists, community outreach performances, blogging, school-based activities, membership clubs/social groups, and email blasts.

Barriers to doing more engagement activities

	Total
Lack of time to plan or staff to run	71%
Cost	69%
Low participation by audiences	32%
Lack of technology know-how or software	31%
Artist availability or lack of interest	28%
Lack of physical space	26%
Question about whether or not they will work	22%
Other	11%
Lack of support from institutional leadership	9%
Lack of support from decision makers, such as board or staff leadership	9%
Agents or artist management resistance	8%
Lack of new ideas	7%

- Lack of time and financial resources are the primary barriers to doing more engagement activities, according to respondents, suggesting that if they had more resources, they'd do more engagement activities. Of course, most respondents had just prepared an idea submission to acquire more resources to do engagement activities through the EDA grant program.
- Lack of technological resources is a second-order barrier (31%), which is not surprising given the large number of EDA proposals involving technology.
- Another secondary barrier, however, is 'low participation by audiences' (32%), which indicates some level of 'lack of uptake' by audiences of previously offered engagement activities. One might infer from this some level of 'growing pain' as the field tries new engagement programs, but not always successfully.

Barriers, by Organization Type



- In general, perceived barriers are common across organization type. However, differences become evident between Producers and Presenters when looking at two barriers pertaining to ‘Artist availability or lack of interest’ and ‘Agent’s or artist management resistance,’ as illustrated above.

The two comments below illustrate the range of perspectives on Artists’ and Presenters’ capacity to engage audiences:

“Generally it is the artists themselves who are the most difficult to engage. Not in the role of performer but in bringing their own support; bringing an audience of friends, colleagues, to experience their work and be enthusiastic about forwarding the information on and making it easy and accessible. Artists, in my observation, just want to show up, do their piece, and leave. That is not how it works in my experience.”

“For specific performances, the key to participation is presenter engagement. Some presenters are open and ready to discuss engagement ideas, but most do not have time/resource to support touring artist to become more engaged with the audience in the community.”

Have you ever evaluated or assessed the effectiveness of your engagement programs?

- Overall, 64% reported 'Yes'
- Among this group, the approaches to evaluation have included:

	Total (n=140)
Staff debriefings of engagement events/programs	85%
Participant satisfaction surveys	65%
Collected and/or published anecdotes about participant experiences	56%
Focus group discussions with participants	27%
Online survey, blog, listserv, or exchange	25%
Expert observation or quality assessment	21%
Other	14%

- While most undertake informal assessment (e.g., staff debriefings), 65% reported that they have undertaken surveys, and 27% have undertaken focus groups. This leads us to wonder if the field does, in fact, have a body of assessment data that remains to be discovered and synthesized. What lessons have been learned?
- 'Other' responses included commentary on respondents interest in evaluating their programs, but they are just getting started on this or are uncertain where to begin.



Perspectives on 'Audience Engagement'

Where are you on this philosophical continuum?

	"Art speaks for itself. No explanation is necessary."	2	3	Neutral	5	6	"Audiences benefit from explanations of art."	
I believe...	0%	2%	3%	11%	23%	34%	26%	= 100%

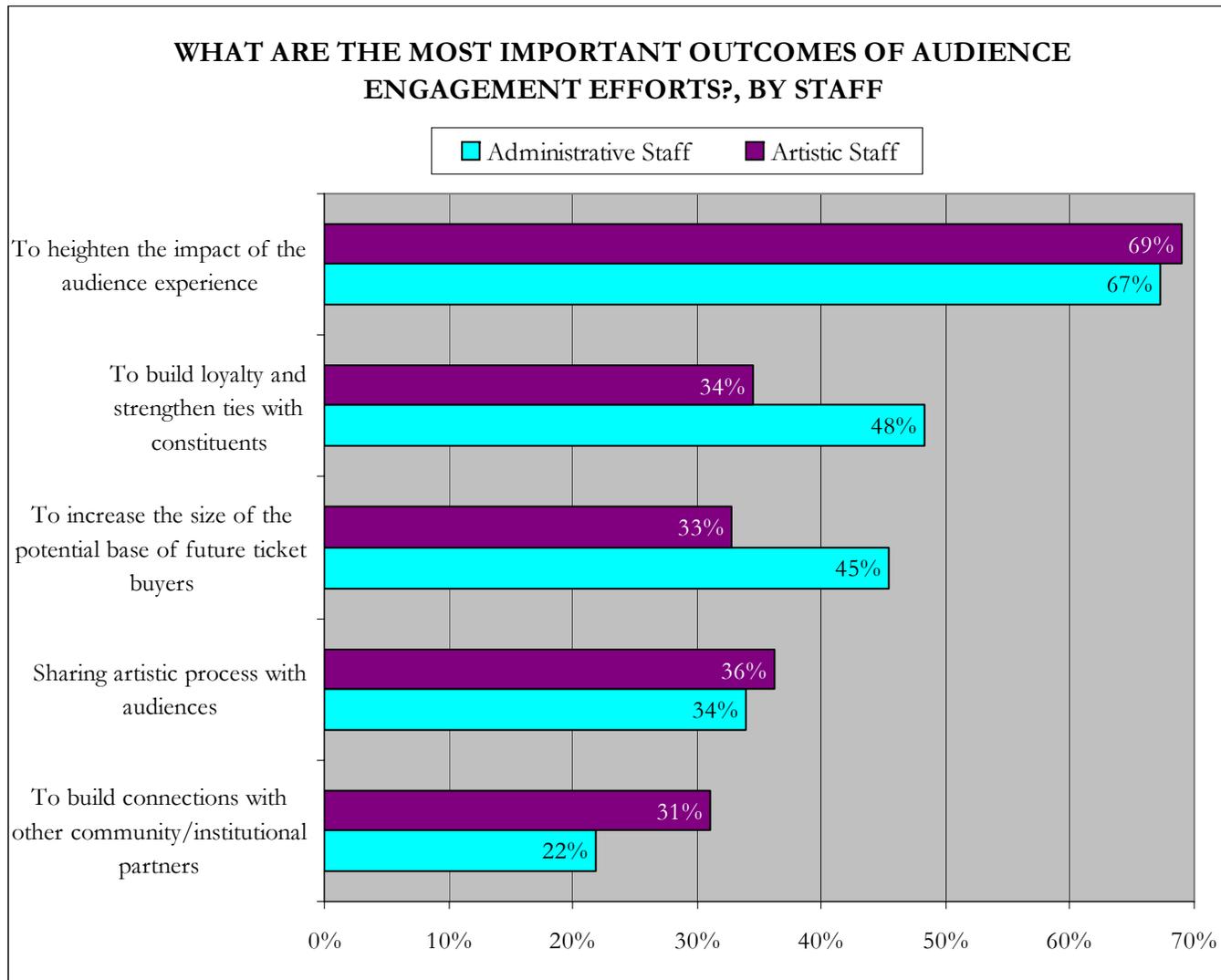
- Responses favored the notion that audiences can benefit from explanations of dance. No one answered absolutely that “Art speaks for itself. No explanation is necessary.” It would be interesting to see whether representatives of other fields (classical music, theatre) would answer this question similarly or differently.
- Bear in mind that this question was asked on a survey that was fielded in conjunction with a grant program that focuses on audience engagement, and that longitudinal data is not available. Regardless, we hypothesize that responses to this question reflect a fundamental shift that has occurred in the dance field over the past decade or so – a shift away ‘art for art’s sake’ and towards bridging divides between audiences and the art.

Most Important Outcomes of Audience Engagement

From your perspective, what are the most important outcomes of audience engagement efforts?	Total
To heighten the impact of the audience experience	68%
To build loyalty and strengthen ties with constituents	45%
To increase the size of the potential base of future ticket buyers	42%
Sharing artistic process with audiences	34%
To provide disadvantaged constituents with opportunities they would not otherwise have	29%
To build connections with other community/institutional partners	24%
To help audiences develop capacity for critical response	22%
To cultivate donors for more/larger gifts	10%
Other	8%

- To further explore the philosophical underpinning of the dance field with respect to audience engagement, respondents were asked to indicate the most important outcomes of audience engagement efforts (choose three from a list of eight)
- According to respondents, engagement activities are undertaken primarily ‘to heighten the impact of the audience experience (68%), although marketing outcomes are also desired, secondarily. This underscores the need to develop new impact assessment tools for assessing audience engagement programs, which is part of the EDA grant program.
- The most common ‘Other’ outcome mentioned was building the public’s understanding and appreciation of dance.

Most Important Outcomes of Audience Engagement, by Organization Type



- Artistic and administrative staff value ‘impact’ as an outcome of audience engagement by approximately the same margin.
- However, Administrative staff tend to value ‘building audience loyalty’ and ‘potential ticket-buyers’ more than Artistic staff, suggesting that they feel a greater urgency around audience development.

Other Perspectives on Audience Engagement

Do you think the primary responsibility for audience engagement lies with...	Total
...the presenter/producer reaching out to audiences	96%
...the audience member seeking out a richer experience	4%
	100%

Do you think 'audience engagement' is...	Total
...a broad term referring to the numerous ways that organizations reach out to current and potential audiences	90%
...a specific term referring to how an organization interacts with its audiences	10%
	100%

Do you think 'audience engagement' activities serve mostly to...	Total
... 'deepen' audiences' experiences with the art form	90%
... 'broaden' the audience for dance	10%
	100%

- Three additional pairs of statements were used to force respondents to choose one end of a philosophical continuum. In reality, of course, these are false dichotomies.
- Almost all respondents believe that the primary responsibility for audience engagement lies with the Presenter/Producer, not the audience.
- Nine out of ten respondents consider audience engagement to be a broad term referring to both current and potential audiences, although the large majority of engagement activities described elsewhere in the survey are designed for current, not prospective, audiences.
- Despite this broad definition, nine out of ten respondents believe that engagement activities serve primarily to deepen the audience experience, as opposed to broaden the audience for dance.



**'Audience Engagement' &
'Audience Development'**

Is there a distinction between 'audience engagement' & 'audience development'?

- 72% reported 'Yes'
 - 13% reported 'Unsure'
 - 15% reported 'No'
- Based on an analysis of verbatim responses to an open-ended follow-up question, explanations for respondents' answers to this question can be grouped into the following categories:

	Total (n=181)
Audience development is about broadening/increasing audiences; audience engagement is about deepening the experience for audiences.	59%
Distinct, but intertwined	10%
Interchangeable	8%
Engagement is a subset of development; a way to development audiences	6%
Audience development is about deepening audiences' experiences; engagement is about increasing audiences	3%
Audience development is about deepening audiences' experiences; engagement is about keeping audiences	2%

Respondents articulated the distinction between 'audience engagement' & 'audience development'

- *“Audience development can be measured quantitatively; audience engagement can be measured qualitatively.”*
- *“Audience development is focused mainly on filling seats; audience engagement is more about filling souls.”*
- *“Audience development can be done without ever interacting with the actual audience. There are numerous ways to reach out and market to potential dance patrons and build audiences for dance. However, audience engagement involves actively reaching out to patrons and engaging their interest and understanding of the art form. It goes beyond getting them into the theater, but rather taking the time to help them understand and appreciate the art form.”*
- We suggest that further dialogue about this distinction should be encouraged, since so many in the field see ‘audience engagement’ and ‘audience development’ as separate endeavors, while others see them as existing along the same continuum.

Have you seen any changes in how artists and managers think about audience engagement activities?

- 81% reported 'Yes' – suggesting a positive change amongst dance companies and their agents.
- Based on an analysis of verbatim responses to an open-ended follow-up question, explanations for respondents' answers to this question can be grouped into the following categories:

	Total (n=178)
A new awareness, a new openness to engagement activities	52%
The spread of technology has enabled an expansion of engagement activities	21%
Artists are more comfortable with engagement, and have a greater understanding of its importance	15%
Artists and managers are open to engagement activities, but implementation is a challenge	10%
Opportunities for funding largely drive the interest in audience engagement activities	8%

Respondents articulate the changes they've noticed in how artists and managers think about audience engagement

- *“Yes, and I am skeptical of the intent and authenticity of these changes. I think that it is trendy to do more outreach; trendy in that it is funder- and field-driven. I am not sure how many in the national community are really investing themselves and their organizations in this work and realizing the impact. It is a tremendous investment and long-term relationship. Master-classes and additional activities alone will not succeed.”*
- *I believe there is a growing understanding of broadening versus deepening and more appreciation for deepening an experience in order to retain a loyal supporter. Agents and managers are becoming more aware of this need and are less resistant, sometimes even sharing ideas and concepts.*
- *“...In what has been referred to as the “on-demand” generation, we are beginning to work to capture the attention and leisure time of consumers, recognizing the critical need to personalize the offerings, ensuring that we speak to the individual’s specific interests.”*

Are you seeing any trends in audience response to your engagement programs?

- 73% reported ‘Yes’ – most indicating increasingly positive responses by audiences
- Based on an analysis of verbatim responses to an open-ended follow-up question, explanations for respondents’ answers to this question can be grouped into the following categories:

	Total (n=167)
Audiences have a greater understanding and/or appreciation for our work	22%
Audiences love the activities and want more	21%
Our audiences are more involved, participate more because we offer these activities.	20%
We see increased attendance/interest in our engagement activities	16%
We see increases in ticket sales, repeat ticket buyers, donors	12%
We don't know/haven't measured audience responses.	7%
Audiences are more interested in the social aspects of attending these events than in the content.	2%
We see increased loyalty (although not increased purchases)	2%
We see low interest/less interest in these engagement activities	1%

Respondents articulate the trends in audience response they've seen

- *“Audiences seem to be seeking ways to personalize their experience. They want real, tangible access to the artist, whether through social networking sites, blogging and micro-blogging, and post-performance discussions and lectures.”*
- *“... The work hasn't changed at all, but we have found ways to make it clearer to the audience that it is for them.”*
- *“Anytime you provide opportunities for audience members to dig deeper into an artistic experience you are creating a win-win situation for all involved. Through audience engagement, we are experiencing growing numbers at our events...and interest in...modern dance in general.”*

How would you like to see the dance field evolve regarding audience engagement?

- This was an open-ended question. A careful review of verbatim responses produced the following categorization of responses:

	Total (n=205)
Create new ways/expand current ways to engage and connect with audiences, and learn more from them	39%
Use technology (especially web-based) to build relationships between audiences and artists	22%
Strengthen the public's appreciation of dance and focus on the art form	17%
Integrate audience engagement into normal operations and share best practices	14%
Build broader (and younger) audiences for dance	11%
More funding and support for the dance field	8%
Build dance into people's everyday lives, and build on the social dance already there	6%
More collaboration - across dance forms; with other artistic disciplines; with non-arts organizations	4%

Some unresolved concerns and debates emerged from the open-ended responses

- There seems to be a difference in whether a respondent wants to let the public ‘see’ their creative process vs. whether or not they want the public to actually be a part of their creative process.
- There seems to be some tension as to whether the dance field itself needs to make the art form more “accessible” to newcomers versus the public taking the initiative to become more educated about dance – it seems to be a matter of ‘who’ needs to take the initiative.
- An evident concern in the open-ended responses is the field’s approach to striking a balance between funding audience engagement activities and providing financial support to artists in order to create their work. The perspectives in the open-ended responses tended to view these priorities as an “either/or” situation - either fund engagement activities or fund artists to create; yet some respondents expressed their interest in knowing more about the actual “return on investment” in engagement activities – i.e. does funding engagement activities actually result in more opportunities for dancers and choreographers? Some respondents framed the tension between these two priorities as “balancing the equation between the supply and demand sides of dance”.
- Underlying some responses was concern about fitting the inherent “3D” nature of dance into the “2D” nature of technology. Does exploring these other mechanism for engaging dance mean a move away from the live performance of dance?
- A question about how to strike the balance between educating the public to appreciate dance, and responding and being receptive to audiences’ interests.

How would you like to see the dance field evolve regarding audience engagement?

- *“I would like this dialogue to continue to deepen and focus on how audiences and the art/ artists can connect in more meaningful, tangible ways. I think people are longing for a more intimate connection with people, art and the events they choose to participate in, and I hope our conversations around audience engagement can reflect this.”*
- *“I hope that the opportunities become richer, more abundant and more diverse. Companies and organizations often see audience engagement as an add-on as opposed to an essential part of their work. Funding is always a problem but the return on investment greatly outpaces marketing. Smart and invested audiences are priceless. Direct and meaningful integration of audience engagement is critical to sustain and advance the field.”*
- *“Our industry needs to embrace this in order to stay relevant and survive. We are also responsible for 'raising' the next generation of artists and arts leaders so that they have a strong and complete understanding of the importance of audience engagement and their role in that process.”*



Appendix 1: Protocol

1. Introduction



The purpose of this survey is to help Dance/USA build a base of information for the dance field about audience engagement. One of the objectives of the EDA initiative is to develop a better definition of "audience engagement." Based on an initial round of interviews with a cross section of dance presenters and producers, we define "audience engagement" as an emerging set of practices that interconnect artists, presenters, and audiences, going well beyond accustomed practices of marketing, outreach and audience development. Audience engagement:

- Invites audiences to be participatory rather than passive and values their involvement.
- Deepens relationships with existing audiences and also builds connections among prospective audiences.
- Stems from the premise that a more knowledgeable and involved audience will lead to better sales and donations and will attract new faces. The outcomes of engagement practices, however, are not attendance or ticket sales alone, but other kinds of impacts.
- Appreciates that everyone will react differently to the art, and celebrates the diversity of impact.
- Inevitably involves risk, investment and innovation.

By completing this survey, you will contribute to the knowledge base.

Dance/USA members who plan to submit an EDA idea **MUST** complete the survey. All Dance/USA members are **ENCOURAGED** to respond to this survey (one submission per organization, please). Non-member organizations are also invited to complete the survey (must be non-profit).

If you are submitting a proposal in response to the EDA Call for Project Ideas, please note that the content of your survey responses will in no way influence the review of your submission. If you are submitting as part of a consortia, the lead partner is **REQUIRED** to complete this survey. Additional consortium participants are **ENCOURAGED** to complete this survey.

WolfBrown, a research and consulting firm serving the arts and cultural sector, will produce a public report of the findings from this survey. Results will only be reported in aggregate; no organization or individual will be identified in the report.

We hope that you will answer these questions candidly so the results will reflect an accurate picture of the field's thinking about the concept of audience engagement. We would like to know your issues and challenges along with your successes. Thank you in advance for your thoughtfulness and candor.

If you would like to consider your answers prior to completing the online survey, you may download a copy of the survey document from the EDA web page.

It is not necessary to complete the survey in one session; however, to re-access your survey you must use the same computer. You will be able to re-access your survey until May 4th (the deadline for all submissions to the EDA program).

Let's get started...

2. Opening Information

* 1. Are you, or is your organization, a current member of Dance/USA, or do you plan to be a Dance/USA member by the May 4, 2009 EDA deadline?

No

Yes

3. Identifying Information

1. Is your organization submitting a Call for Project Ideas form to Dance/USA's Engaging Dance Audiences initiative?

No

Yes

* 2. Please enter the name of your organization:

* 3. Please enter your professional title:

4. Activities Leading Up To Performances

1. Indicate which of the following engagement activities your organization currently does, or has done in the last three seasons, leading up to performances. (*select all that apply*)

- My organization does not do engagement activities leading up to performances
- Lecture/discussion with artist
- Lecture/discussion with a dance expert, but not the artist
- Artist demonstration
- Open rehearsal
- Introductory dance classes
- Master classes
- Mail artist or performance information to ticket-holders and/or potential audiences (beyond promotional language)
- Create web/online information resource about artists/performance (beyond promotional language)
- Provide links to digital video files of artists' work
- Offer a blog created and populated by the artist about the choreography to be presented
- Provide other opportunities for online social networking, such as Facebook, Twitter, or photo sharing
- Online dialogue to contribute to the creative process, participate in performances or show up for gatherings (such as flash mobs)
- Provide other opportunities for live social networking such as pre-show receptions or light meals, discussion groups, or "clubs"

Other (*please describe*)

2. If you checked "Lecture/discussion with a dance expert, but not the artist", please tell us the type (s) of experts you involve: *(select all that apply)*

Your Executive Director

Academics

Your Outreach or Education staff

Company Dancer/s

Dance Writer or Critic

Other *(please describe)*

5. Activities During Performances

1. Indicate which of the following engagement activities your organization currently does, or has done in the last three seasons, during performances. (*select all that apply*)

- My organization does not do engagement activities during performances
- Introductions of pieces from the stage by an artist or educator
- Video introductions of pieces shown immediately prior to performances (not live)
- Interpretive text projected onto a screen during performances (like super-titles)
- Extended intermissions to encourage dialogue
- Interactive digital activity during performances (e.g., encouraging audience members to use their cell phones to send text messages or take photos during performances)

Other (*please describe*)

6. Activities After Performances

1. Indicate which of the following engagement activities your organization currently does, or has done in the last three seasons, after performances. (*select all that apply*)

- My organization does not do engagement activities after performances
- Post-performance discussions with artists
- Post-performance discussion with professional facilitators
- Post-performance discussion with professional dance writers or critics
- Provide spaces or facilitators for informal gathering and conversation after performances
- Distribute questions that audience members can ask each other
- Email audience members after performances with information or links to educational resources
- Invite audience members to react to the performance in an online forum or blog
- Provide other opportunities for online social networking, such as a blog, exchange on Facebook, or photo sharing (through sources such as snapfish, iphoto, etc.), or YouTube
- Provide other opportunities for live social networking, such as dinners, discussion groups, or "clubs"

Other (*please describe*)

7. Other Engagement Activities

1. Do you do offer engagement activities that are general rather than directly related to specifically scheduled performances? (*select one*)

No

Yes

If yes, please provide a few examples.

8. Engagement Activities Process

1. What barriers have you encountered when trying to do engagement activities? (*select all that apply*)

- Cost
- Artist availability or lack of interest
- Agents or artist management resistance
- Lack of support from institutional leadership
- Low participation by audiences
- Lack of new ideas
- Lack of physical space
- Lack of time to plan or staff to run
- Lack of technology know-how or software
- Question about whether or not they will work
- Lack of support from decision makers, such as board or staff leadership

Other (*please describe*)

2. Who in your organization is primarily responsible for designing your engagement programs? (*select all that apply*)

- My organization does not do engagement activities
- Artistic Director, Programming Director or Other Artistic Leadership
- Executive Director or Managing Director or Administrative Leadership
- Outreach staff
- Education staff
- Marketing staff
- Development/Membership staff
- My organization has a small staff, so there is no delineation between roles
- Volunteers, students, or interns

Other (*please describe*)

3. Generally, are your engagement programs planned concurrently with the selection of artists/programs, or after the season is planned? (*select one*)

My organization does not do engagement activities

Concurrently with the selection of artists/programs

After the season is planned and artists are contracted

Both

Not sure

9. Your Thoughts on Audience Engagement

1. From your perspective, what are the most important outcomes of audience engagement efforts?
(select no more than three)

- To provide disadvantaged constituents with opportunities they would not otherwise have
- To increase the size of the potential base of future ticket buyers
- To heighten the impact of the audience experience
- To help audiences develop capacity for critical response
- To build connections with other community/institutional partners
- To cultivate donors for more/larger gifts
- To build loyalty and strengthen ties with constituents
- Sharing artistic process with audiences

Other (please describe)

2. Where are you on this philosophical continuum?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Art speaks for itself. No explanation necessary.			Neutral			Audiences benefit from explanations of art.
I believe...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please share your opinion. (select one from each pairing)

3. Do you think the primary responsibility for audience engagement lies with...

- ...the presenter/producer reaching out to audiences
- ...the audience member seeking out a richer experience

4. Do you think 'audience engagement' is...

jm ...a specific term referring to how an organization interacts with its audiences

jm ...a broad term referring to the numerous ways that organizations reach out to current and potential audiences

5. Do you think audience engagement activities serve mostly to...

jm ...'broaden' the audience for dance

jm ...'deepen' audiences' experiences with the artform

10. Audience Development and Audience Engagement

1. In your opinion, is there a distinction between 'audience development' and 'audience engagement'?

No

Yes

Not Sure

Please provide a brief explanation for your response.

2. Have you seen any changes over the years in how artists and managers think about audience engagement activities?

No

Yes

If yes, please share your observations.

3. Are you seeing any trends in audience response to your engagement programs, if you offer engagement programs?

My organization does not offer engagement programs.

No

Yes

If yes, please share your observations.

11. Evaluation

1. Have you ever evaluated or assessed the effectiveness of your engagement programs?

No

Yes

2. If yes, then what did you do (*select all that apply*)?

- Participant satisfaction surveys
- Staff debriefings of engagement events/programs
- Collected and/or published anecdotes about participant experiences
- Focus group discussions with participants
- Expert observation or quality assessment
- Online survey, blog, listserv, or exchange

Other (*please describe*)

3. How would you like to see the dance field evolve with respect to audience engagement in the next 5 to 10 years?

12. Thank You

Thank you for your answers and insights.

