CultureCase

Why do people return to the theatre?

This research was conducted by **Margee Hume, Gillian Sullivan Mort, and Hume Winzar** at the **Griffith Business School, Australia [Now at the University of South Queensland, Australia]**

Summary

This paper looked at what motivated customers to return to performing arts venues. The researchers found that about two-thirds of people were looking for affective artistic experiences, but even for these people the most important factors that determined whether they returned or not related to customer service and the overall experience.

The research is placed within the broader concept of 'repurchase intention'

This reflects a consumer’s experience of an event and is expressed either through endorsements or another ticket purchase. The interviews tried to identify how people defined value, emotional connection, service quality and overall satisfaction, and how these then influenced their likelihood to rebook.

They interviewed 26 performing arts patrons in Australia

The interviewees were identified by a particular performing arts organisation and interviewee's own contacts supplemented the sample. All interviewees had attended a performing arts event at least once in the last three years and ranged between 21 and 60 years in age.

One third of interviewees described performing arts as an entertainment experience rather than an artistic one

The factors that fed in to their considerations of value were price, physical accessibility, signage, food and drink, staff friendliness. The research also identified a group of regular attenders who were not passionate about the performing arts but accompanied friends or family who were.

Repurchase intention was shaped by a 'multi-dimensional' equation

Most people weighed up both artistic and non-artistic facets of their most recent experience(s) of the performing arts which they combined with a mix of social factors that were outside the control of the arts venue. Performing arts organisations need to understand the specific definitions that people create for the performing arts, and segment their approaches to take account of these very different mindsets.

Keywords

decision-making **interview** **theatre** **Australia** **repurchase**

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