
Arts for Delaware's Future Consortium

Summary of Findings

Phase 3: Creative Ideation Session

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Audience research and planning for the mission-driven world.

4147 North Ravenswood Ave. #302
Chicago, Illinois 60613
773.348.9200 main
773.348.9209 fax
hello@sloverlinett.com
www.sloverlinett.com

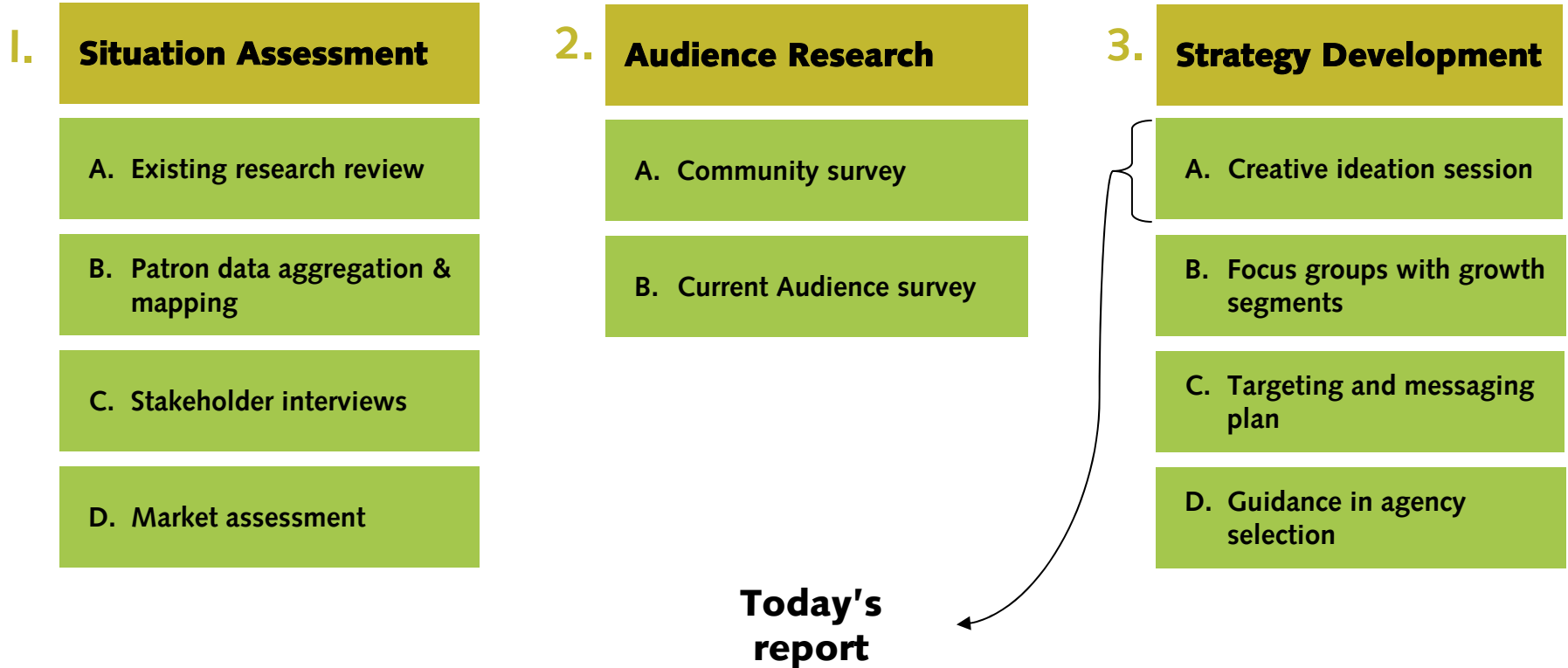
Overview

Project Background

Phase 3 Objectives

Project Background: Currently in the third phase of a three-phase research approach to AFDF audience development

Project Plan:



Phase 3 Objectives: Phase 3 is designed to address how AFDF can respond to the opportunities and challenges at hand

- As a whole, Phase 3 is guided by the following research objective:
 - To identify the best ways for the AFDF partners to develop a compelling, collaborative, and sustainable strategy for increasing audience engagement
- Specifically, the primary objective of the Creative Ideation Session was to:
 - Brainstorm specific strategies and tactics that AFDF organizations could use to build audiences, rejuvenate Wilmington's cultural landscape, and better meet patrons' (and potential patrons') needs
 - Ideas that could work for either the consortium as a whole or for individual institutions
- This document briefly summarizes the results of this brainstorming session, and will act as an input to the upcoming focus groups with current and potential AFDF patrons

Project Background: In Phase 2 audience research, we identified four potential strategies that could yield success for AFDF

- These strategies, in part, informed the creative ideation session
 - AFDF consortium members brainstormed various ways in which these strategies could be enacted and expanded upon
 - They also identified new strategies that could better engage patrons with Wilmington arts

Strategy #1: Encourage and facilitate greater crossover attendance among AFDF patrons

Strategy #2: Increase awareness and interest in AFDF institutions among new audiences

Strategy #3: Develop distinct strategies for each of the geographic target regions

Strategy #4: Improve the Wilmington “brand” and perceptions of its cultural landscape

Summary of Creative Ideation Session

Creative Ideation: Stakeholders discussed Wilmington’s cultural landscape and the audience needs that must be met

- Consortium members identified several critical barriers preventing a more vibrant arts community in Wilmington:
 - Lack of awareness
 - Potential audiences in the region do not know what’s going on in Wilmington; they don’t feel informed about the volume and variety of the city’s cultural portfolio
 - Nor is there a widespread recognition of the superb *quality* of Wilmington’s arts; it’s a “secret”
 - Inertia
 - Many potential arts-goers may be apathetic towards cultural activities in general
 - Lack of perceived relevance
 - People who don’t attend the arts often don’t think it’s “for me”; at the same time, arts organizations aren’t adequately communicating the relevance of the arts to potential patrons’ lives
 - > Nor are they creating new kinds of arts experiences that would be more relevant for more people
 - The great potential for creativity and artistic expression by and among audience members is not being fully realized
 - > Neither by these audience members nor by cultural institutions
- Stakeholders identified the following audience needs that the arts could meet in order to connect more fully with its patrons:
 - A greater quantity/flow of and more-detailed information about Wilmington’s arts offerings
 - Flexible options for making last-minute cultural arrangements
 - A sense of belonging to a community and opportunities to socialize with other members of that community
 - Assistance with creating a holistic cultural occasion, including convenient transportation/parking, dinner options, and social connections
 - More and more appealing family-friendly programming
 - Programming that incorporates a variety of artistic enhancements, forms, styles, etc.

Creative Ideation: Stakeholders shared their vision for the ideal Wilmington cultural landscape

- Participants articulated attributes that they would like the Wilmington arts scene to embody:
 - Have an **energetic** and **passionate** character
 - Provide a forum for **social interaction** and convey a **warm, friendly** vibe
 - Provide audiences with opportunities for **self-discovery** and see the **creative side** within them
 - Allow patrons to **craft and self-direct** their own cultural experiences
- They also envisioned a range of tactics that the individual organizations (or the consortium as a whole) could employ to meet audience needs and convey these attributes
 - Wilmington arts festival
 - Arts "passport" (discounts, information, and access to Wilmington arts)
 - Behind-the-scenes access to arts organizations (including tours)
 - Centralized arts listing, website, or brochure
 - Central ticket-buying kiosk
 - Packages with hotels and restaurants (for discounted rates and central reservations)
 - Open-choice seating (to make attendance more social and spontaneous)
 - Child care on-site at arts events
 - Pre-show cocktail hour or after-party at arts events
 - Shuttle service around Wilmington arts organizations
 - Valet parking
 - Unified programming themes shared by multiple arts organizations
 - Social event series in conjunction with cultural events (singles' night, wine tasting, etc.)
 - Print-at-home tickets

Next Steps

Next Steps: The focus groups will help expand upon, prioritize, and gauge the feasibility of these strategies and tactics

- The upcoming focus groups will consist of four groups, segmented by AFDF attendance:
 - One group of multi-organization AFDF patrons
 - One group of single-organization AFDF patrons
 - One group of AFDF patrons who are heavy cultural consumers (single- or multi-organization AFDF patrons)
 - One group of cultural consumers who do not attend AFDF organizations (“non-patrons”)
- Key topics to address in these focus groups include:
 - Attributes of consumers’ ideal arts experiences
 - Perceptions of Wilmington and its arts scene
 - Perceptions of individual AFDF organizations
 - Ways that organizations could better provide ideal arts experiences
 - Reactions to specific tactics identified in the Creative Ideation Session