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Community Relations

Two Budget-Friendly Strategies
for Local Audience Development

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What is Community Relations?



A new way to think about “public” relations:

You can engage both returning and new audiences on any budget through **direct, authentic community building endeavors.**

Know your local audience and provide them opportunities to connect and get involved.

Strategy #1: Extracurricular events



Case In Point:
Pacific Opera Project
(~\$1.1m operating budget)

Quantitative Data (24/25 Season)



- **17** free and low-cost engagement events with a total estimate of **3,343** attendees including **7** POP Artist recitals
- **5** education engagement programs and one family production
- **4** mainstage productions with **7,428** attendees total, with **96%** capacity filled — the highest ever in POP's history
- Total mainstage audience for the season grew by **15%** from the previous season, whereas total engagement event audience grew by **4%**
- **42%** of their audience do not regularly attend operas by other companies

Qualitative Data (24/25 Season)



Extracurricular events:

- A free movie screening of *Amadeus*, promoting their production of Salieri's *La Scuola de' Gelosi*
- A “Drunken Sailor” bar crawl during Fleet Week, promoting their production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*
- POPtoberfest, an Oktoberfest celebration at POP HQ featuring performances and sing-alongs with POP artists
- Mess-Cider Sing-Along, an off-beat version of Handel's *Messiah* at Benny Boy Brewery in Downtown LA
- Free performances from cast members at the LA Italian Festival and the Música y Poemas Block Party, promoting their production of *Don Bucefalo*
- Recitals throughout the season from POP artists and guest artists

What POP is Doing Right:

- **Understanding their local audience:** POP's younger audience appreciates pop culture, kitschy events, and refreshments
- **Getting their artists involved:** POP Artist Recitals are collaborative efforts and showcase both well-known and emerging artists to the community
- **Providing “fun” context:** These extracurricular events provide context to audiences outside of the opera world through cultural touchpoints rather than articles or lectures
- **Partnering with local organizations:** Tabling and performing at local festivals and arts events gets their name out there to the local community (they look for creative partnerships with their mainstage productions as well)

Strategy #2: Influencer Partnerships



Case In Point:
Babatunde Akinboboye & Carnegie Hall

Overview

- Carnegie Hall was promoting a free, outdoor film screening in Bryant Park of Bizet's *Carmen*, as part of their Carnegie Hall+ program.
- In order to get audiences to the park, Carnegie Hall utilized an influencer we work with, baritone **Babatunde Akinboboye**, to create a two-part series on *Carmen* that would be shared on their social media channels.
- Babatunde has **534K** followers on Instagram and over a **million followers** on TikTok.
- Carnegie Hall's accounts recently have focused more on influencer partnerships and collaborations to maximize impact and reach.



Quantitative Data

- On average, Carnegie Hall videos have:
 - ~**48.8k** views
 - ~**2k** likes
 - ~**28** comments
 - ~**169** shares
- Babatunde's 1st video for Carnegie Hall had:
 - ~**213k** views (~336% increase)
 - ~**20k** likes (~900% increase)
 - ~**455** comments (~1,525% increase)
 - ~**2.4k** shares (~1,320% increase)

Qualitative Data



Comments from the post:



mnmandogal 2d

Wow I had no idea opera stories were actually cool like that. I like opera music but I didn't know the stories were cool too



marjonleg 3d

I didn't know I liked opera, but you singlehandedly peaked my interest! 🙌



tylersylar 4d

This is the most I've EVER cared about an opera thank you so much for this I have to see it now



janellegilkes 5d

Please explain all the famous Operas this way. I always knew the tea was piping hot but I don't speak the language. The way I am invested...oooh... it's like Dynasty but with singing.



gmk66 3d

Throw them into modern dress, it's a reality show

Is this scalable to our budget?



Absolutely! Here are some budget-friendly strategies for influencer partnerships:

- **Microinfluencers** are influencers who have less than 10k followers. While they have less of a following, they have a more concentrated audience for their niche, and they are cheaper.
- **Utilize comp tickets to the concerts.** Some influencers will create a piece of content in exchange for tickets (and other perks) to the concert they are promoting.
- **Leverage the power of partnerships.** Look at ways to partner with other organizations to share influencer budgets and perks (restaurants, community partners, etc).

Recap — Community Relations



The Real World ↔ The Digital World

- Give your audience opportunities to connect outside of concert programming
 - Let cultural touchpoints and local activities and partners guide outside events
 - Make these events accessible and affordable
 - Get your artists involved and let your audience come to know them on their own terms
- Influencers are the new “experts” — leverage their followings and personalities to build and sustain audiences
 - Again, let cultural touchpoints guide who you work with and what content they produce
 - Use social media data and comments as real-time feedback for future PR and marketing campaigns

Thank you!

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Questions? Email us!

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