



Let's Talk Loyalty Toolkit

November 2021



Introduction

The arts sector has a loyalty problem. Retention is a hot topic in all manner of sectors but in the arts sector, it's a big issue. [Only 30% of household bookers returned from the previous year in the financial year of 2019/20](#). Retaining audiences rather than constantly working to attract new ones, makes sense both for staff capacity and financial reasons. Rather than feel defeated by this, **consider how big an opportunity this can be for your organisation!** If you put together a solid loyalty strategy and have a plan for how to approach these members of your audiences, you will start making strides in the right direction. In this toolkit, we'll look at how to **evaluate loyalty, gather data on your audience's loyalty and rate your own loyalty score.**

If you'd like to talk to us about your audiences, we're always available for a chat. [Book one of our free Audience Appointments.](#) We're looking forward to meeting you!

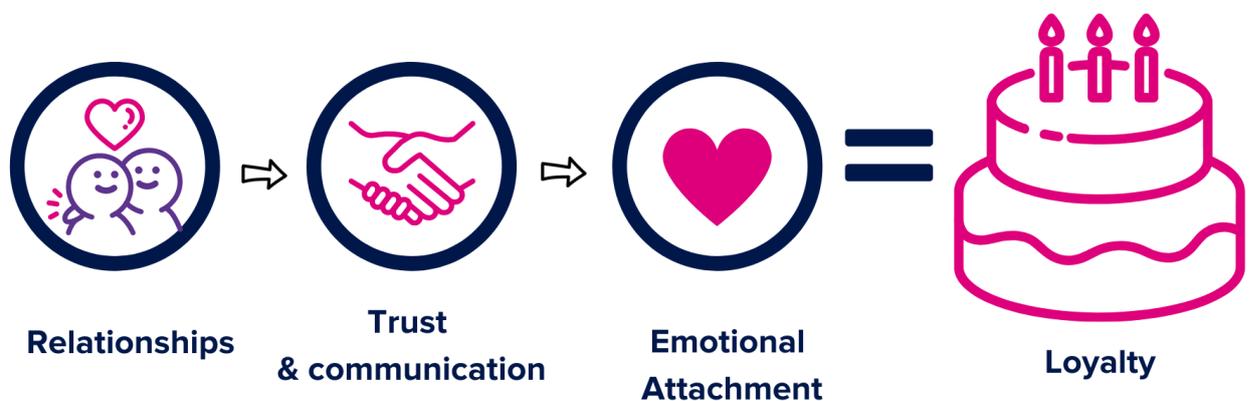
This toolkit is part of our theme 'Let's Talk Loyalty' supported by our annual funding from Arts Council of Northern Ireland.



Loyalty Recipe

What are the components of loyalty? How can we work out how to build it? Check out our loyalty recipe below and think about how it reflects the relationship audiences have with your organisation.

Loyalty Recipe



- **Relationships:** A relationship is more than a one-off encounter when a new audience member visits you once and then never comes back. How can you create opportunities for audiences to make repeat connections with your organisation? It's not only about what you offer but also about all the interactions you have with your audience. Remember –your organisation is a living entity that is composed of everyone who works there and builds it from the ground up. This includes all your staff, from Front of House to Housekeeper, and the audiences who come through your doors. Make people the heart of everything you do because people are what makes the magic happen.

- **Trust and communication:** Thriving relationships are based on communication, respect and trust. It's not any different with your audience and your relationship with them is a two-way street. Listen to your audiences, respect what they have to say. Make it a habit to learn about the people who come through your doors and enact change that they want to see if it makes sense to do so. Don't be defensive – take feedback gracefully as it's coming from a good place and demonstrates that your audiences care enough to share their opinion with you. Trust

people to know what works for them and what doesn't. Talk to your audiences often and in a language they understand. Your copy should be clear and easy to understand. Nobody wants to be made to feel silly. Beware of art speak – not everyone is going to have a university-level degree in what you do, and they shouldn't need to have one to understand what you do!

- **Emotional Attachment:** Offer sensational experiences that make people feel something - that's what the arts are all about, right? This is one aspect of the loyalty recipe that arts organisations will be able to do well but make sure you shout about how you do this far and wide!

Loyalty Journey

How do I work out where someone is in their loyalty journey with us?

Data, data, data! You can't just pull this information out of nowhere, you must understand why your audiences come to you, then continue to visit, and then use this solid information to plan your next steps. When you begin gathering data for your loyalty journey, keep thinking about motivations and barriers. **Why do people come or what stops them coming?** What do they **want to happen** when they come to visit you? These reasons will likely be different for each step of your loyalty journey and can have an impact on how you communicate with these people. It's important to understand what makes your loyal audiences tick, so you can try and **replicate what they love** for newer audience members.

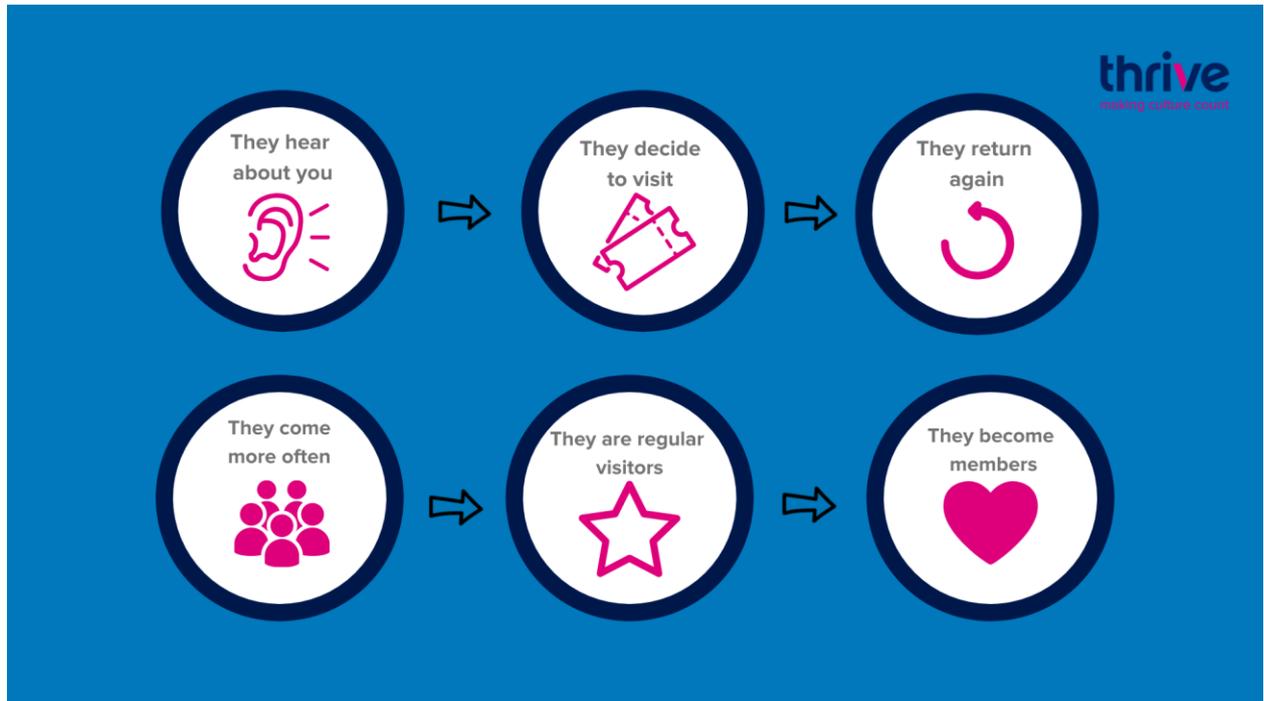
How to gather data:

- **Insider Info:** Talk to your front-of-house and box office staff and find out what they know about your regulars. What do your staff already know about these people and how they came to be so loyal to your organisation?
- **Get talking:** Chat to your regulars in whatever way works best for your organisation. It could be through a survey, purpose-built to be sent out through your mailing list to your most engaged customers. Maybe you could invite some of your loyal fans in for a pre-show chat and learn more from them there on a 1-2-1 basis. Do you have a membership scheme? Perhaps you could chat to these people too to learn why they are so bought into your brand already.
- **Reach out:** Don't forget to speak to the people who AREN'T as engaged as your loyal audiences. You could try this through your social channels with an incentivised survey. There are a lot of people who follow various organisations online that they have never actually visited in person, so this can be a useful place to start. Ask questions like: have they come in person? If not, why not? What

would entice them to start to visit? This survey could be used to inform your marketing strategy too - it doesn't need to be a one-trick pony!

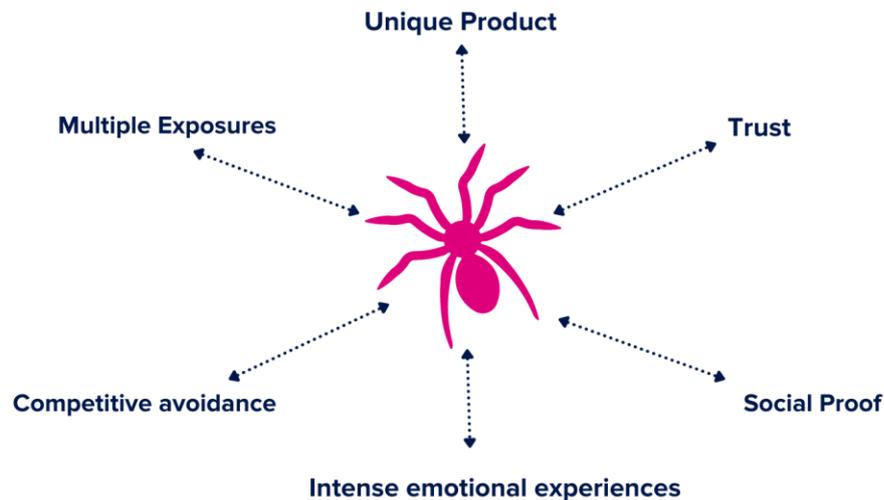
Once you have solid data, you can plot your own audience loyalty journey and plan to directly target individuals at each step of this journey.

Your audience member journey to loyalty might look something like this:



Loyalty Spidergram

Loyalty Spidergram



How does your organisation score against the loyalty spidergram?

Take each of these points and rate your organisation out of 10 against each one. Not all these points may apply to what you do and that's ok! Use the ones which are applicable to your organisation, identify the good and the bad and see if you can think of ways to solve some of them.

Unique Product: Do you offer something unique to audiences that nobody else does quite like you? You may work in an artform that many others do, but there will be something you do better than anybody else, or maybe nobody else does in quite the same way. Celebrate it!

Trust: Do your audiences trust you? Do they trust you when you tell them that a show will start at 7pm sharp and not 7.15pm instead? Do they know when you say you're going to change something that you'll follow through? Inspire trust in your audiences by showing them respect and by doing exactly what you say you're going to do - or explaining what's happened openly if something doesn't go quite as planned.

Social Proof: Does your organisation give audiences the opportunity to socialise and interact with each other? Can they spend time with people while at your organisation and are they encouraged to do so? Do they see other people going to your organisation (perhaps online) and want to go too?

Intense emotional experiences: Does your organisation allow people to experience intense emotions at your events? (We would say most of you will do quite well in this section!)

Competitive avoidance: Are you people's number 1 choice? Are people so loyal to your organisation that they wouldn't visit another organisation offering the same artform because they like you so much?

Multiple exposures: How often do people return to your organisation? How many of them return more than once in a week, a month or a year?

What next?

Consider each step of this person's journey with you.

- Using your **available data** on your existing audiences. You can find this via your ticketing system, mailing list, or your social media accounts.
- Use this data to work out who is most engaged, then **differentiate between these customers** and reach out in a friendly way via email, newsletter, and your socials.
- Thank all your attendees for coming at every available opportunity. Offer each set of people at **each stage of the loyalty journey something different**, but appropriate to their current relationship with you. Incentives like a free coffee or drink at your venue could be a way to entice these people back once more.
- Acknowledge your newer audiences are just beginning to get to know you. Speak to your loyal audiences often and warmly - they consider themselves to be a part of your community! Treat them as such and keep them up to date on what you're doing often.

Now is the hard part! Print off our worksheets below for each activity and see how you score.

What makes up your Loyalty Recipe?



Relationships

What relationships make up your organisation?



**Trust
& communication**

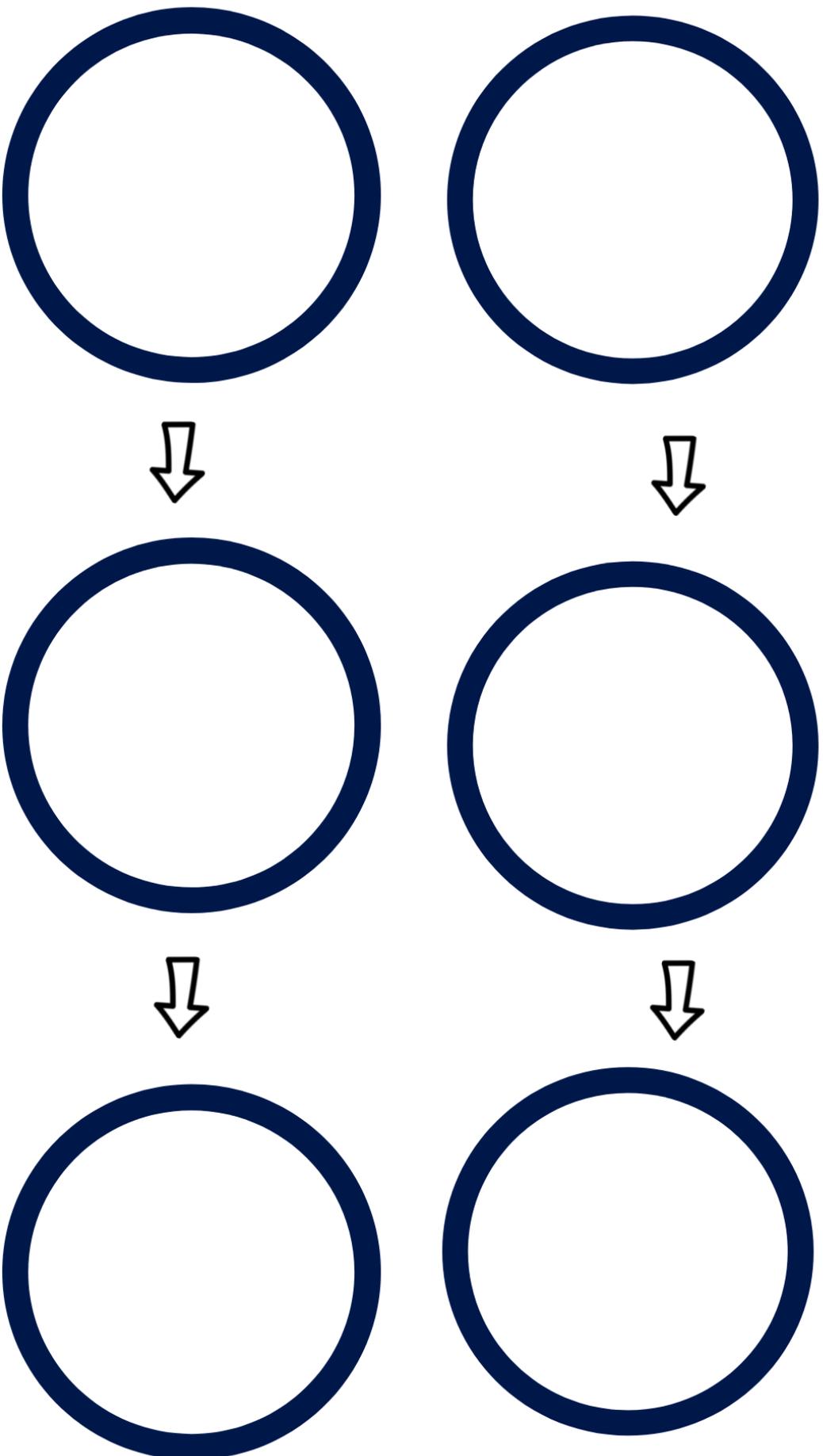
How can you treat your audience with respect?
How do you communicate with them?



**Emotional
attachments**

What ways can you encourage emotional
attachments with your audience?

Create your own loyalty journey



Loyalty Spidergram Scorecard



Unique product

/10



Trust

/10



Social Proof

/10



Emotional experiences

/10



Competitive avoidance

/10



Multiple Exposures

/10