

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT: A COMPETITIVE STRATEGY FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE LIVE-PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY

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Abstract

In an era marked by rapidly shifting consumer preferences and intense competition from digital and leisure alternatives, the live-performing arts industry—especially in developing contexts such as Nigeria—faces significant audience attrition. Contemporary audiences are digitally literate, highly selective, and increasingly expect personalised and engaging cultural experiences. In response to these challenges, this paper examines audience development as a strategic, research-driven approach for enhancing the socio-economic viability of the live-performing arts sector. Moving beyond traditional marketing, audience development is positioned as a holistic, organisation-wide commitment to attracting, retaining, and deepening relationships with diverse audience segments. Drawing upon established models of audience development and competitive strategy, this study investigates the transformative potential of these frameworks through participant observation, focus group discussions, and case study analysis. The Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Centre is presented as a model institution that has successfully employed well-researched audience development strategies—such as segmented communication, adaptive programming, and relationship cultivation—to sustain vibrant, loyal patronage despite prevailing challenges. Findings reveal that MUSON's deliberate investment in audience engagement not only enhances attendance and revenue but also reinforces its cultural mission and social relevance. The paper argues that audience development is not merely a promotional activity but a critical competitive strategy for ensuring the economic sustainability and cultural impact of live-performing arts institutions. It concludes that without such intentional strategies, live-performance organisations risk obsolescence in an increasingly fragmented and demanding entertainment landscape.

Keywords: Audience Development, Live-performing Arts, Competitive Strategy, Socio-Economic Viability, Cultural Sustainability

Introduction

A typical Nigerian 21st Century live-performing arts audience has become very critical, sophisticated, virtually inclined, selective, aggressive and demanding, the much more so, with the avalanche of recreational activity options they are confronted with. On the other hand, they are buffeted with an array of competitive marketing and advertising activities by the conventional industries routing for a substantial share of their brain space. Ironically, the live-performing art is one industry that is either deliberately ignoring the need to invest immensely in marketing, or is simply incapable of the huge cost of marketing and advertising adventure as engaged by the conventional industries especially against the backdrop of the ever-rising cost of articulating live-performances on stage and with producers and Theatre organisations hardly able to break even on their investment.

According to view.officeapps.live.com:

it has become apparent that audiences are making stronger demands for a personalised experience. This is a trend led by the changes in new technology which is allowing individuals to tailor every aspect of their life to their own needs and interests: organisations that are audience-focused and deliver a personalised experience, are likely to be the same organisations that thrive in the future (2022).

In other words it has become pertinent that if one must stay competitive and continue to attract the audience, one must develop a competitive edge that will enable one to beat the prospective audience as well as the competing organisations, at their game and successfully attract, sustain and retain an all time audience for one's own theatre live-performances.

According to Leadbeater, 2005 as cited in view.officeapps.live.com:

Successful arts organisations are arts led but audience focused. They do not sell their souls to pack in an audience. They draw audiences to work of high quality, which can be challenging and difficult. But they never take their audiences for granted. Arts organisations succeed when they create a dynamic relationship between artists, their art and an audience. The challenge is developing that dynamic relationship at a time when audiences are becoming more demanding, fragmented and unpredictable.

One way of achieving these “personalised experiences” for ones' audiences to be able to permanently engage them, is through the audience development strategy. The Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Centre has adopted this approach for so many years. This paper however examines audience development as a life-saving competitive strategy for life-performing arts organisations of the 21st Century against the background of the audience attrition challenges faced by the live-performing arts industry.

What is Audience Development and Why Does it Matter?

Audience development is a wide-ranging phenomenon that covers a large number of activities, approaches and philosophies channeled towards attracting the attention, interest, desire, action-to-buy- in, of a set of loyal audience or publics, whose patronage and partnership over time have been obtained, sustained and retained by the organisation. Audience development is a key marketing effort that however goes beyond the borders of traditional marketing activities, aiming at attracting new audiences, retaining existing ones as well as sustaining the continual goodwill and patronage of future publics of the organisation.

According to the Arts Council of England (2006):

The term audience development describes activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences and to help arts organisations to develop ongoing relationships with audiences. It can include aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care and distribution.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (2009) also in further confirmation, posits that:

Audience development is about taking action to put people centre-stage. It involves making an effort to understand what they want and presenting your heritage site, collection or activity in a way which is accessible, inviting and meaningful for them; and it involves building on-going relationships to encourage participation and support from as broad a range of people as possible for the long-term.

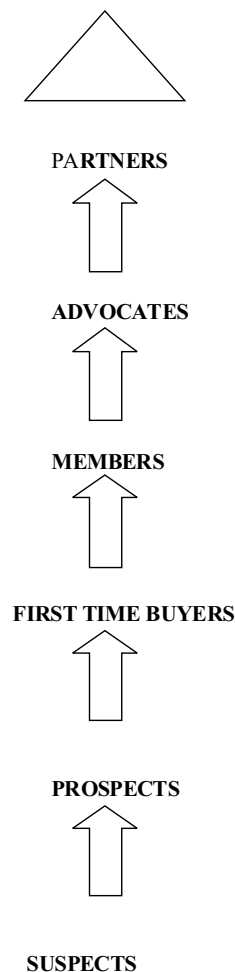
And then, Ford (2002) says that audience development ...

... is about making an organisation-wide commitment to engaging with people whether or not they are currently your 'audience' and developing long-term relationships of mutual respect and benefit with those people. This involves finding ways of breaking down the physical, psychological, social, financial, practical or other barriers that prevent people from participating. It requires on-going investment in research, systematic segmented and targeted communications, and most of all, the ability to be flexible and innovative with the [artistic] product.

The common denominator in these definitions is that audience development focuses on existing, but very importantly, new and prospective audiences; that is, in attracting people both present audiences, and those not currently engaging with one's organisation. Understanding the present premise that attracting audiences to live-performances is now more or less, a hard-sell adventure, it becomes critical that in practice, developing new relationships with individuals from hard-to-reach groups, as well as choosing to broaden ones' efforts to actually deepen relationship with existing audiences is now a sine qua non to successful and effective audience development adventure.

To that extent, audience development strategy possess techniques and approaches that help organisations get to know their existing and potential audiences better. This also helps to tailor their brand offers to these audiences, therefore (hopefully), encouraging the organisation's first-time and return-core audiences to attend more often, and with their friends, and or become donors, friends or supporters. This is the ultimate objective of the audience development strategy. The figure below effectively illustrates the aim and ultimate objective of all the organisational efforts at audience development, which is, to build a loyal and partnering subscribing audience from been a suspect to

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The Progression Chain of Audience Development Objectives

The above audience development progression chain represents the various stages of audience development process step by step achievement until it gets each member of the developed audience to the optimum stage of actually becoming the organisation's 'partners'; At the base of the continuum is the suspects stage which covers the entire organisation's catchment environment wherein almost every inhabitant is a suspect that might eventually become a first-time patron. Then the next stage is the prospects stage where the likelihood of a potential audience becoming an actual patron gets stronger and more positive than been a mere suspect. From the stage of prospects which actually gets even fewer, the crop of first time buyers emerge, again, from which a set of repeat buyers further emerges. From the group of repeat buyers yet a fewer faithful patrons become 'members'. At this 'membership' stage, the patrons tend to begin to take full responsibilities of their consistent buying decision, identifying with the company as their first stop, and taking ownership of their patronage engagements.

At this 'Member' stage, the patrons do not need marketing persuasions anymore to buy except if for information and reminder purposes. They tend to develop a higher level of confidence in the service they enjoy and can take the further risk of inviting other prospects to become buyers and eventual repeat buyers like themselves. From the group of members, emerges the advocates. The advocates actually take a further step of becoming unsolicited brand ambassadors for the organisation and the offering they patronize, making excuses for likely shortfalls. The partner stage is the final and ultimate zenith of the continuum. When a company successfully takes a consumer or patron from the level of been mere suspects, through the rank to the level of partners, the customer becomes permanently loyal patrons and friends of the company.

The organisation on a continuum basis puts activities in place that endear its target publics to their precinct and to activities that take place in their theatre. These activities range from sheer warm reception from the gatemen, to the hospitalities shown by the customer service personnel, to the neatness and attractiveness of the Theatre ambience (within and outside), to the safeness of lives and properties of the publics within the theatre environment, to the availability of comfortable conveniences, seating comfort and adequate seating capacity, and then of course to the quality standards of product and service offerings, web presence contents and search engine optimisation, to the direct customer engagement activities and awareness creation communication techniques. Audience development strategy actually ranges from the micro to macro organisation-wide efforts aimed at grabbing the attention, goodwill, support, patronage and partnership of the organisation's publics, and ultimately retaining them for life.

The MUSON Centre Example

The MUSON Centre is a state-of-the-art performing arts and culture centre, and international events venue located at Marina, Lagos. It is a not-for-profit private concern run by a Trustee of collective individuals whose initial interest was the love of Western Classical Music. The interest subsequently evolved to include the showcasing of resident productions of various other art genres in the still, and live-performances. MUSON also doubles as a world class venue to a cross-section of other high-notch commercial, academic and social events such as book launches, product launches, corporate annual dinner or award ceremonies, corporate annual general meetings, weddings and family anniversaries, etc..

Over the years since its founding and opening for business in 1987, the Centre, through its management and the consistent intervention of its astute trustees, have survived and thrived through consistent and committed engagement of a range of audience development strategies which incidentally gave it its competitive edge over its contemporaries, most of which have closed shops. This has enabled the establishment to earn for itself an impressive support, sponsorships, patronages and partnership from a regular and loyal team of audiences for its in-house artistic live performances, and for its events venue

ventures. This has gone a long way earn the Centre its record of a consistent average of 500% growth in its asset and annual profit accumulation. (MUSON Annual Report 2009).

Yet the MUSON Centre remains a not-for-profit organisation. (Ohenhen, 2016). Examples of key audience development strategies of the MUSON Centre and recommended for other art-based and non-art conventional organisations include: branding and positioning; routine customer satisfaction survey; data-base marketing; membership subscription; target direct mail-shot; customer relationship management and marketing; experiential marketing; social media and digital direct interaction with existing and potential customers on their (customers') anniversaries; theatre internal and external ambience management; customer care call-centre; email marketing; web-site advertising; events marketing and collaboration activities; issues management activities and reputation management, facility maintenance and management. (Ohenhen, 2016). It could be observed that these array of audience development activities are essentially customer centric and geared toward ensuring a command of public goodwill and ultimate patronage, loyalty and retention.

Audience Development as a Competitive Strategy

Competitive strategy according to Porter, (2021) “is a long-term action plan of a company which is directed to gain competitive advantage over its rivals after evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the industry and compare it to theirs”. Michael Porter, a Harvard Business School professor, further posited that it is necessary for businesses to understand the core principles of this concept that will help them to make well-informed business decisions in the course of action. A competitive strategy of an organisation, or an institution, sets the organisation apart from the rest in its industry. It is a differentiating factor that provides an organisation a competitive edge that enables it attract its own developed and sizeable customers and patronages regardless of the aggressiveness of the competition it faces in its industry.

The competitive strategy is focused on achieving an above average position and generate a superior Return on Investment (ROI). This strategy becomes a critical factor for survival in the marketplace, when an organisation or an industry is confronted with competitors with several similar or alternative offerings for the same array of consumers. Organisations that have taken time to develop their own competitive strategy have been able to fill a void in management thinking, providing itself an enduring foundation and grounding point on which all subsequent strategies within the organisation can be built. Competitive strategy provides organisations with a disciplined structure to the question of how firms achieve superior profitability.

In a generally competitive business environment where it is expected however, that the performing arts and culture should survive and thrive howbeit, the industry incidentally competes with, not just firms doing the same businesses of the arts of live-performances, but also with any establishment or firms that offer anything from entertainment to recreations such as cinema, eateries, restaurants, recreation centres, amusement parks and gardens, club houses and night clubs. Meanwhile, these seeming unconventional but very aggressively competitive ventures tend to more naturally find it convenient to invest a huge percentage of their annual budgets in conventional marketing campaigns.

The performing arts and culture industry however, is usually shy of. Engaging in conventional marketing campaigns, perhaps for the reason of unaffordable high costs of production or for the 'altruistic' reasons of arts-for-arts sake. Audience development strategy, which goes way beyond the core traditional below-the-line and above-the-line marketing and advertising campaigns, to include any efforts of the organisation that is capable of eliciting the goodwill and eventual partnering patronage of a consistent loyal public, becomes a much more cost-effective and long term strategy, capable of giving the industry a quintessential competitive advantage to sustain it in business. Just like Porter says

of competitive strategy, audience development is equally a long-term action plan of an organisation that is capable of enabling the organisation earn a competitive edge over its peers or competitors over a long haul. It, incidentally is a very cost effective venture compared to a direct engagement of conventional marketing and advertising campaigns.

Key Performance Indicators of Audience Development Strategy

Management Strategic Approach: Effective audience development is always strategic and planned, and takes a sustainable approach to developing long-term relationships with audiences. There is agreement that key to success is a commitment not just to attracting someone for one visit, but in investing in developing long-term relationships with individuals. At the MUSON Centre for example, there is a general long-term commitment efforts to relationship building from the gate, to the chairman of the board of Trustees. This is important as it is comparatively easy to invest time, energy and resources to generating a new, larger and more diverse audience for a single event or activity, but keeping those audiences engaged and retained require an ongoing commitment to them. For example, an organisation will need to continue programming relevant work, making their facilities accessible and listening to their responses and ideas. Ultimately developing a commitment to audiences requires every aspect of the organisation to work together to ensure ongoing relevance, a warm welcome and a responsive attitude. This has been one of the hallmarks of the MUSON Centre.

Short-Term and Long-Term Commitment

Audience development strategy is both short term and long term impacts. Short term audience development are usually present offerings-based efforts, and though their impacts could be often immediately effective but could be quite expensive. They are often direct targeted or mass marketing oriented investments focused at immediate sales. Describing employees default disposition to this efforts, Hub Plan, 2008 comments:

In particular, staff feel that where new audiences have been attracted to venues, it has been the result of intensive project-based work that is unsustainable. New audiences have visited once but have not felt that the venue is able to offer them anything of relevance long-term. The need to address this short-term approach to audience development is key.

In other words, audience development effectiveness is beyond the immediate and instant benefits of organisational marketing, call to action activities. It is much more deeper forward looking customer engagement that endears them on a piecemeal basis but for an eventual permanent loyalty.

The likely fall-outs of these efforts are:

- *Increased numbers of attenders
- *New relationships with audiences from hard-to-reach groups
- *Increased familiarity with a new target group
- *Enhanced experience for your audiences (Hub Plan, 2008).

Organisation-Wide Commitment: An art organisation or even the conventional industry that is committed to audience development recognises that while responsibility for front-line delivery of audience development activity may fall to one particular department, all other parts of the organisation are also committed to contributing to this area of work. For example again, at MUSON Centre, first-time visitor experience teams, usually consisting of the house management units members, are briefed to welcome and support new audiences that might have been attracted initially through the work of the

marketing department. Without this kind of organisation-wide commitment there is a dangerous possibility that newly attracted audiences may be let down by aspects of organisational management that may not have appeared directly relevant. This is because new audiences are very sensitive to all aspects of a visit, not just the artistic experience, and if they have a bad time, they are unlikely to give you a second chance.

Change Management: According to the Arts Council of North Ireland:

Audience development involves the identification, engagement and retention of audiences. It is a planned and strategic management function aimed at delivering organisational objectives. Audience development sets out to affect a change in the attitudes, understanding and behaviour of both existing and potential audiences. It seeks to remove barriers, deepen relationships with audiences and create greater inclusion in the arts

For an audience to be effectively developed and ultimately retained to partnership level in the audience development continuum, the organisation must be flexible and adaptable to the idiosyncracies and whims of the audience. The organisational approach to audience development involves an implicit commitment to change. This might mean reassessing organisational priorities, questioning organisational assumptions and being prepared to try-and-fail, as well as to try-and-succeed, all in an attempt to be able to adapt to whatever is in the audience or customer's best interest. Changing organisations' culture, policies or operational procedures could take time, and usually a strategic process, but in the long-run it helps to ensure that everyone is behind the change process, and if it turns out making the customer delighted and loyal, the organisation and those that work in it are better for it.

Customer-Friendliness and Understanding the Reasons for Attrition: Another performance indicator for an effective audience development practice is customercentric activities, activities that puts the customers' best interest in mind in terms of policies administration, rules and regulations and general standard operating procedures. The organisation understands the needs and aspirations of its audience. And it is easy therefore for such organisations to identify the causes of spotted recalcitrance in the audience and reasons for attrition, if and when it happens, and therefore plan ways to overcome them. It is an aberration to assume that everyone can and should enjoy the particular offerings being presented to the audience at any particular time.

Understanding the reasons for customer attrition must spring from an understanding of the organisation's teaming target audience otherwise there can be a danger of compensating for needs that do not affect the people that one actually wants to attract, and this can be seen as patronising or failing to address the problem. This is the reason for a periodic customer, and customer satisfaction survey at the MUSON Centre. It also helps for accurate prediction of what could lead to customer satisfaction and consequently, retention. Identifying and rectifying barriers to patronage is, essentially, an inward-looking approach. The organisation takes a periodic look at itself and see what might need to change to attract people in. It is also possible to reverse this approach, start with the audience, or potential audience, and see if one can identify what motivates them to reach final decisions on offerings and then, package for presentation. A report publication of the Arts Council of England - *Arts Audiences: Insight, AAI*, (2022) also suggests the identification of drivers to attendance, based on the audience profiles developed overtime by the organisation's market segments. For example, describing how to engage with the Family and community focused programme segment, AAI suggests:

Successful strategies for engaging with this group could tap into their key drivers of family and community, positioning arts opportunities as: a fun and social outing for both adults and children; and educational or developmental opportunity for children;

a chance to spend time with friends and family or an opportunity to get involved in the local community. (Arts Council of England Publication, 2022)

Defining most Appropriate Target Communication Channels: A typical audience development conscious organisation must bear in mind that the process invariably is targeted at defining, attracting, engaging, growing, and sustaining a loyal audience of readers, viewers, influencers, or customers and that it is never achieved by a one-off marketing activity. The specific marketing communication channels engaged by the MUSON Centre include: direct mail shots, data-base marketing, direct marketing, e-mail marketing, and tele-marketing. Telephone follow-up and follow-through calls and SMS. Others include:

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|--|---|
| 1. Event sponsorship drive | 11. Sales Letters |
| 2. Event marketing | 12. Database Marketing |
| 3. Event branding | 13. Target Marketing |
| 4. Use of banners | 14. Word-of-Mouth |
| 5. Event brochure advertisement solicitation | 15. Newspaper Advertisement |
| 6. Subscription tickets | 16. News Analysis/interviews |
| 7. Lobby & outdoor display | 17. Photonews |
| 8. Posters | 18. Group Concession tickets |
| 9. Handbills | 19. Advertisement through in-house newsletter |
| 10. Direct Mail Shot | |

Each of these channels were targeted first at the subscribed members of the Society, and then at all their prospects and first time subscribers. The effectiveness of these communication channels was profound given the authoritative direct means through which the messages were conveyed, monitored and followed through. This is also against the background of the competitive activities of contemporaneous competitors springing up around the MUSON Centre catchment area. Also conscious of the fact that there is an ever-increasing competition for consumer's share of brain space due to a plethora of contents being produced and published via various distribution channels like the internet search engines, social channels, and emailing lists, organisations like the MUSON therefore have a unique opportunity to increase their reach and develop large audiences at a fraction of what it used to cost. MUSON is usually highly selective in their choice of cost-effective communication channels as audience development strategy is supposedly a more cost-saving channel than traditional marketing activities.

Membership Subscription or Ticket Subscription Strategy: One of the winning strategies of the MUSON Centre is its Membership subscription system. In fact a whole department called Membership Department is delegated to seeing to a concerted management of its membership society: encouraging new member subscription, consistent updating and networking with all members through a database, initiating programmes that give the members a sense of belonging and joint ownership. The membership subscription, beside been another huge funding source for the organisation, provides a immense leverage for a ready and loyal audience for all its resident programmes and performances, and therefore an easy channel for ticket subscription. MUSON has a graded membership system categorised into seven levels: the table in the plate below provides the details of the various membership categories, their entrance fees, annual subscription fees and the benefits of each category. Every member of the society becomes the first direct target for the ticket subscription usually contained in a direct mail shot way ahead of the performances and events.

 The Musical Society of Nigeria			
NOTES ON MUSON MEMBERSHIP			
	Entrance Fee	Annual Subscription	Benefits
Student Member 8 - 21yrs	N5,000	N2,000	● Receives MUSON Newsletter and concert flyers ● Receives a membership smart card ● Get invited for "members only garden" party ● Enjoys discount on ticket prices for MUSON Concerts
Member	N25,000	N10,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Student member' ● Has opportunity to limited number of seats Reserved for members at MUSON concerts
Participating Donor	N100,000	N30,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Member' ● Listed in MUSON Concert Programmes
Supporting Donor	N250,000	N30,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Member' ● Listed in MUSON Concert Programmes ● Presented with a certificate of recognition
Sustainer	N500,000	N30,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Supporting donor' ● Listed on a Mansionia Plaque displayed conspicuously at the MUSON Centre
Sponsor	N750,000	N30,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Supporting donor' ● Listed on a Silver Plaque displayed conspicuously at the MUSON Centre
Benefactor	N1,000,000	N30,000	● Is entitled to privileges of a 'Supporting donor' ● Listed on a Gold Plaque displayed conspicuously at the MUSON Centre ● Privileged to choose beforehand, a number of seats at all MUSON Concert

NOTE: All Membership categories are entitled to negotiable discounts on the use of the MUSON halls
Existing members are welcome to upgrade to higher levels at any time

MUSON BANK DETAILS

The Musical Society of Nigeria | Zenith Bank Plc | Acct No: 1010497617 | Sort Code : 057250013

For enquiries - membership@muson.org | To Become a member, visit - www.muson.org/become-a-member
08077607788 | 09098940590 | 08098940599

Plate 1. Showing MUSON Membership subscription. Source - www.muson.org

The membership subscription system is a strategy that all resident theatres, including some commercial and non-for-profit theatres adopt as an effective audience development mechanism. Another example of the like of MUSON is the Glover Memorial Hall, also located on the Marina in Lagos Island. It makes it easy and near automatic for all their members to become first hand patron partners of the organisations' events.

Customer Relationship Management System: Linked directly or indirectly with membership subscription system, various customer relationship management activities such as annual customer recognition banquet - a platform whereby a number of consistent patrons during the year are compiled for various recognitions and rewards; membership ticket discounts – a system that provides for members of the MUSON society enjoying close to 50% standard discount on all concerts gate fees; periodic information bulletins, periodic newsletters, information call centre, customer-value co-creation channels – usually flagged through various customer questionnaire survey platforms; brain storming sessions with members on how best to improve on their programming; personalised anniversary greetings through MUSON's inhouse newsletters, SMS, and personal emails of members and regular patrons... are all efforts at the MUSON Centre to endear their publics and court their consistent patronage. This is the meat of the audience development strategy of the MUSON.

Consistent Ambience and Facility Maintenance and Management System: Bearing in mind that audience development includes any activity of an organisation that is capable of attracting, sustaining and retaining the attention, goodwill and consistent present, but most especially, future patronage of an art organisation, regardless of whether it is a hardcore call to action marketing effort or not. To the extent to which committed, consistent ambience maintenance and facility management contributes to this overall corporate objectives, it becomes a major contributor to the audience development legacy of the organisation. MUSON Centre is an organisation that is fully committed to ambience and facility maintenance, ensuring constant checks to any malfunctioning fixtures and accessories, or run-down facilities with a view to immediate replacements or renovations.

Table 3: Facility Management Structure at MUSON Centre

No.	Facilities	Maintenance Required	Supporting Contractors/Third Party Experts	Internal Dept. In Charge
1.	Buildings & Halls	General structural/Civil Maintenance	G. Cappa	Technical
2.	Stage Lightings, Fittings & Equipment	Electrical Maintenance	Matson Ogbu	Technical
3.	Generating Sets/Power & Energy	Electrical Maintenance	Holt Engineering/PHCN	Technical
4.	Internal Telecommunication	Electrical/Electronic Maintenance	STI Nig. Ltd	Technical
5.	Lifts	Electrical Maintenance	Nigerian Motors Industries (Otis)	Technical
6.	Water Pumping Machine/Overhead Tank/Borehole System & General Water Services	Civil Engineering Maintenance	Matson/Lagos State Water Corporation	Technical
7.	Underground Septic Tanks/Soak away Installation	Waste Management	Bea-Eli Enterprises	Technical
8.	Fire Alarm System	Civil Building Maintenance/Fire Services	Elektrint Nig. Limited	Technical
9.	External Telephone System	Telecommunication Maintenance/Installation	NITEL	Technical
10.	Central Refrigeration & Cooling System	Electrical Maintenance	Mandilas Ent. Ltd	Technical
	Sound & Accoustics	Electronic	Matson Ogbu	
11.	Equipment	Maintenance	Technical	Technical
	Music Fountain	Civil/Electrical	Dexdee Fountains	Technical
12.		Maintenance	Ld	
13.	General Fumigation		Bea-elle Enterprise	House/Operations
14.	Parks & Gardens	Horticulture Cultivation & General Maintenance	Rushmore Company	House/Operations
15.	Halls/Building Facilities	Floor, Cleaning, Waxing & General	Nigeria Cleaning Services (NCS)	House/Operations

Source: (Ohenhen, 2013)

As shown in the table above, MUSON has a sub unit contractor for various segments of the facility's establishment: there is a contractor incharge of the elevators maintainance; contractor incharge of the park and gardens; a contractor-firm incharge of the cleaning services; a contracting firm incharge of power and the generating sets maintenance; a carpentry group seeing to the consistent maintenance of the overall furnitures and fixtures in the Centre. For every unit, MUSON has a standard operating procedure that is followed religiously by each contractor-employee unit. These efforts usually make the organisation a kind of resort attraction to the publics, providing a direct or indirect reason for patronage, supports, sponsorship or partnership retention.

Periodic Customer Satisfaction Survey: MUSON has a tradition of designing a questionnaire which usually contains series of questions that probe into the minds of its regular patrons how they feel about the performances, what they like, what they dislike, what they wish to retain, what they wish to change, what they wish introduced. What an organisation has found out via research about what makes its audience happy or otherwise, are usually the easiest things to replicate or otherwise, enhance, or completely eliminate, where negative. Again, MUSON Centre is a good example of this as it conducts a periodic audience satisfaction survey to capture the temperaments and feelings of its publics from time to time.

Issues Management: Issues management can be regarded as an essentially public relations strategy that is deployed to ensure that programmes are put in place to forestall likely future complaints or crises from emanating. Some ways in which the MUSON does this is: making provision for customer complaint or suggestions through a Complaint/Suggestion Box, or direct mailing or telephone to MUSON management; Talent hunt events, scholarship offerings to select citizenries. This in the long-term works well as an effective audience development mechanics in that whatever is capable of generating pubic goodwill, making the organisation's general publics happy and delighted enough to stay loyal to the organisation's offerings both in the present and in the future, is a welcome approach to developing a long-term partnership with the organisation's existing and future patrons.

Institutionalising a Quality-Conscious Corporate Culture: Organisational culture that is quality-driven, excellence-driven and customer-driven is a very quintessential audience development strategy for the performing arts and culture establishments be it privately run, public, profit or non-for-profit concerns. Organisation culture is a critical factor in determining the competitiveness of an organisation. According to Gomez-Mejia et al, (2005:148), results from workplace studies indicate that organisational culture can be an even more important determinant of worker commitment and loyalty than pay. Culture is capable of providing a sense of continuity in the midst of rapid change and intense competitive pressure as well as a sense of shared identity, facilitating commitment to something larger than individual self-interest. So to a very large extent, a well-articulated corporate culture for performing arts groups, companies or institutions, will go a long way in shaping individual paradigms, perspectives, attitudes, commitment and ultimate input which will in turn cascade into long-run organisation peak performance and hiked productivity. (Ohenhen, 2018)

Consistent House-Keeping: House-keeping is a total quality management strategy that also goes a long way in enhancing organisational performance and the organisation's audience development efforts. House-keeping has to do with ensuring the attractiveness and orderliness of the general ambience of the theatre external and internal performance environment. The performance environment must by itself be attractive enough to entice the audience having taken care of the performance areas, hard-walks, lawns, parks and gardens, parking lots, conveniences, seating comforts, ventilation, proper lightings of the theatre, even when performances are going on. All of these go a long way in creating an unforgettable experience and sense of longing in the audience. (Ohenhen, 2018)

Conclusion

That the performing arts and culture industry is swarmed by myriads of challenging, life-threatening competitive activities is not debatable. That the industry is incapacitated in its ability to positively and massively influence the awareness campaign against climate and environmental devastation and abuse, due to huge audience attrition is a fact. Competitive activities ranging from the several alternative recreational and entertainment facilities as remote as football and other sports tournaments, restaurants and club houses, to same industry threats as the cinema, home theatres, cable tv, and other live-art performing art houses and institutions severely depletes the potential audiences for the contemporary live performing arts centres, do pose an eventual extinction threat to any single live performing arts organisation or troupe. Also, that the performing arts industry is generally shy of investing its hard-earned funds (when anything is earned at all), on traditional marketing campaigns is equally a statement of fact. Yet it is one industry that its essence is defined by the quality, quantity and consistency of loyal audiences, sponsors and supporters. Where full blown traditional marketing and advertising cannot be sustained, audience development strategy becomes a critical competitive strategy that the managers of performing arts organisations – commercial or not-for-profit concerns, can resort to, for sustainability.

Every organisation and in fact, corporate individuals do have a competitive advantage which only the activation of its competitive strategy by its managers and administrators can operationalize. This is against the background that audience development strategy is a most cost-effective effort that a performing arts organisation can deploy to enable its cultivation of a sizeable life-time loyal audience that have become partners of the organisation over the years. Matter-of-factly, the MUSON Centre do invest some of its sizeable annual budget on audience development activities, and that has helped to cultivate its huge high profile membership and loyal audiences over the many years of its existence since 1983 to date (2022). The paper concludes that there are indeed, extensive gains in the deployment of research-driven audience development strategy as a winning-competitive strategy for the economic survival of the live-performing arts industry, against the background of the daunting competition threats confronting the industry, to which many have caved in and closed shops. This is going to, to a large extent, immensely increase the capacity of the live-performing arts and culture organisations to positively and massively impact on the global campaign against the steady environmental degradation and route for a safer and healthier environment.

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