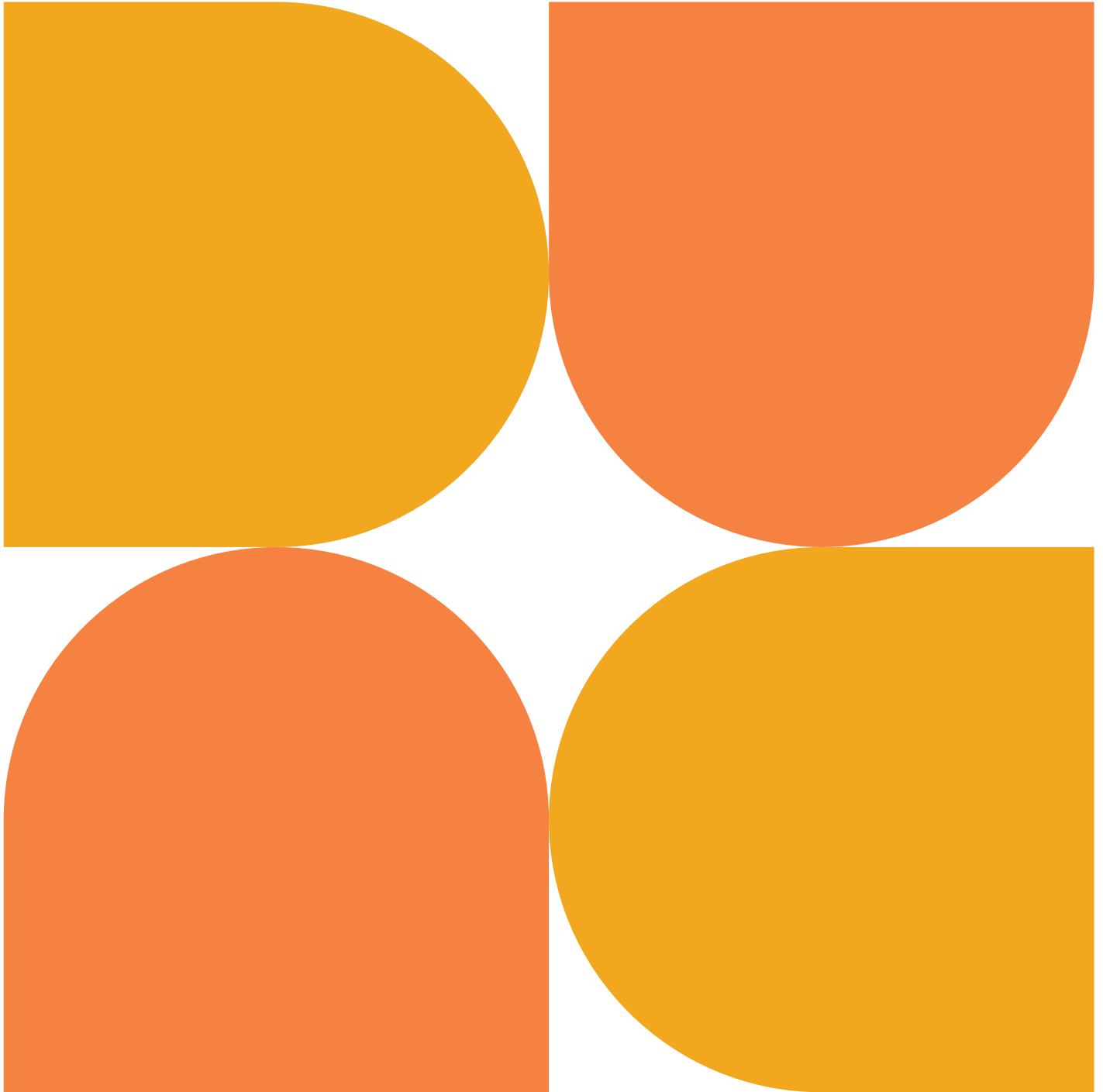


Know your Audience



Waiho i te
toipoto, kaua
i te toiroa

Let us
keep close
together, not
wide apart

For most, if not all of us, having an audience is crucial to what we do. We don't want to go to all the effort to create a gig, an event, a shop, a gallery, or a workshop series if no one actually comes.

And ideally the audience we attract are the people who get what we do, the ones that become supporters, advocates and allow us to grow.

Do you know who your current audience is? Do you know what they like, don't like, what their barriers to attendance are?

It's an important part of an audience development approach to regularly check and ask your audience – how are we doing? Are you still enjoying what we offer? Are we meeting your needs? Are you growing alongside us? What can we do better?



Starting a conversation

To start to learn directly from your audience about who they are, to start a conversation with them, you first need to make sure there are feedback channels. So perhaps the very first question is ‘how can our audience best give us feedback?’

At the very least, you could simply have (anonymous) feedback forms available, as these are a fairly easy and low cost way to give you valuable information. At the same time, by doing so you will demonstrate to your audience that you care, are listening, and interested in their experience.

Or, you could simply ask yourself ‘what are our assumptions about our audience?’. These assumptions can be informally and anecdotally tested by chatting directly with your audience. This will give you some information to work with.

Toolkit 03 goes deeper into feedback methods and ways to collect a range of information, which you can then use to measure your audience over a period of time to test whether what you’re doing is working.

Whatever method you choose, all that is ultimately required is a sense of curiosity and a desire for a mutually-rewarding relationship—where you can both benefit, flourish and grow.

You are not your audience

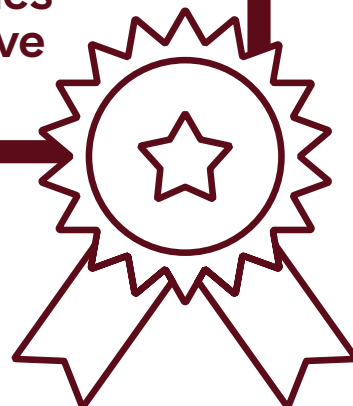
Oftentimes people assume their audiences are just like them, so perhaps it's an important reminder that — you are not your audience.

We all make assumptions about who our audiences are, and by attempting to learn more about them by asking them directly, we may find some surprises — and almost certainly, some evidence-based ways to improve what we do.

Once you are armed with information, you can potentially minimise obstacles, collaborate with others to enhance the experience, deepen the relationship and grow your audience.

You can also identify the best channels to share information with your audience, which is valuable information to know. And of course, you can also start to measure how well your approaches are going, by regularly checking in with your audiences.

It's important to also note here that you don't want to simply be reactive or ad hoc with the information you learn! You'll want to hold the feedback against your vision and values, and be strategic about where you put your energies and what you can actually achieve



**Questions to help
identify your approach**



What do you want to know?

If you knew the answer, would you act on it?
If not, then maybe this isn't the right question

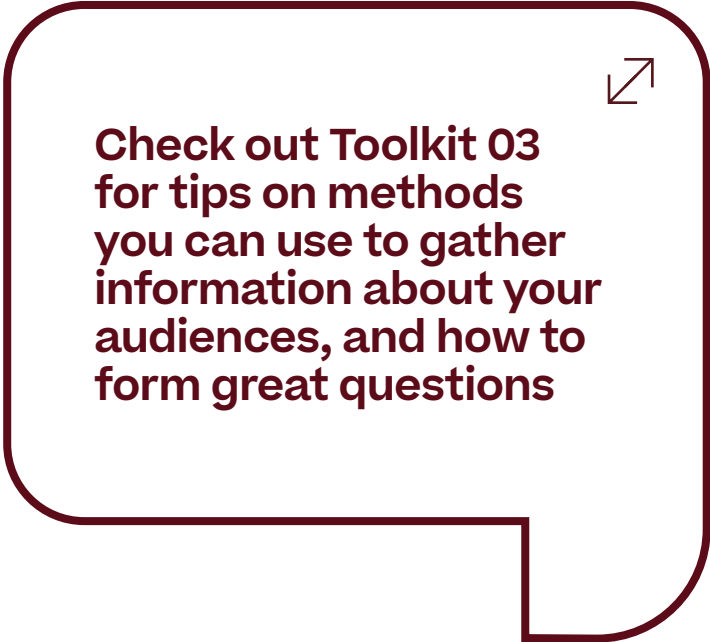
Getting clear on what you want to know will inform both your method and your questions.

Do you want to know what the barriers are to people signing up to your email list?

Do you want to know why people with disabilities (potentially a large untapped market) don't attend your events?

Why do your core audience only come 25% of the time?

Do you want to test if your advertising is working or what type of videos your audience most want to see?




**Check out Toolkit 03
for tips on methods
you can use to gather
information about your
audiences, and how to
form great questions**

Useful links and reading

Waikato Arts Navigator

 creativewaikato.co.nz/site/uploads/Waikato-Arts-Navigator_Regional-Strategy_ONLINE.pdf

Wellbeing and Arts, Culture and Creativity in the Waikato (2022)

 creativewaikato.co.nz/site/uploads/HS_Creative-Waikato_Wellbeing-and-Arts-Culture-and-Creativity-in-the-Waikato_FINAL.pdf

Transformation or Bust by Diane Ragsdale, keynote speech at Creative New Zealand's The Big Conversation 2016

 youtube.com/watch?v=spFn0kFD-Cs

The Art of Relevance, Nina Simon TedX Talk

 youtube.com/watch?v=NTih-l739w4

The Tao of Audience Development for the Arts; Philosophies About Audience Development Five Years in the Making by Shoshana Danoff Fanizza

A show without an audience is nothing, after all. In the response of the audience, this is where the power of performance lives.

Erin Morgenstern

