

Alternative Pricing Models, Memberships & Subscriptions

Key points

Cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessibility in arts and culture, and this is true for every demographic – so it makes sense to explore innovative ways to address this

Pay what you can/choose your price model – people who can pay more will, and people for whom cost is a barrier will pay what they can afford. Can experiment with this
Pay it forward – minimum cost for ticket/event/offering, with option to choose to pay a bit more, or to donate an extra ticket. Think Bandcamp

Pay as you stay - audiences pay for the length of time they stay in the venue/or experience as they leave it. The idea flips admission fees into exit fees, with the idea that it leads to” higher satisfaction, and (that) prices would be perceived as fairer, since visitors determine their price themselves”

Koha te reo Māori for gift, is a familiar “personal expression of your gratitude”. Deborah from The Meteor finds koha works well, so long as the audience “doesn’t just see it as free”

The success of alternative payment models may come down to the narrative we offer the audience of the value they get from the experience

Memberships and subscriptions are a way for your audience to support you. The potential for growth of these in the Waikato is promising, but people seek flexibility

While some people may sign up because of cheaper tickets or exclusive offerings, it is key that all people “know how their contribution supports the organisation” and the value of what the experience gives them

Useful questions

Is cost a barrier for your audience? How important is it to you to tackle this?

When did you last consider the pricing of your creative activity?

How prepared are you to take a risk with your pricing?

Where and how can you see risks being taken?

How long can you sustain a risk to trial new ideas?
Once per show season? For every event over a six-month period?
By offering it on one or a small selection of offerings?

How can you tell stories about the value of
your work in relation to the cost of a ticket?

What is your core goal in pricing activity?
Increasing accessibility for audiences?
Covering costs? Making profit?

Are there any other organisations you could
collaborate with on a new approach to pricing?

What is the audience journey when experiencing your work? Can your
pricing model include extra value activity before or after the show?

How might you link in subscriptions and memberships with your
bigger audience development and organisation objectives?

Is there the possibility of having payment options, such as paying in
instalments available to your audiences? For those who struggle with
the cost of a full ticket price, the option to break the cost down into
smaller instalments might be more accessible and achievable

He kai kei aku ringa
There is food at the
end of my hands