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An External Communication Audit of the Kentucky Arts Council

An analysis of the publications distributed by a state agency



THE KENTUCKY ARTS COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

Problem

The specific objective of the audit is to conduct a formal examination of how the Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) is communicating with target authorizing groups outside of KAC, such as artists, arts administrators, educators, media and legislators.

Research Strategy

The external communication audit is an instrument used to gauge authorizers' feedback on the publications distributed regularly by the agency. This audit is designed to paint a picture of the current communication patterns, policies, practices, capabilities and needs in order to make informed recommendations for the improvement of communication. The specific research question guiding this audit is: How effective are the publications distributed by the Kentucky Arts Council in communicating with the authorizers of the Arts Councils work?

The audit focuses on the external communications of KAC, however, interviews have been conducted with program directors that will help

pinpoint areas of additional research and provide insight into the staff's influence on communications. A focus group was held with a random sample of members of target authorizing groups. The surveys were developed based on the information gathered in interviews and the focus group then distributed by mail to a random sample. The survey was designed to collect data about the strengths and weaknesses of current communications as well as gather information about the needs of authorizing groups. By collecting and measuring the data, the end result of the audit is to learn how to better communicate with authorizing groups.

Major Findings

Early on during the investigation of the Arts Council it became clear that there were no standardized methods of gauging feedback from authorizing groups about publications. When asked, fewer than 65% of respondents that said they receive publications from KAC said they read or refer to them on a regular basis. There is a strong preference for print publications among some authorizing groups, while the majority of publications distributed are available only in an online format. Another major finding is that several of publications lack relevance to the personal interests of target authorizing groups.

Recommendations

Based on the results of my research, I recommend that KAC develop methods of asking for constituent feedback on a regular basis. They should also make a conscious effort to provide and make easily available print copies of publications as well as online publications when possible. The majority of the respondents indicated as a level of importance that publications are relevant to their specific work or personal interests. This information might be grounds for future research to be conducted to identify the specific needs and interests of each group. When possible, publications should be individually tailored to the authorizing groups that KAC has identified as most important to its work to reduce unnecessary information overload.

Background/ Introduction

Effective communication is essential to maintaining a strong framework for promoting and supporting the arts in Kentucky. The Kentucky Arts Council is a state agency that supports, through grants and technical assistance, Kentucky arts organizations, non-profit community organizations, local arts councils, local government agencies, individual artists and craftspersons. They communicate their benefits to these groups through publications that are distributed via print and online channels. Although producing publications is a task that consumes a great deal of time and energy by the Arts Council,

they were unsure of how their audiences were responding to these publications.

Review of Relevant Literature

In order for any type of communication to occur, steps need to be taken to transfer understood meaning from the sender to the receiver (Robbins, 2005). These steps are referred to in communications theory as the communication process. Given that there is a method to successful communication, the inability to follow the method would lead to communication failure. The transfer of meaning can be interrupted by sending messages that the receiver may not be interested in or sending the message through an inappropriate medium, or channel.

Communication audits are becoming increasingly popular in analyzing the communication needs of organizations and the interests of their audiences (Gray, 2000). In an optimal situation, both qualitative and quantitative aspects are included in order to back up data with anecdotal evidence. They can paint a picture of the who, what and how of communication in order to create a vision of what to do to improve the image. The Public Relations Society of America outlines the role of an external consultant in conducting an audit rather than working internally (Tips & techniques: the communications audit,

2006). It is beneficial to have an unbiased viewpoint, but time should be taken to create a frame of reference of the organization to be studied. There are many standardized formats that may be used to conduct a communications audit.

The various constituencies whose satisfaction must be addressed are referred to as market segmentation (M2PressWIRE, 2006). This is one of the most important aspects of marketing in organizations that deliver specific services. Identifying valuable communication requires continuous analysis of the changing needs of the constituents and authorizing groups. In 2005 a report, *Marketing Life to Scientists: Navigating Channels Through Segmentation*, revealed an in-depth analysis of a company's customer groups (M2PressWIRE, 2006). They identified that there are many types of individual customers with unique needs; the idea is to identify subgroups of customers with similarities in the way that they respond to differing communications. An area of interest was channels of communication; preferences of print versus online methods of delivering messages. Segmentation allows organizations to capitalize their resources by focusing them on target groups thereby avoiding wasted resources on ineffectual or irrelevant messages.

One of the authorizing groups of interest to the Kentucky Arts Council is Legislators. A study by the nonprofit Congress Online Project found that Congressional representatives received 80 million e-mails in 2000 (2001). While sending emails may be fast and easy, when writing your legislators, the value of print mail in communicating messages goes up considerably more than other authorizing groups.

Methodology

In late May, a meeting was held with major program directors of the Kentucky Arts Council to plan an approach to address the growing need to gain feedback from the receivers of the many publications they distribute. An external communication audit was agreed upon to evaluate the current status with the intention of gaining information in order to communicate more effectively in the future. The audit was conducted by an individual outside of the Arts Council so it was necessary to gain background about the current practices, policies and constituent groups. This was done through interviews with the program directors. Each program director was interviewed using a standard set of questions (appendix 2.1) in their office. A SWOT analysis of the organization was developed using the results of these interviews.

By asking program directors about the types of people they communicate with I developed a comprehensive list of all groups that receive information from KAC. A meeting was held with a cross-section of employees to group some of these into larger categories. Different employees tend to work more heavily with different types of subgroups and it is difficult to distinguish the importance of some groups over others by asking only program directors. To address this, it was agreed that a list be sent to all employees and they were asked to rank the organizations according to importance of the KAC's work. Five groups were identified as the main authorizers of the work that KAC provides:

- Artists – producers of art; the main reason that the Arts Council exists
- Arts Administrators – an integral distributor
- Educators – crucial in providing arts in education
- Members of the Media – brings information to the general public
- Legislators – essential to funding

It was decided that a cross-section of these groups would be used to discuss important publication issues in the form of a focus group. While the information gathered in program director interviews were valuable to this process, it was important to gain the perspective of the receivers of information as well as the perceptions of the senders. Letters were sent to a random sample of members of each authorizing group inviting them to attend the focus group (appendix 3.1). In attendance were two members of each authorizing group. A list of predetermined questions was used to guide the conversation (appendix 3.2).

The results of the focus group were used to sort out areas for special attention for a survey to be sent out to a larger group for a more in-depth analysis of publications. The Tailored Design Method was used to administer surveys; a series of four carefully timed contacts with respondents in order to encourage higher response rates (Dillman, 2000). A random sample of 100 members of each authorizing group was taken from the KAC's database. The number of members within each group was held equal to emphasize the balanced importance of each of the authorizing groups. The surveys call attention to:

- Access to the internet

- Receivership/ readership
- General usefulness
- Relevance to specific work
- Relevance to personal interests
- Length of text
- Preference of online versus print publications

Limitations of the Study

Given unlimited resources and time, there are several elements that would have been changed about the methodology of this audit. The first is that an individual focus group would have been conducted with each of the five groups to gain additional perspective to the individual group's sentiments.

The survey could have been conducted on a wider scale and it would have been helpful to survey by phone or face-to-face interviews in order to guide respondents through the process and increase accuracy of results.

There was a somewhat low response rate to this survey at the time this report was created, therefore limiting the generalizability of the results and increasing the difficulty of analyzing the data. The actual deadline for final surveys for the purposes of KAC was extended beyond that of when this report was submitted. The additional time might have been useful to increase the overall response rate.

The response rate also affected the ability to speak to the individual ratings of publications by each group and the results shown for publications are in terms of overall ratings for all groups. A series of chi-square tests revealed that there was no relationship between the type of group and evaluations of publications. This may have been due to the fact that respondents were only asked to evaluate publications that they are familiar with.

The preferences indicated by each group have been analyzed in greater detail than the ratings of all publications. These questions had higher response rates because they could be answered by all respondents regardless of familiarity with KAC publications.

Results

Program Director Interviews

The information gathered from the program director interviews was used to develop a SWOT analysis of the status of KAC.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis from Program Director Interviews

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open door policy between agency and constituents• Work of Arts Council is of much value to constituents	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requests not handled in a standardized way• No centralized point that communications go through before becoming external• Have gotten away from targeted publications• Redundancy of information across publications
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fast communication possible through technology• Database of all contacts with personal contacts	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot communicate with legislators directly• Current policies not utilized are a threat to future policies derived from audit• Difficulties in using print publications because of complicated process• Overwhelming amount of communications through email can lead to reduced readership• In need of larger publications staff• Unsure of the channels of communication that authorizers are comfortable with• Many things are distributed to constituents with little knowledge of what is read or received• No standardized way of measuring what information audiences want or if they are satisfied

The strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization while the opportunities and threats are external. Due to the nature of the state agency, there is minimal competition to be concerned about for delivery of services, but there is always pressure to grow and expand so that it may be benchmarked to other state arts agencies when consideration is given to agency funding.

Focus Group

The focus group concentrated on issues that should be considered by all authorizing groups. There was a general consensus that the field is being inundated with information and it is difficult to keep up with regular publications, but all agreed that they refer to communications from known sources when they can, especially when it is useful to their specific work or personal interest. The main topic of conversation about specific communications concentrated around the Blue Moon Newsletter that was once distributed as a paper copy and has since moved to an online publication to save money. The majority of the group agreed that it was preferred to have a physical copy of a publication that they could put aside until they had time to read it and then file it to refer to it later on. Email editions of the newsletter did not have the same functionality and many admitted to deleting more copies than they read. These comments were noted and became special topics in the survey.

Survey

The responses to this survey were highest among educators (25%), followed by arts administrators (23%), artists (23%) legislators (18%) and were lowest among members of the media (11%). The overall response rate was 16%. While an emphasis on equal importance of groups was emphasized in the administration of the survey, differing response rates negatively affected the balance that was desired in the methodology.

Internet access

It was a concern that information was being lost when KAC moved its publications to the internet because some constituent groups may not have internet access. The survey showed that 5.1% of respondents did not have internet access. These respondents that did not have internet access were artists. Further effects of internet access on communication are noted under the Channels of Communication portion of the results section.

Readership

In all publications, less than 65% of those who receive publications report reading or referring to them. Specific publications have much lower readership levels as can be seen in Table 2. The number of respondents that did not receive publications was typically greater than those that did receive them. However, the additional feedback

section of the survey revealed that many respondents were unaware of certain publications that they were interested in receiving in the future.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents reading each publication

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Readership</u>
A. R. T.	61.1%
Arts Ed Online	34.8%
Arts E-News	47.1%
Blue Moon Newsletter	62.2%
News Releases	62.8%
Arts Education Roster of Artists	44.4%
Performing Arts Directory	50%
Arts Council Website	64.3%

The publications artists read most out of all the publications were A.R.T, the Blue Moon Newsletter and News Releases. Arts administrators read or reference the Performing Arts Directory and the website most. Educators read the Blue Moon, news releases and the website most. Members of the media and legislators read KAC news releases most out of all publications.

The highest overall readership was of the Arts Council Website. The groups that reported using the website most were artists, arts administrators and educators; these are constituent-based groups.

Quality of Publications

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the following publications using the qualifiers described earlier. Questions evaluating general usefulness, relevance to specific work and relevance to personal interest were formatted in individual matrices of publications on Likert scale where respondents could rate each on a value of 1-4. Respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction with length of text in publications on a scale of 1-5. The last category asked respondents to indicate preference of how they would like to receive publications given a choice of print, indifference or online.

Table 2. Respondents' evaluation of KAC publications

Publication	General Usefulness	Specific Work	Personal Interest	Length of Text	Communication Preference
A. R. T.	+	+	+	satisfied	Print and Online Equally
Arts Ed Online	-	-	-	satisfied	Online
Arts-E News	+	+	-	satisfied	Online
Blue Moon Newsletter	+	+	+	satisfied	Print and Online Equally
News Releases	+	+	-	satisfied	Online

Arts Education Roster of Artists	+	+	-	satisfied	Print
Performing Arts Directory	+	+	+	satisfied	Print
Arts Council Website	+	+	+	satisfied	n/a

+ indicates majority of responses above 3 on 4 point scale

- indicates majority of responses 2 and under on 4 point scale

Detailed results can be found in appendix 4.3

General Usefulness

In addition to rating each publication, respondents were asked how each item of evaluation criteria influenced their motivation to read or refer to any publication.

The chi-square test revealed an inability to reject the null hypothesis that there is not a relationship between the type of group and their value of the general usefulness of any publication when motivating them to read or refer to it. The standard deviation was greatest among members of the media in all questions because it was the group with the lowest response rate. The average importance of general usefulness across groups was 3 (important). This level matched the rating of publications assigned by respondents with the exception of Arts Ed Online, indicating a need for improvement of the general usefulness of that publication.

	Artists	Arts Admin	Educators	Media	Legislators
Mean	3.25	3.2352941	3.1111111	3.1111111	2.75
Standard Deviation	0.6831301	0.6642112	0.7583953	1.0540926	0.9653073
Minimum	2	2	2	1	1
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4

Relevance to Specific Work

Again, the chi-square test revealed an inability to reject the null hypothesis that there is not a relationship between the type of group and their value of the relevance to specific work of any publication when motivating them to read or refer to it. There was a slight increase of the mean among arts administrators. The average importance of relevance to specific work across groups was 3 (important). This level matched the rating of publications assigned by respondents with the exception of Arts Ed Online, indicating a need for improvement of the relevance to specific work of that publication.

	Artists	Arts Admin	Educators	Media	Legislators
Mean	2.9411765	3.5294118	3.0526316	2.6666667	2.9166667
Standard Deviation	0.747545	0.6242643	0.7050362	1	0.7929615
Minimum	2	2	2	1	2
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4

Relevance to Personal Interest

The chi-square test revealed an inability to reject the null hypothesis that there is not a relationship between the type of group and their value of the relevance to personal interest of any publication when

motivating them to read or refer to it. There was a slight drop in the median among members of the media and arts administrators. The average importance of relevance to personal interest across groups was 3 (important). The preferences are higher than the ratings assigned by respondents for Arts Ed Online, Arts E-News, News Releases and Arts Education Roster of Artists. This indicates a need to investigate the personal interests of authorizing groups and incorporating those interests into lacking publications in order to increase readership.

	Arts				
	Artists	Admin	Educators	Media	Legislators
Mean	3.2352941	2.7647059	3.0526316	2.7777778	3.1666667
Standard Deviation	0.6642112	0.9034249	0.7798635	0.9718253	0.7177406
Minimum	2	1	1	1	2
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4

Length of Text

The chi-square test of all groups revealed an inability to reject the null hypothesis that there is not a relationship between the type of group and their value of the length of text of any publication when motivating them to read or refer to it. However, a chi-square test of constituent groups (artists, arts administrators and educators) together along with media and legislators revealed a relationship between the type of group and their value to length of text. The expected frequency assumption in this situation is violated is most likely a result of the

small data set. A larger data set may show significant results for this criterion. The majority of respondents answered between 1 (less text) and 2 (indifference). Most legislators preferred less text than other groups when motivating them to read or refer to a publication.

Legislators indicated that publications geared toward them should have the least amount of text possible to convey a message. The results of the evaluations of publications indicated that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the length of text of KAC publications.

	Arts				
	Artists	Admin	Educators	Media	Legislators
Mean	1.8125	1.8235294	1.75	1.6666667	1.1666667
Standard Deviation	0.5439056	0.5285941	0.5501196	0.5	0.3892495
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	3	3	3	2	2

Channels of Communication

The chi-square test revealed a relationship between the type of group and their value of either print or online formats of any publication when motivating them to read or refer to it. There was preference for online publications among arts administrators and media more than other authorizing groups. Artists and legislators stand out with a greater preference for print publications. The expected frequency assumption is met for this criterion because of the distinct preferences in this area. KAC can rely on this information most according to the data to guide future decision making about sending messages to target authorizers.

Of the 95% of respondents that have internet access, 40% of them prefer print publications over online publication methods.

	Arts				
	Artists	Admin	Educators	Media	Legislators
Mean	1.4705882	2.2941176	1.75	2.6666667	1.25
Standard Deviation	0.6242643	0.8488747	0.7863975	0.7071068	0.6215816
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	3	3	3	3	3

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the data, the majority of the respondents have found publications to be adequate in levels of general usefulness and relevance to specific work to motivate them to read or refer to publications with the exception of Arts Ed Online. This would suggest that Arts Ed Online is not effectively communicating to target its audiences. To improve general usefulness of the publication and relevance of specific work, an analysis of the work of the authorizing groups should be considered. This publication is designed specifically for educators and this may contribute to the low rating in relevance to specific work by other authorizing groups.

Much of the anecdotal evidence gathered in the focus group and comments section of the survey emphasized the amount of information overload in the field. Respondents have indicated that more measures

taken to develop concise publications that target their needs, the greater the chances are that they will utilize that resource.

The publications Arts Ed Online, Arts E-News, News Releases and the Arts Education Roster of Artists, all appear to lack the amount of relevance to personal interest to motivate respondents to read or refer to them. An additional study could be conducted to identify the personal interests of each authorizing group. There should be a standard format of gaining feedback. This process should be as easy and seamless as possible; emails could contain a link to a feedback source such as an email or internet survey.

The length of the text was reported to be satisfactory in all publications. The publications are currently being delivered in the channel of communication preferred for that publication with the exception of A.R.T. and the Blue Moon Newsletter. The individual groups, however, differ in preferred channels of communications, to resolve these differences KAC should investigate possibilities of making all publications available in a print format in addition to online for all groups as an alternative to the current distribution method. Any publications that target artists or legislators should be available in print and items that target arts administrators or media should be available online.

Overall, the effectiveness of publications of KAC could be improved in terms of relevance to personal interest; the Arts Ed Online Bulletin and distribution methods of publications. This audit has provided a solid starting point at which to begin looking into these changes.

Citations

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Appendix 1

Methodology*

The following outlines the proposed plan to conduct the audit.

1. Held meeting to discuss strategy objectives (met with major program directors)
 - a. Discussed areas of questions (the questions that KAC would like to know vs. what they need to know)
 - b. Plan approach
 - c. Develop a schedule
2. Conduct interviews with Program Directors using questionnaires
 - a. Determine Program Director's attitudes and beliefs (such as those outlined in the strategic plan) about the publications
 - b. Pinpoint communication problems noticed in particular area of expertise
3. Identify authorizing groups for research (June 30th)
 - a. Employees of the Arts Council selected the following five groups as the target authorizing groups intended for research
 - i. Legislators
 - ii. Media
 - iii. Arts administrators
 - iv. Artists
 - v. Educators
5. Conduct focus groups/interviews with constituents
 - b. Sort out areas for special attention on survey
6. Prepare and test questionnaires
 - a. Wording, length and format can affect results significantly
7. Administer survey
 - a. Send first survey by mail
 - i. Participant selection will be by a random sample of the Arts Council's database using the target audiences mentioned above
 - b. Perform follow-up post cards with individuals to ensure completion
 - c. Send second survey for follow-up
 - d. Enforce deadline
8. Tabulate and summarize results
 - a. Questionnaires tabulated and run for analysis using SPSS
9. Analyze and interpret audit data
 - a. Data is analyzed together with the analysis of the communication materials and developed into an interpretation of the audit data

10. Prepare and present audit report
 - a. Summary of results presented
 - b. Suggestions given for attention and action to maximize effectiveness of organization's communications

*This outline generally follows the methodology of a communications audit as outlined by the Public Relations Society of America (www.prsa.org)

Appendix 2.1

Questions from Program Director Interviews

1. Describe your job (duties and functions):
 - a. What kinds of people do you usually communicate with within your job?
 - b. Where do you get the information?
 - c. Should any policies be developed or added to determine how you communicate information?
2. What are some of the major communication strengths of KAC? Be specific.
3. What are some of the major communication weaknesses of KAC? Be specific.
4. Describe the formal channels through which you typically distribute information about KAC to authorizing groups.
 - a. What kind of information do you usually distribute?
 - b. How often?
5. Describe the informal channels through which you typically distribute information about KAC to authorizing groups.
 - a. What kind of information do you usually distribute?
 - b. How often?
6. What would you like to see done to improve information flow between KAC and authorizing groups?
 - a. Why do you think it hasn't been done?
7. Describe the way decisions are typically made to distribute communications.
8. How do you know when KAC has done a good job of communicating its benefits?
 - a. Do you have a specific message you incorporate into communications activities?
 - b. Overall, how would you rate your organization's effectiveness in communicating your message to your target audiences?
9. How do you know when KAC has done a bad job of communicating its benefits?
10. Which of the media outlets below is most effective in helping you publicize KAC's mission and message? (effective, moderately effective, somewhat effective).
11. What types of things prevent you (or others) from communicating benefits to authorizing groups?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 3.1

Focus Group Invitation Letter

[Recipient address]

Dear [Recipient Name]:

You have been randomly selected from the Kentucky Arts Councils Communications mailing list to participate in a focus group to evaluate the Arts Councils Communications efforts. We hope you will be able to share your thoughts with a small group of artists, arts administrators, educators, members of the media and legislators in Frankfort at 10am on Thursday, November 17th in Capitol Tower Plaza.

As a member of the media with Business First, your involvement will play an important role in an external communication audit that will help the arts council to better communicate benefits to you and others in your position in the future. We would like to encourage you to participate so that we may better serve Kentuckians and bring greater efficiency to state government.

Participants will be provided with lunch and reimbursement of travel expenses within the state of Kentucky at a rate of \$0.43/mi. Lodging will be available to those traveling distances greater than three hours time. If you are an educator, the Kentucky Arts Council will cover the fee of a substitute. Please notify us of any accommodations that should be made for disabilities.

To participate, please confirm by phone at 1(888) 833-2787 or e-mail Jess.Kropczynski@ky.gov and return the enclosed confirmation form **no later than November 7, 2005**.

Thank you for your continued support in the arts. We look forward to seeing you in November.

Sincerely,

Jess Kropczynski
Communications Intern

Enclosure

Appendix 3.2

Focus Group Script

November 17th 2005

Welcome. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of KAC communications efforts. KAC will use this information to improve the ways they communicate the services that they provide.

There are no right or wrong answers. We expect that you will have differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in negative comments as positive ones.

We are recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. No names will be included in any reports. The results of this group discussion will be public; however your individual views and opinions will remain confidential.

During the course of this discussion please keep in mind that we have identified the groups that you are a part of as being target authorizing groups of the Kentucky Arts Council's work. We are hoping to use this information for the general purposes of the entirety of the group and would like for you to keep that in mind as you respond. Please respond as candidly as possible and elaborate when needed. This discussion should last no more than two hours including the time that we are eating.

We have some name tents here in front of us today. They help me remember names, but they can also help you. If you want to follow up on something that someone has said, you want to agree, or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Don't feel like you have to respond to me all the time. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. I am here to ask questions, listen, and make sure everyone has a chance to share. We're interested in hearing from each of you. So if you're talking a lot, I may ask you to give others a chance. And if you aren't saying much, I may call on you. We just want to make sure we hear from all of you.

-
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Opening: | 1. Let's begin. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the room one at a time and introduce ourselves. |
| Introductory: | 2. You have been provided with some index cards, could you please take a few moments to think about a meaningful arts experience that you've had that left a lasting impact on you, your family or your community. (We'll ask some of you to share in a moment.) |
| Transition: | 3. Going around the room, please describe your relationship or your organization's relationship to the arts council and how much you know or don't know about the arts council. |

Key Questions:

4. What kinds of communications do you receive from KAC that you are aware of?

- News Releases
- Arts Ed online
- Arts E-news
- Blue moon newsletter
- Have you ever used the website?
- A.R.T
- Directories such as the Artist Roster, Performing Arts Directory or Juried CD list

5. How do you typically find out about arts related information? (Press? Mailings? Internet? E-mail?)

6. What kind of information can KAC provide you or your organization that would be relevant to your work?

Ending Questions:

7. If you had a chance to give advice to those working on communications at the Kentucky Arts Council, what advice would you give?

8. We wanted you to help us evaluate how KAC is communicating to its constituents. We want to know how to improve the communication and how we can better serve target groups that you are a part of. Is there anything we missed? Is there anything that you may have wanted to say at any time and didn't get a chance to say?

Appendix 4.1

First Contact (post card & email)

Dear Constituent:

A few days from now you will receive in the mail a request to fill out a brief questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by the Kentucky Arts Council.

It concerns the print and electronic publications that are produced by the Arts Council on a regular basis.

I am writing you in advance because we have found many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study will help the Arts Council understand if the information that we provide, and the way we provide that information, meets our constituents' needs and expectations.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. It's only with the generous help of people like you that our research can be successful.

Sincerely,

Ed Lawrence
Public Information Officer
Kentucky Arts Council



Appendix 4.2

Second Contact (Cover letter, survey and reference sheet)



**COMMERCE CABINET
KENTUCKY ARTS COUNCIL**

Ernie Fletcher
Governor

2nd Floor, Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601-1987
1-888-833-2787
502-564-3757
FAX 502-564-2839

George Ward
Secretary

Lori Meadows
Executive Director

«Prefix» «FirstName» «LastName»
«Organization»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Prefix» «FirstName» «LastName»:

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of the effectiveness of communications being generated by the Kentucky Arts Council (KAC). This study is part of an effort to learn how we may or may not be meeting the information needs of people we consider important to the Arts Council, such as yourself.

We are contacting a random sample of target groups of Artists, Arts Administrators, Educators, Members of the Media and Legislators to ask them to evaluate the publications they are currently receiving and give their opinion on publications in general. The results of this survey will be used to help our state agency provide a better flow of targeted communications to the group that you most strongly identify with. We hope to measure our progress, identify areas that need attention, and strengthen the bond between us and the diverse communities we serve.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire. Your candid and thoughtful replies will help our evaluation. Most people are able to complete the questionnaire in less than fifteen minutes. Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. This survey is voluntary. However, you can help us very much by taking a few minutes to share your experiences and opinions about the Kentucky Arts Council's communications efforts. If for some reason you prefer not to respond, please let us know by returning the blank questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Contact Ed Lawrence at Ed.Lawrence@ky.gov or call 1-888-833-2787 extension 473.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope included for your convenience. Thank you in advance for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Ed Lawrence
Public Information Officer

Enclosures

#«ID»

KentuckyUnbridledSpirit.com



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Help Us Improve Our Publications

Please take some time to carefully fill out this survey on your experiences with publications that you receive from the Kentucky Arts Council. We welcome your feedback and your answers will be kept confidential. We rely on your responses to help us improve our services. This survey includes questions about your general communication preferences and your opinions about specific publications produced by the Kentucky Arts Council. If you are unfamiliar with a specific publication you may skip questions about that particular publication. Enclosed is a reference sheet of Kentucky Arts Council publications that you may use to guide you through this survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

General Information

1. Which of the following groups do you most identify with? (check one)

- Artist
 Arts Administrator
 Educator
 Member of the Media
 Legislator

2. Do you have internet access? (check one) yes no

For each publication listed, check the box that indicates whether or not you receive or access the publication and if you read or refer to it regularly—please be completely candid. (check one for each publication)

	<u>Question</u>	<u>I don't receive or access this</u>	<u>I receive this, but I don't read or refer to it regularly</u>	<u>I receive this, and I read and refer to it regularly</u>
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Ed Online	4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts E-News	5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blue Moon Newsletter	6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News Releases	7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Education Roster of Artists*	8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performing Arts Directory	9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Council Website*	10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*These publications are not distributed but are available online; please indicate if you access them.

Content of Publications

Please indicate general usefulness of the publications listed below that you are familiar with. Circle the number that best represents your opinion, if you do not receive the publication please move to the next publication on the list.

Question	General usefulness of publications I receive now				
	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Useful	Very Useful	
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	10.	1	2	3	4
Arts Ed Online	11.	1	2	3	4
Arts E-News	12.	1	2	3	4
Blue Moon Newsletter	13.	1	2	3	4
News Releases	14.	1	2	3	4
Arts Education Roster of Artists	15.	1	2	3	4
Performing Arts Directory	16.	1	2	3	4
Arts Council Website	17.	1	2	3	4

18. How important is the general usefulness of any publication when motivating you to read or refer to it? (circle one)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
General usefulness of <u>any</u> publication	1	2	3	4

Please indicate how relevant the following publications are to your specific work. Circle the number that best represents your opinion, if you do not receive the publication please move to the next publication on the list.

Question	Relevance of publications I receive now to my specific work				
	Not Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant	
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	19.	1	2	3	4
Arts Ed Online	20.	1	2	3	4
Arts E-News	21.	1	2	3	4
Blue Moon Newsletter	22.	1	2	3	4
News Releases	23.	1	2	3	4
Arts Education Roster of Artists	24.	1	2	3	4
Performing Arts Directory	25.	1	2	3	4
Arts Council Website	26.	1	2	3	4

27. How important is the relevance to your specific work of any publication when motivating you to read or refer to it? (*circle one*)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Relevance to your specific work in <u>any</u> publication	1	2	3	4

Please indicate how relevant the following publications are to your personal interests. Circle the number that best represents your opinion, if you do not receive the publication please move to the next publication on the list.

Relevance of publications I receive now to my personal interests

Question	Not Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	28. 1	2	3	4
Arts Ed Online	29. 1	2	3	4
Arts E-News	30. 1	2	3	4
Blue Moon Newsletter	31. 1	2	3	4
News Releases	32. 1	2	3	4
Arts Education Roster of Artists	33. 1	2	3	4
Performing Arts Directory	34. 1	2	3	4
Arts Council Website	35. 1	2	3	4

36. How important is the relevance to your personal interests of any publication when motivating you to read or refer to it? (*circle one*)

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Relevance to your personal interests of <u>any</u> publication	1	2	3	4

Ease of Use of Publications

Please indicate your satisfaction with the length of text in the following publications. Circle the number that best represents your opinion, if you do not receive the publication please move to the next publication on the list.

Question	Satisfaction with length of text of publications I receive now					
	Too Short	Somewhat Short	Satisfied with Length of Text	Somewhat Long	Too long	
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	37.	1	2	3	4	5
Arts Ed Online	38.	1	2	3	4	5
Arts E-News	39.	1	2	3	4	5
Blue Moon Newsletter	40.	1	2	3	4	5
News Releases	41.	1	2	3	4	5
Arts Education Roster of Artists	42.	1	2	3	4	5
Performing Arts Directory	43.	1	2	3	4	5
Arts Council Website	44.	1	2	3	4	5

45. How does length of text in any publication motivate you to read or refer to it? (circle one)

	Less Text	I am Indifferent	More Text
Length of text in any publication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate preference of how you would like to receive the following publications. Circle the number that best represents your opinion, if you do not receive the publication please move to the next publication on the list.

Question	How I would like to receive publications			
	I prefer this in print	I am indifferent	I prefer this online	
A.R.T. (Artist Resources and Tips)	46.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Ed Online	47.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts E-News	48.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blue Moon Newsletter	49.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News Releases	50.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Education Roster of Artists	51.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performing Arts Directory	52.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts Council Website	53.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**54. What type of format of any publication most motivates you to read or refer to it?
(circle one)**

	I prefer print	I am indifferent	I prefer online
Format of any publication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments on Our Publications

Would you like to add a comment about any of the publications produced by the Kentucky Arts Council?

A.R.T (Artist Resources and Tips)

Arts Ed Online

Arts E-News

Blue Moon Newsletter

News Releases

Arts Education Roster of Artists

Performing Arts Directory

Arts Council Website



Kentucky Arts Council
21st Floor Capitol Tower Plaza
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601-1987

Additional Feedback

Do you have any suggestions for improving the Arts Councils communications with the group you identified yourself as in question one of this survey?

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out our survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Reference Sheet Included with survey

Kentucky Arts Council Publications



A.R.T. (Artist Resource and Tips) is a bi-monthly newsletter for individual artists announcing Kentucky Arts Council application deadlines and serving as a clearinghouse for national and international opportunities for artists in various arts disciplines. It is currently a print publication also available online in pdf format.



Arts Ed Online is a periodic e-mail bulletin for Kentucky educators announcing arts education opportunities for students, teachers and schools. Arts Ed Online bulletins do not have a regular publication schedule but are sent as soon as the information is known to the Arts Council.



Arts E-News is a semi-monthly e-mail newsletter providing information about the Arts Council's current activities, application deadlines with links to guidelines and instructions, event dates, workshops and seminars and a link to a statewide calendar of arts and cultural events.



The Blue Moon is a bi-monthly online newsletter reporting on the work of the Arts Council, national trends in public policy and funding of the arts, Kentuckians and organizations receiving national recognition in the arts, and information specific to arts education, craft marketing and folklife with links to current resources and reports available to the arts community. Print-outs are available upon request.



News Releases are distributed by e-mail to statewide media contacts, selected trade publications, legislators and constituents (upon request). News Releases advise the media on Kentucky Arts Council events, opportunities for grants, awards, programs and services of the Arts Council and announcements of grants and awards to Kentucky organizations and individuals.



Arts Education Roster of Artists is a directory of professional artists that are qualified to serve as resident artists in Kentucky schools and communities. This publication is designed primarily as a resource for teachers in planning for an arts enriched environment in Kentucky classrooms. It is currently available on the Arts Council website in HTML format and is updated on an annual basis.



The Kentucky Performing Arts Directory promotes and showcases a diverse selection of Kentucky's finest contemporary and traditional performing artists available for booking and touring in all types of venues. The directory is a print publication that is revised annually and is also available online in pdf format.



Kentucky Arts Council Website at www.artsCouncil.ky.gov is a comprehensive information resource that includes artist opportunities, arts education, virtual galleries, grant programs and applications, events and activities, workshops and training, newroom, arts links and publications.

If you are currently not receiving any of these free print or online publications but would like to subscribe to them, simply update our mailing list with your subscription preferences at www.artsCouncil.ky.gov/forms/mailqst.htm



Appendix 4.3

Third contact



**COMMERCE CABINET
KENTUCKY ARTS COUNCIL**

Ernie Fletcher
Governor

21st Floor, Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601-1987
1-888-833-2787
502-564-3757
FAX 502-564-2839

George Ward
Secretary

Lori Meadows
Executive Director

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear **[Recipient Name]**:

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinions about Kentucky Arts Council publications was mailed to you. Your name was drawn randomly from a database kept by the Arts Council.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your experiences that we can understand the effectiveness of the current publications and how they may be improved.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please call us toll free at 1-888-833-2787 and we will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Title]

Appendix 4.4

Fourth contact (additional copy of survey was included with mailing)



**COMMERCE CABINET
KENTUCKY ARTS COUNCIL**

Ernie Fletcher
Governor

21st Floor, Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601-1987
1-888-833-2787
502-564-3757
FAX 502-564-2839

George Ward
Secretary

Lori Meadows
Executive Director

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [Recipient Name]:

About three weeks ago I sent a questionnaire to you that asked about your experiences with the Kentucky Arts Council publications. To the best of our knowledge, it's not yet been returned.

The comments of people who have already responded include a wide variety of information about their experiences, both good and bad, concerning or regarding communications they currently receive and what they would prefer. We think the results are going to be very useful to our state agency.

We are writing again because of the importance of your response in helping to get accurate results. Although we send questionnaires to people who identify with many different groups and living all over the state, it's only by hearing from nearly everyone in the sample group that we can be sure that the results are truly representative.

A comment on our survey procedures: a questionnaire identification number is printed on the questionnaire so that we can check your name off of the mailing list when it is returned. The list of names is then destroyed so that the individual names can never be connected to the results in any way. Protecting the confidentiality of your responses is very important to us.

We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire no later than April 19th, but if for any reason you prefer not to answer it, please let us know by returning a note or blank questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Ed Lawrence
Public Information Officer
Enclosures






KentuckyUnbridledSpirit.com





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Appendix 4.5

Detailed results of survey

1. Which of the following groups do you most identify with?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Artist		22.8%	18
Arts Administrator		22.8%	18
Educator		25.3%	20
Member of the Media		11.4%	9
Legislator		17.7%	14
Total Respondents			79
(skipped this question)			0

2. Do you have internet access?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		94.9%	75
No		5.1%	4
Total Respondents			79
(skipped this question)			0

3. For each publication listed, check the box that indicates whether or not you receive or access the publication and if you read or refer to it regularly--please be completely candid.				
	I don't receive this	I receive this, but i don't refer to it regularly	I receive this, and i read and refer to it regularly	Response Total
A.R.T.	76% (58)	9% (7)	14% (11)	76
Arts Ed Online	70% (53)	20% (15)	11% (8)	76
Arts E-News	56% (43)	23% (18)	21% (16)	77
Blue Moon Newsletter	42% (32)	22% (17)	36% (28)	77
News Releases	44% (34)	21% (16)	35% (27)	77

Arts Education Roster of Artists	76% (57)	13% (10)	11% (8)	75
Performing Arts Directory	56% (43)	22% (17)	22% (17)	77
Arts Council Website	46% (36)	19% (15)	35% (27)	78
Total Respondents				78
(skipped this question)				1


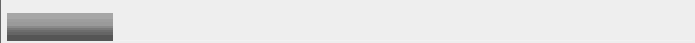

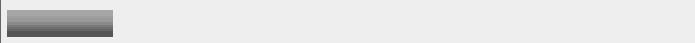
4. Please indicate the general usefulness of the publications listed below that you are familiar with.

	not useful	somewhat useful	useful	very useful	Response Average
A.R.T.	15% (3)	20% (4)	35% (7)	30% (6)	2.80
Arts Ed Online	12% (3)	54% (13)	17% (4)	17% (4)	2.38
Arts E-News	3% (1)	39% (13)	36% (12)	21% (7)	2.76
Blue Moon Newsletter	7% (3)	29% (13)	33% (15)	31% (14)	2.89
News Releases	5% (2)	35% (14)	32% (13)	28% (11)	2.83
Arts Education Roster of Artists	11% (3)	26% (7)	19% (5)	44% (12)	2.96
Performing Arts Directory	5% (2)	22% (8)	32% (12)	41% (15)	3.08
Arts Council Website	2% (1)	19% (8)	40% (17)	40% (17)	3.16
Total Respondents					63
(skipped this question)					16

5. How important is the general usefulness of any publication to motivate you to read or refer to it?

		Response Percent	Response Total
not important		2.8%	2
somewhat important		18.1%	13
important		44.4%	32
very important		34.7%	25
Total Respondents			72
(skipped this question)			7

6. Please indicate how relevant the following publications are to your specific work.					
	not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant	very relevant	Response Average
A.R.T.	11% (3)	26% (7)	41% (11)	22% (6)	2.74
Arts Ed Online	6% (2)	44% (14)	41% (13)	9% (3)	2.53
Arts E-News	0% (0)	41% (15)	43% (16)	16% (6)	2.76
Blue Moon Newsletter	0% (0)	40% (16)	42% (17)	18% (7)	2.78
News Releases	4% (2)	29% (13)	47% (21)	20% (9)	2.82
Arts Education Roster of Artists	14% (4)	32% (9)	29% (8)	25% (7)	2.64
Performing Arts Directory	6% (2)	26% (9)	31% (11)	37% (13)	3.00
Arts Council Website	0% (0)	18% (7)	35% (14)	48% (19)	3.30
Total Respondents					66
(skipped this question)					13

7. How important is the relevance to your specific work of any publication to motivate you to read or refer to it?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
not important		1.4%	1
somewhat important		23%	17
important		43.2%	32
very important		32.4%	24
Total Respondents			74
(skipped this question)			5




8. Please indicate how relevant the following publications are to your personal interests.					
	not relevant	somewhat relevant	relevant	very relevant	Response Average
A.R.T.	9% (2)	39% (9)	30% (7)	22% (5)	2.65
Arts Ed Online	24% (7)	38% (11)	28% (8)	10% (3)	2.24

Arts E-News	11% (4)	43% (16)	32% (12)	14% (5)	2.49
Blue Moon Newsletter	7% (3)	36% (16)	36% (16)	22% (10)	2.73
News Releases	15% (7)	37% (17)	28% (13)	20% (9)	2.52
Arts Education Roster of Artists	21% (6)	48% (14)	14% (4)	17% (5)	2.28
Performing Arts Directory	15% (5)	33% (11)	21% (7)	30% (10)	2.67
Arts Council Website	5% (2)	28% (12)	33% (14)	35% (15)	2.98
Total Respondents					67
(skipped this question)					12


9. How important is the relevance to your personal interests of any publication to motivate you to read or refer to it?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
not important		4.1%	3
somewhat important		18.9%	14
important		48.6%	36
very important		28.4%	21
Total Respondents			74
(skipped this question)			5



10. Please indicate your satisfaction with the length of text in the following publications.						
	too short	somewhat short	satisfied with length of text	somewhat long	too long	Response Average
A.R.T.	9% (2)	14% (3)	77% (17)	0% (0)	0% (0)	2.68
Arts Ed Online	0% (0)	8% (2)	88% (21)	4% (1)	0% (0)	2.96
Arts E-News	0% (0)	6% (2)	80% (28)	14% (5)	0% (0)	3.09
Blue Moon Newsletter	2% (1)	4% (2)	83% (38)	11% (5)	0% (0)	3.02
News Releases	0% (0)	0% (0)	80% (33)	20% (8)	0% (0)	3.20
Arts Education Roster of Artists	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (26)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3.00
Performing Arts Directory	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (29)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3.00

Arts Council Website	0% (0)	3% (1)	88% (30)	9% (3)	0% (0)	3.06
Total Respondents						65
(skipped this question)						14

11. how does the length of text in any publication influence your motivation to read or refer to it?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
less text		36.5%	27
I am indifferent		59.5%	44
more text		4.1%	3
Total Respondents			74
(skipped this question)			5

12. Please indicate preference of how you would like to receive the following publications				
	I prefer this in print	I am indifferent	I prefer this online	Response Total
A.R.T.	37% (13)	26% (9)	37% (13)	35
Arts Ed Online	22% (8)	3% (1)	76% (28)	37
Arts E-News	15% (7)	12% (6)	73% (35)	48
Blue Moon Newsletter	43% (23)	15% (8)	43% (23)	54
News Releases	23% (12)	10% (5)	67% (35)	52
Arts Education Roster of Artists	61% (23)	13% (5)	26% (10)	38
Performing Arts Directory	60% (26)	7% (3)	33% (14)	43
Total Respondents				67
(skipped this question)				12

13. What type of format of any publication most motivates you to read or refer to it?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I prefer print		45.3%	34

I am indifferent		25.3%	19
I prefer online		29.3%	22
Total Respondents			75
(skipped this question)			4