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# Theatre & Touring Symposium Report 2019

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Harbottle & Lewis



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July 2019

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# Introduction

## **The Theatre and Touring Symposium was held on 17 June 2019.**

The day was an opportunity for the theatre sector to come together to discuss and tackle shared issues, leading to real and practical change.

The Symposium included six Discussion Sessions on topics suggested by the sector. Each discussion was facilitated and began with two short provocations from figures from across the sector and other areas.

## **This report is drawn from the notes taken in those discussions, and the notes provided by the discussion facilitators.**

It sets out the key points made in those sessions, and the suggested practical actions for UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre to take forward with colleagues across the industry.

Discussion facilitators and conversation starters have been named here. Specific examples or resources have been given. Comments from delegates to the Theatre and Touring Symposium have not been attributed.

The notes from Discussions Two and Four were lost due to technical issues. We have included any points that were recorded, as well as the suggested actions.

The Symposium also included Knowledge Sessions. Delegates chose to attend Knowledge Sessions on topics they'd like to hear more about. We have also included in this report any actions that were suggested in those sessions.

# Discussion One

## What Goes on Tour? Developing content to build audiences

**Facilitator:** Tarek Iskander, [Battersea Arts Centre](#)

**Conversation starter:** Kelly Andrews ([Brown Simcocks & Andrews](#), [Personal Managers' Association](#))

Kelly and other agents representing actors and a variety of creatives would like there to be more engagement between producers, agents and talent.

Agents feel that the theatre industry could improve touring and living allowances, fixed fees and capped royalties, however the conversation needed to move to discuss what would help make touring more viable and attract talent out on the road.

In the current marketplace, producers need "names" to headline their shows. The issue is that the talent they need is now increasingly under restrictive exclusivity deals with streaming companies (such as Amazon and Netflix). This means that agents can only guarantee a short window of availability for their artists which conflicts with the requirements of touring. Kelly asked what we could do collectively as a community to combat this.

High profile actors want a guarantee of quality assurance. Kelly suggested small touring management companies could emphasise their brand and explain their aims more to the artists, because talent from all creative areas approach the work from a creative standpoint first, and a package of key creatives will seal a deal.

In the US packaging model, a production puts together the entire creative team; all headline actors have lists of plays they want to be a part of and directors that they want to work with, so it is a question of putting them together, so each member of the team creatively excites the rest of the team. When this is achieved, the whole project can come together much faster.

Kelly suggested three questions for the group to discuss:

1. Can we be more agile in planning with regard to theatrical timescales when it comes to signing up creatives?
2. How can we help smaller producers attract the people they need?
3. Can we use the US packaging structure to help put together the entire team and bundle a product which will sell?

### Discussion

Producers have to work a year in advance when planning tours to number one venues - and know that it is impossible for agents to do this. Options and exclusivity deals in (particularly US) TV prevent talent from accepting theatrical work too far in advance. This is a huge stumbling block for producers.

Short runs, where an actor really wants to do a play and the venue works with them, can work. But this is different to a commercial tour going out on the road for weeks on end. West End plays can attract people because they are not going around the country and are a shorter commitment.

Producers need to impress venues with the show and the package, including cast and creatives. It is a chicken and egg scenario - they need the guaranteed venues to get the actor, and need the actor to get the venue.

Even if the artist likes the piece, they are attracted to credibility and they want to trust the team and know that they will market the work successfully. This is difficult with new work.

Some actors work exclusively on new writing. Agents find it difficult to find original pieces and put these together with artists that do want to do it. Casting directors have the awareness of which actors will be attracted to which pieces of work. It would be useful to know which actors are looking for specific types of work, such as original plays.

There is a disconnect between those involved in touring and the industry culture because regional audiences know that high profile casting is prevalent in the West End and this puts more pressure on the touring product. High profile actors start their careers in the regions and then move on when their profile rises. It was suggested that producers should meet with artists and ask them to help the industry that they have benefited from.

It seems that whenever the industry has this conversation, the major issue in terms of contracts and agents holding back actors are the TV and film production companies. A potential way forward could be for the theatre industry to proactively work together with TV – Netflix, BBC and others – so that that they support regional theatre because it produces and trains the actors that they benefit from.

Agents could build the opportunity to do theatre into an actor's career and encourage it. Venues also need to hold their nerve and book good quality work even if there are no "names" attached. Actors need to be more prescriptive about what they want to do and hold their nerve with their agents and the TV companies. The culture shift is not going to work unless TV and film producers see that there is an advantage in artists maintaining a link to live performing, as it improves the quality of their performances.

Young people out of drama school are now chasing the dream of TV straight away - agents are finding it hard to convince younger actors to try theatre. There could be a conversation within the theatre community about the need for producers and creatives to go into drama schools to encourage younger actors to do theatre.

Getting artists is a challenge and there should be a concerted effort in the industry to make the importance and prestige of the work clear and position it almost as a public service.

Is the UK theatre industry giving all its power away? The industry shouldn't feel it can only survive if it takes on other art forms - UK theatre is a strong brand in itself. There are plenty of actors who do want to work in theatre and who are skilled at theatrical acting. Centring the conversation on star casting is doing the industry a disservice. Look outside of London and the opportunity of building a robust industry that is not dependant on bringing in star names but rather creates star names, particularly regionally. If we want proper diversity that goes beyond skin colour and gender and also represents different people from different places, this is how we will move forward.

A 500-seat theatre with a smaller studio theatre is finding it hard to programme the smaller space because of problems with funding. Major producers are not getting the same levels of guarantee that they used to. More venues are having to rely on splits and there are far more co-producers now, which limits the creativity of the product they can receive. There are fewer companies that move through the scales from small scale producers to major producers. If the smaller companies cannot get the talent, they need to be encouraged to try and play on a bigger canvas and give them more opportunities to play to a bigger audience.

How can we develop local ecologies and ensure that the industry is not so reliant on star casting and within that, how can we grow production companies that are just starting out?

A medium scale venue is finding it increasingly difficult to find drama product that is relevant to their audiences and of sufficient quality. A solution would be to work more closely with the producing companies to ensure that the work is relevant when it is first in the development stages, to discuss products with the venues before it goes on tour and that a good dialogue with producers will help them create products which are more relevant to local audiences.

Touring companies and venues should get together to discuss what issues are interesting at the moment and collaborate more in developing work. The venue could ask the producer what they want to make and the producer could ask the venue what audiences are buying tickets for. Then they can meet in the middle to develop something that will hopefully be a financial and creative success.

Shows used to be built as a core design that could be adapted - but these days the designers build one stage and if it does not fit, there is nothing they can do. This means venues that may want to book a show can be limited due to space constraints on stage and lack of flexibility. This is frustrating as audiences want to see all types of shows.

Some programmers want to see the work once it has been completed before agreeing to take it on at their venue. But it is very expensive for producers to re-tour work because they need to re-rehearse and actors may have taken other jobs so it is very difficult for a producer to capitalise on a piece of work that people got excited by.

There is a constant pressure for companies to move on and produce the next thing. Where producers are working on splits, they also cannot guarantee income for the team. Perhaps venues should be taking more chances on new work before they have been able to see it.

Some venues believe requests are often not passed on to their clients.

Marketing teams often build a campaign around the star name – is there a Plan B? Venues could be more agile and capable of changing a deal and changing pricing. Signing a star late on can be an advantage as it gives them something else to announce, so if the team had already built up the idea of the show as the attraction and then add on a star, it creates more excitement. If it happened more regularly, it could also result in audiences catching on to the idea that even if no “names” are signed on at the beginning, they might be later on.

## **Actions**

- The industry needs to look at the structural way touring operates, because at the moment the timescales hinder the ability to secure talent. The industry needs to consider what we can control, and try a coordinated approach between agents, artists and production companies to enable that to happen.
- The industry could focus more on local ecologies and development. Producers and venues could take a more strategic approach to developing work that supports audiences. The aim should be for the work to be the celebrity and not just the creatives involved.
- Requirements for big names shouldn't stop us taking creative risks – announcing a 'name' at a later stage can be a useful marketing tool.

## Discussion Two

### Mixed messages? Welcoming audiences and managing security.

**Facilitator: Anna Williams,** [Birmingham Royal Ballet](#)

**Conversation starters:**

- **Steve Blake,** [Storm 4 Events](#)
- **Jonathan Saville,** [Nottingham Theatre Royal & Royal Concert Hall](#)

Jonathan talked about the context for Nottingham Theatre Royal & Royal Concert Hall. This consists of a 1100 seat Matcham theatre and a 2500 seat modern venue taking classical & contemporary music, comedy, dance, children's shows, talks and large West End transfer musicals. Nottingham has areas of high deprivation in the city balanced by affluent country dwellers. Last year they saw a £19 million turnover with over 600,000 customers through the door.

Instances of customers having too much to drink are commonplace for many shows, including panto. In some shows people want to get up and dance or join in with the show's tunes and they have to be asked not to. They have also had specific instances that go well beyond that.

Both venues now have security staff present on Friday & Saturday evenings, and at all performances if deemed a higher risk show. They have introduced a traffic light system to assess the security risk of all shows and have heightened security on all amber and red shows. They have double duty manager presence on high risk shows, and they are changing programming policy to remove certain shows. They are also investigating CCTV trained on the audience in the auditorium and investigating bodycam wear for security staff.

#### Discussion

The discussion ranged from how to provide an inclusive welcome, whether and how to change expectations of what audience behaviour 'should' be, how to prevent incidents from happening, the rise of alcohol related incidents, how to manage and create expectations of security measures while also providing a good welcome.

#### Actions

- Intelligence and knowledge sharing: what are the shows that tend to have issues, what is being done to manage problems/unexpected behaviour. From our sector and the wider entertainment industry.
  - As there is a genuine need for equality of opportunity and access, this will have an impact on audiences and how they engage. UK Theatre to work with others e.g. funders to look at the longer-term changes.
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# Discussion Three

## Beyond Brexit: Opportunities for international working

**Facilitator: Leonora Thompson, [WNO](#)**

### Conversation starters:

- **David Hutchinson, [Selladoor](#)**
- **Jo Crowley, [1927](#)**
- **Tess Gale, [DCMS](#)**

Jo Crowley spoke about her experience at 1927 and touring outside the UK/EU. She struggles to get a UK programmer to pick up the phone, but they are invited by China to present the type of work there that they cannot present in the UK.

Tess Gale shared how DCMS are engaged and advocating to government on the industry's behalf. She asked the room to feed back to them about what more DCMS can do. She also spoke of opportunities in China and other countries where there is huge demand for international projects.

David Hutchinson spoke of Selladoor's background and their experience of touring outside of the UK. He said he feels the sector needs to have a stronger voice and to speak up more about the positives, for example existing "new" markets like China. The world is more interconnected and accessible than ever before. Brexit allows companies to redefine relationships.

He gave some practical ideas such as twinning cultural cities/venues where staff could share practices and productions. Asia has an interest in investing in and co-creating work and want to be a part of the journey from the start; a forum for international promoters. When he is aboard he pops into the local theatre and recently set up a mini tour in Greece this way.

### Discussion

During a recent experience of touring to US venues and audiences a delegate commented on how different the work was, leading to a concern that if the UK leaves the EU the work may change and not be as unique.

Delegates spoke of concerns around bringing staff over from the EU into the UK, particularly if there is No Deal.

DCMS is aware of unanswered questions and assured people that they are not holding back information. The Home Office are in the middle of setting up their policy.

There was the suggestion of a sharing platform for practical knowledge.

An example of how an organisation budgeted for a donation for charity when touring to a country – but felt uncomfortable visiting from an ethics point of view.

Jude Henderson from [FST](#) spoke about [Made in Scotland Festival](#) in Brussels and how shows are matched with venues. There is a focus on relationship building and they are really interested in hearing about what relationships come out of the Made in Scotland Festival.

Others talked about the importance of staying in [Creative Europe](#) and how Universities are great examples of international networking.

## Actions

- UK Theatre could facilitate the sharing of practical experiences and good practice in international working.
  - Consider how to link better through relationships; outreach and participation is better all round for everyone. Could we consider twinning venues and cities?
  - UK Theatre to keep up the work it is doing and make sure people know about it.
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## Discussion Four

### Opportunities for local growth:

Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships, tourism and local industrial strategies to unlock local innovation and growth.

#### Facilitator: Anita Bhalla OBE

#### Conversation starters:

- **Kris Bryce**, [Pitlochry Festival Theatre](#)
- **Fiona Gibson**, [Liverpool Everyman](#)

#### Discussion

- We have a role to play in a range of areas; regeneration, place making, tourism, skills growth and skills transfer, attracting inward investment to an area, engaging with young people and different audiences.
- We should also make the case for how we add value not only to the economy but also in health and wellbeing.
- Make the case to LEPs for being in their delivering economic development team, rather than their culture delivery team.
- We need to talk about ourselves not only in terms of culture but also the impact we have with communities.
- Devolution gives us plenty of opportunities in our localities and regions to make ourselves part of the local/regional economic case with LEPs, Councils, Combined Authorities and other stakeholders. But there are challenges - because to some we are currently invisible.
- Continue to look into the balance between capital funds and revenue; it is possible to lever income through difference budgets. Do we need a policy shift?
- Be bold in driving uncomfortable conversations, for example the hotel levy.
- Diversity is not only about people (though this needs to be addressed urgently) but also in thought and creativity.

#### Actions

- Change our own dialogue to speak the language of our stakeholders. Look at the key priorities of LEPs etc to see how we could influence their policies and practices and support them to deliver.
- More research or share research about our economic impact. This will help build our case as a serious economic contributor in regions and nationally.
- Need a strong collective voice so we can be heard and lobby effectively – UK Theatre can do this.

## Discussion Five

### Building revenue and attendance:

How do we programme to attract new audiences *and* develop the ones we've got?

**Facilitator: Stephanie Sirr**, [Nottingham Playhouse](#)

#### Conversation starters:

- **Lindsay Anderson**, [TRG Arts](#)
- **Rebecca Wilcock**, [Hartshorn Hook](#)

Lindsay opened the discussion by explaining her interest in the concept of audience “loyalty”. She feels that the industry has a love affair with the idea of new audiences and she acknowledged their importance, but she wanted to address the issue of how to retain audiences. Work has been done to attract more diverse audiences but how are theatres going to keep them coming back? A discussion needs to be had around how organisations make choices about what to put on stage and how things are looking long term rather than show to show.

She asked the group about the role of programming in attracting people and how the groups' teams are setting things up to ensure the relationship continues. How long do organisations need to engage with people before they feel they have secured their interest permanently and how frequently do “loyal” audience members actually attend the theatre?

Rebecca from Hartshorn Hook explained that she works over a range of different types of theatre, and tours with immersive shows. These shows attract audiences because they are intrigued by the concept of the show. With their production of *The Great Gatsby*, Hartshorn Hook worked with a traditional theatre but did not use their venue – the Theatre was therefore able to benefit financially from the ticket sales but they did not use their space. The audience was made up of 50% first time bookers and 30% of those have now booked with York Theatre again for other shows. They have also found that during immersive shows, audiences spend 3-5 times more on, for example, food, drink and merchandise than on normal productions. A high proportion of the immersive audience are first timers and these audiences are then encouraged to come back and try other types of productions.

The market is saturated and people will not book to see a show if they have not heard of it, but once word of mouth gets out and the local press validates the show, the audience will come in quite late in the run. To hook the audience earlier it is vital to market the show so they understand what it is. Rebecca asked the group how venues and producers can work together to create new revenue streams and what steps can they take to get audiences hooked to see a show before it becomes validated.

#### Discussion

Stephanie asked the venues present; how many have a lot of audience capacity left to sell on their current shows? Most of the group said they had sold 80% plus of their tickets and she felt this was very positive news.

She asked if many in the room had had success with event theatre. Some have been staging dining event theatre such as *Fawlty Towers* and *Only Fools and Horses*. These shows sell out very quickly and people are attracted to the idea of dressing up and drinking throughout the show. They are terrific revenue earners through drink sales too. Some host sing-a-long shows which are very popular. The interpretation of “the theatre experience” is much broader than the traditional idea of a theatrical show.

Some are experimenting with an escape game focussing on 16-24 year olds. It will be a theatrical and immersive game at a venue next door to their building. It is important to create work that new audiences want to go to rather than try to attract them to the shows they are already putting on. Once they try one type of experience, they may then consider going to see traditional theatre productions too.

From a commercial perspective, should the industry stop trying so hard to force work on people who do not want to see it and instead, take a more segmented approach to what they programme? Producers and theatres know what type of work will be attractive to certain groups so they could do more targeted marketing of their product to those groups and make it clear that this show is for them. The group agreed.

Theatres could introduce zoning in theatres, so there are areas for people who want to dance along and have a different type of experience. It is important to manage audiences' expectations. However, Lindsay with TRG Arts pointed out this type of segmentation could go against the industry's push for inclusivity.

A contributor said they do not make any ancillary sales when school groups come. They have loyalty and can rely on families and school groups to come back each year but need help in maximising their yield around new audiences. A question was posed to participants to see if anyone had examples of ideas beyond merchandise and food that have really helped increase and diversify revenue streams? There was no response.

When a producer first develops a show, do they already know who they think it will appeal to? Most of the group all agreed they did - but some felt this created an artistic sacrifice as it meant people were taking less risks.

Stephanie brought the group back to the question about how organisation's define loyalty and how often someone needs to attend to be consider a regular. The majority felt regular attendance was 4 or more shows, however a few people considered regular attendance to be once every 18 months. Some don't consider the once a year Christmas show attendees regular visitors. Someone said these audiences are not willing to come more often because the shows are expensive, and people do not have the funds to outlay more money on other shows. Dynamic pricing and seat-based pricing can try and encourage higher attendance at other shows. Secondary spending is decreasing and it was suggested that this could be related to higher ticket prices.

Stephanie also reposed the questions, what does it mean for audiences to feel that they are being loyal to a venue? Dr Kirsty Sedgman was in attendance and said she is currently looking back at historic correspondence between the audience and theatres. Archival letters from the 1940s and 1950s show that theatres had a tendency to call on audiences for their support when the building was in danger. People would help in these circumstances, so audience loyalty does exist, but it does not necessarily result in the audience actually attending productions. She asked if people use this tactic of asking for help from the community today e.g. if a show is selling badly and they are financially at risk, or if it is seen as a sign of weakness that should be avoided?

Lindsay said the question is what will garner greater support – appearing vulnerable or showing strength and success?

In the US, organisations will call upon the support of big donors - but organisations must use vulnerability carefully because people want to support something that they believe is a worthwhile asset in the community to invest in. The industry has needs and people need to understand how they can be a part of the solution - there are many ways people can engage and support the industry.

This is an exciting time for the industry because there is a whole new demographic coming to theatres. People

that grew up on Disney musicals and Wicked and whose parents took them to see these shows as children are now young independent people spending their own money to come and see shows such as Everybody's Talking About Jamie, Heathers, Six etc. They are coming more and there are high quality shows that are attractive and treat younger people as adults.

There is now a much wider variety of musicals and more modern ones alongside the traditional shows. Is this the success of segmenting the audience and targeting shows at specific groups?

Stephanie raised the topic of dramas – are there ideas beyond big-name casting for how to sell plays to regular attenders?

Audiences still have a desire for a good night out even when they are going to see a drama. Audience experience is what needs to be considered when conceptualising a show and it should be showcased in the marketing so that the public are told that they will leave the show feeling excited and invigorated. The USP of the show should be how it makes the attendee feel.

Venues struggle to book good quality dramas that people have heard of. Known shows or shows based on known properties will help bring people in initially – then the audience would be encouraged to come and try more adventurous things. Build trust first.

This puts pressure on theatre; the experience needs to be perfect to make it worth it, while this expectation would never be placed on every film seen at the cinema.

Organisations grow a base of loyal audiences who are open to as many different experiences over the year as possible? Venues are limited with the 'dramatic' shows they can programme by the strategic aims of their business and their funding obligations, and have trouble booking recognisable titles.

It can be scary for producers to put on dramas because even when they produce a play that gets excellent reviews it can still be unsuccessful when it goes out on tour – shows are cancelled when they don't reach the audience.

There was a call for ideas the group had for selling tickets beyond star casting. If the venue/producer is not an NPO and they are looking to put on a good drama, maybe they should reach out to others and see if they can co-produce.

A traditional receiving house has now expanded the work they do. Starting with simple things such as putting educational work in their front of house to help develop audiences, because when people visited, they would see different types of work in the building and would be encouraged to come and see it themselves. Audiences were drawn into their more niche spaces and eventually they would try something in the main space.

While segmenting could be a good idea, would it be a better approach to put things in front of people and let them know that, if they are interested in it, they can experience more of that work through them?

Most venues have participation programmes to add comprehension and involvement in the work they do. Participatory work adds value to organisations. For example [Chichester Festival Theatre's "Prologue" scheme](#) lets young people purchase cheaper tickets and helps build up a youth audience who could become their main audience of the future. They receive Arts Council funding.

## Actions

- The possibility of segmenting who the work is aimed at more and greater honesty about what the work is/isn't (e.g. it's ok to get up and dance, have a drink etc), so they can determine who the work is actually for.
  - The idea of using more experiential theatre to help bring in new audiences and generate greater revenue.
  - Venues need to think more about audience loyalty and the relationship an organisation is cultivating with audiences over time. Develop a plan for retention of all audience members and especially when engaging in attracting diverse audiences.
  - Invest in the relationship between a venue and the community so the venue engages people at all stages of the audiences' lives. When a relationship is forged, an organisation can ask for support on the rare occasion, but it is also important to think about how to cultivate a genuine loyal relationship, and understand what "loyal" / looks like for your audience members.
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## Discussion Six

### What's so great about theatre's working culture?

**Facilitator:** Michèle Taylor, [Ramps on the Moon](#)

#### Conversation starters:

- **Sarah Houston**, [Mayflower Theatre](#)
- **Gina Abolins**, [Spark](#)

Sarah said the work the Mayflower does starts with their values, and they ensure these are at the heart of what they do. They are appraised against them and talk about them all the time.

She talked about [Fish Psychology](#) and that staff are asked to read a [book](#) on this. They run 'Fish Fridays', which can mean a no email day, cake and discussions. They offer flu jabs, have a staff netball team, yoga, choir, and a suggestions scheme where you can win tickets to a show. They run mental health first aid training for all line managers and invite staff families to see the panto. When they were closed for 15 weeks for refurbishment all staff volunteered for local charities one day a week.

Gina talked about her background and how the charity, [Spark](#), came about. The organisation works in schools to explore gender equality. They also work in, collaboration with [Tonic Theatre](#), with drama schools on a project called Empower on abuse of power and what the norms are in theatres and how can we change these, by setting different expectations of those entering the industry.

#### Discussion

- Michèle asked attendees to discuss the questions: "What are you proud of in your organisation?" and "What needs to change?" in small groups, and then report back to the room.
- Birmingham Royal Ballet: Organisational away days to develop fluid hierarchies.

- Shakespeare's Globe: Creative and effective working culture, ensuring the working day for productions is 11am-5:30pm, with a preparatory hour 10-11am to allow for the school run or to go to the doctors.
- Wiltshire Creative: Using time delays for responding to emails so your email doesn't land in someone's inbox after 6pm but arrives at 10am the next day.
- PIPA: Flexibility and using digital platforms to support this. i.e. recruiting via Skype and working remotely.
- Complicité: An example of getting an out of office from Scandinavian company saying 'I am away for two weeks and this email will not be saved. If it is still important in two weeks, please get in touch'.
- RSC: Have a respect policy which is introduced to new people by the Senior Management Team.
- NT Productions: Revisit employee handbook and inductions at the end of the first week when people are more settled. Also, these policies need to come from senior management and the Board to work.
- Graeae: Have a 2-page code of conduct that goes out with contracts, it talks about what language we use and don't use.
- Belgrade: Requested that SOLT and UK Theatre keep the [Theatre Helpline](#) going. They are interested in any feedback on how much it has been used.
- Old Vic: Talked about the [Guardians Programme](#).

## **Actions**

- Our culture has its roots in a pre-digital age – what opportunities does digital give for us to adopt flexible working? Embrace digital and find a way to make the workplace more accessible.
  - Change must come from the top of an organisation.
  - UK Theatre could look at setting up a sharing/ideas repository for people to learn from.
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# Summary of suggested actions

## **Discussion one: What goes on tour? Developing content to build audiences.**

- The industry needs to look at the structural way touring operates – because at the moment the timescales hinder the ability to secure talent. The industry needs to consider what we can control, and try a coordinated approach between agents, artists and production companies to enable that to happen.
- The industry could focus more on local ecologies and development. Producers and venues could take a more strategic approach to developing work that supports audiences. The aim should be for the work to be the celebrity and not just the creatives involved.

## **Discussion two: Mixed messages?**

### **Welcoming audiences and managing security.**

- Intelligence and knowledge sharing: what are the shows that tend to have issues, what is being done to manage problems/unexpected behaviour. From our sector and the wider entertainment industry.
- As there is a genuine need for equality of opportunity and access, this will have an impact on audiences and how they engage. UK Theatre to work with others e.g. funders to look at the longer-term changes.

## **Discussion three: Beyond Brexit. Opportunities for international working.**

- UK Theatre could facilitate the sharing of practical experiences and good practice in international working.
- Consider how to link better through relationships; outreach and participation is better all round for everyone. Could we consider twinning venues and cities?
- UK Theatre to keep up the work it is doing and make sure people know about it.

## **Discussion four: Opportunities for local growth. Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships, tourism and local industrial strategies to unlock local innovation and growth.**

- Change our own dialogue to speak the language of our stakeholders. Look at the key priorities of LEPs etc to see how we could influence their policies and practices and support them to deliver.
- More research or share research about our economic impact. This will help build our case as a serious economic contributor in regions and nationally.
- Need a strong collective voice so we can be heard and lobby effectively – UK Theatre can do this.

## **Discussion five: Building revenue and attendance. How do we programme to attract new audiences and develop the ones we've got?**

- The possibility of segmenting who the work is aimed at more and greater honesty about what the work is/isn't (e.g. it's ok to get up and dance, have a drink etc), so they can determine who the work is actually for.
- The idea of using more experiential theatre to help bring in new audiences and generate greater revenue.

- Venues need to think more about audience loyalty and the relationship an organisation is cultivating with audiences over time. Develop a plan for retention of all audience members and especially when engaging in attracting diverse audiences.
- Invest in the relationship between a venue and the community so the venue engages people at all stages of the audiences' lives. When a relationship is forged, an organisation can ask for support on the rare occasion, but it is also important to think about how to cultivate a genuine loyal relationship, and understand what "loyal" / means looks like for your audience members.

## **Discussion six: What's so great about theatre's working culture?**

- Our culture has its roots in a pre-digital age – what opportunities does digital give for us to adopt flexible working? Embrace digital and find a way to make the workplace more accessible.
  - Change must come from the top of an organisation.
  - UK Theatre could look at setting up a sharing/ideas repository for people to learn from.
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## **Focus on: Producing, Presenting and Touring**

All actions are summarised in the [Producing, Presenting and Touring Handbook](#).

### **Actions noted from Knowledge Sessions**

#### **Know Your Rights:**

Formulate a collective standard agreement / rights framework for future exploitation of creative assets, and the exploitation for digital use/distribution.

#### **Speaker: Amanda Huxtable**

Read her 'lightning talk' [here](#)

#### **Speaker: Dr Kirsty Sedgman**

Read her talk on audience behaviour [here](#)

#### **Speaker: Extinction Rebellion**

There was a strong call through the conference feedback for a greater emphasis on the ecological and climate emergency.

#### **Sharing information/learning and facilitate collaborations**

Many of the discussions at the Theatre and Touring Symposium called for greater sharing of knowledge and facilitation of collaborations. UK Theatre will explore solutions to achieve this, for example a searchable database of case studies with contact details.

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