

The Art of Relationship Marketing: Integrating Analytics and Audience

Dani L Pruitt, Master of Arts Candidate
Human Dimensions of Organizations, The University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

Subscription tickets sales, a stronghold for financial stability in Performing Art Centers and fine arts presenters across the nation, are in decline.

The more the organization learns about and monitors the patrons' needs, preferences, attitudes, and concerns, the more their satisfaction and commitment levels grow. --Rentschler

What are the connections between marketing efforts, customer satisfaction, and subscription ticket sales? Is it possible for Performing Art Centers to revamp their marketing techniques to create a more sustainable subscription ticket model?

Methods

Literature Review: Reviewing theories of Relationship Marketing; how meeting customer expectations creates trust, long-term relationships, and financial stability for performing arts organizations.

Data Analysis: Collecting and coding subscription ticket sales and post-event customer satisfaction surveys from a central Texas Performing Arts Center.

- Ticket sales data included subscription purchases over the course of six seasons (2012-2018).
- Post-event surveys from subscription performances included over two thousand responses to fifty-five events over three seasons (2015-2018)

Literature Cited

Hume, Margee, Gillian Sullivan Mort, Peter W. Liesch, and Hume Winzar. "Understanding service experience in non-profit performing arts: implications for operations and service management." *Journal of Operations Management* 24, no. 4 (2006): 304-324

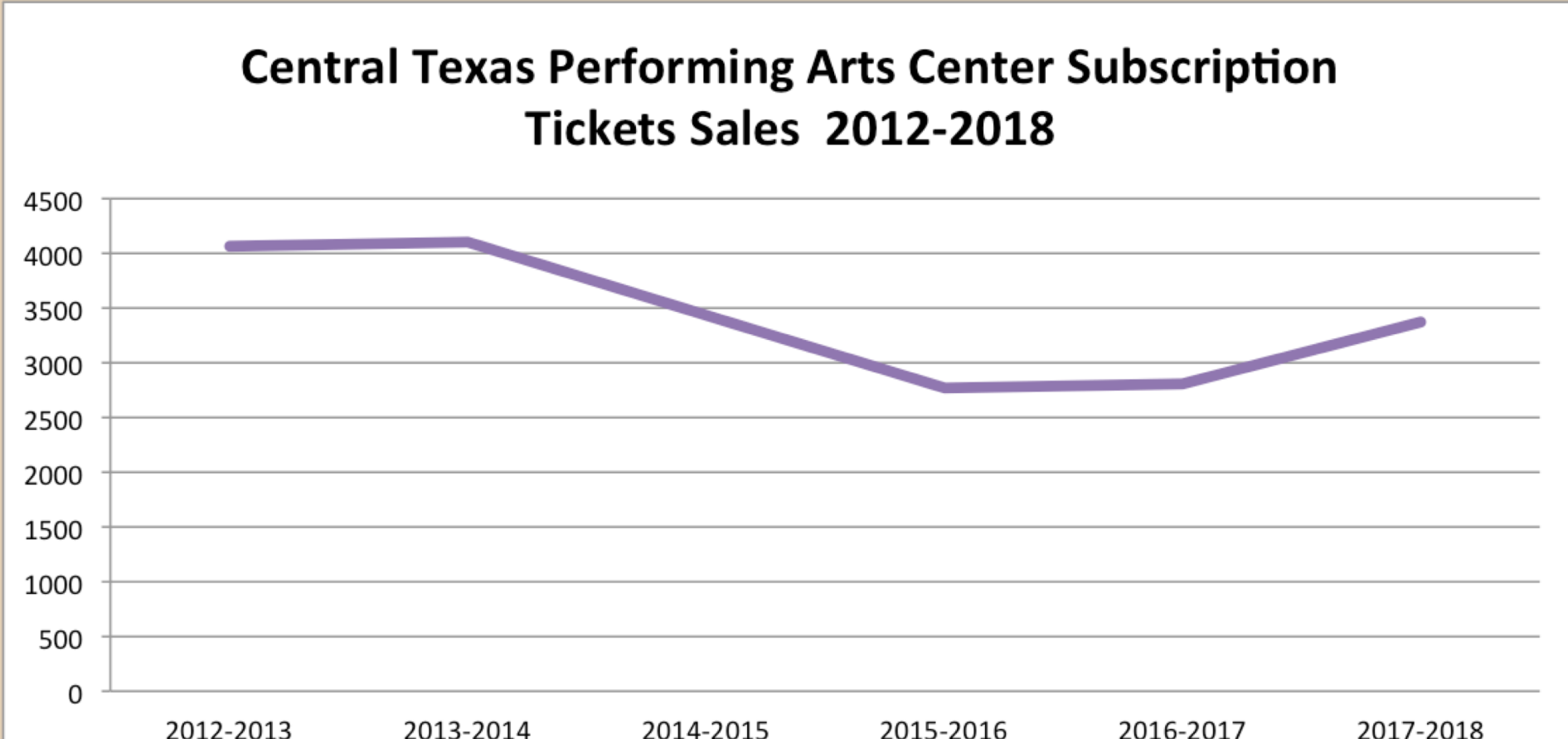
Davis, J. Charlene, and Scott R. Swanson. "The importance of being earnest or committed: Attribute importance and consumer evaluations of the live arts experience." *Journal of nonprofit & public sector marketing* 21, no. 1 (2009): 56-79.

Rentschler, Ruth, Jennifer Radbourne, Rodney Carr, and John Rickard. "Relationship marketing, audience retention and performing arts organisation viability." *International journal of nonprofit and voluntary sector marketing* 7, no. 2 (2002): 118-130.

Graphic Design: Annie Bradley McCall

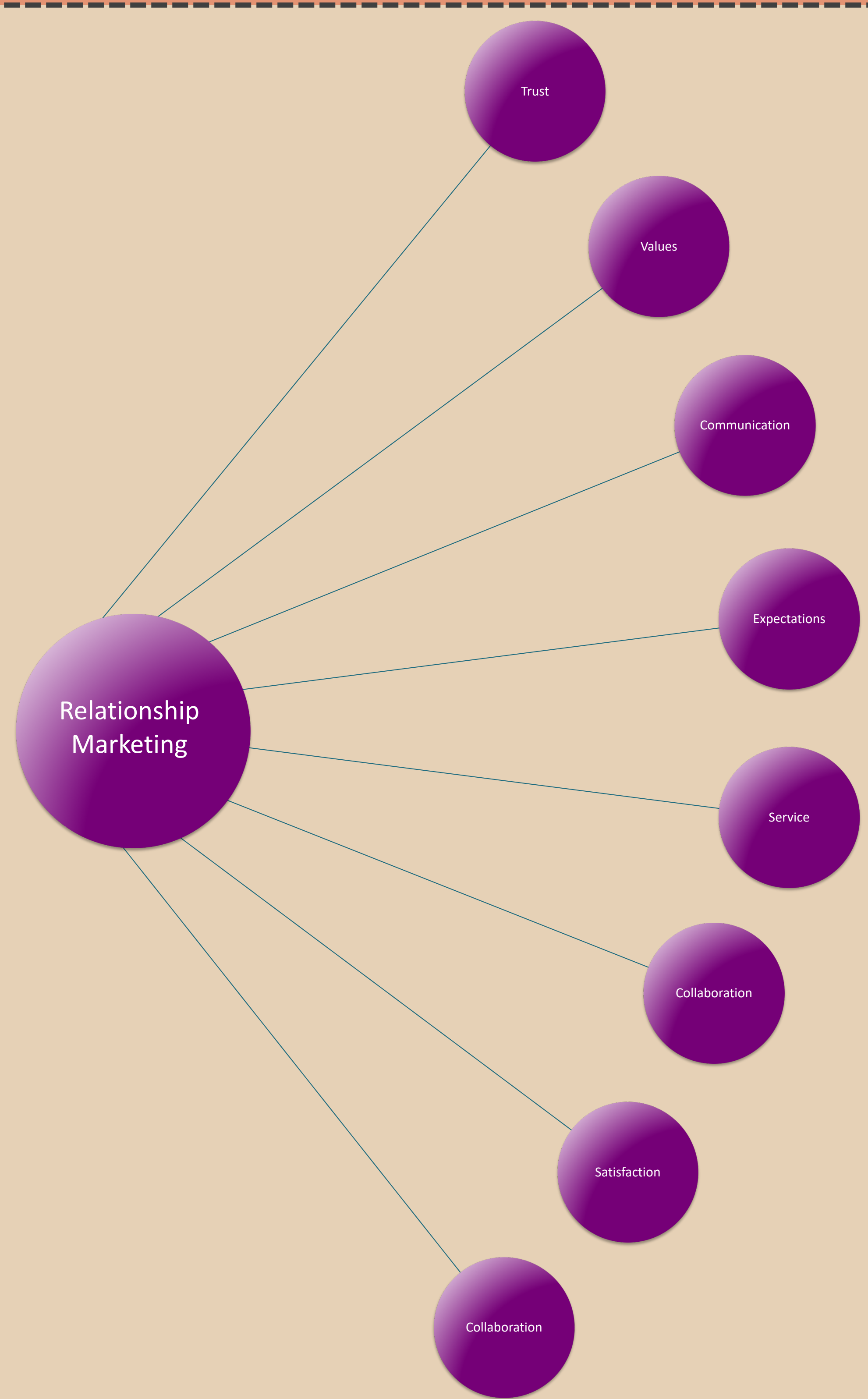
Results

Recent research in the non-profit performing arts has shown that marketing efforts designed to increase revenue from ticket sales are not achieving the results required to sustain the performing arts. --Hume



The performing arts offers a unique context in which to study service quality due in part to the complex nature of a live performance. --Davis

Central Texas Performing Arts Center - Customer Satisfaction				
Percentage who are Excellent/Very Good on Overall Satisfaction by Experience Ratings				
	Poor/Fair/Good	Very Good	Excellent	Overall % Satisfied
Parking	89.88	93.7	94.18	92.25
Food	89.97	95.76	95.62	93.39
Staff	78.6	91.78	94.55	92.41
Cleanliness	80.99	88.87	94.28	92.33
Communication	81.5	89.41	95.6	92.46



Many thanks to: my family who checked on me, even though I never answer the phone; friends who picked me up when I couldn't myself; those that have passed who continue to inspire me; my work family who always have my back; every HDO professor for their challenges, patience, and understanding; the HDO administrative team for their support; the 2018 cohort who I wouldn't have asked to be on this journey with anyone else.

Conclusions

Performing Arts Centers need to approach the problem of declining ticket sales holistically, as Relationship Marketing is unique to each organization and audience. The following are recommendations for those wanting a sustainable approach to subscription ticket sales in the performing arts:

Data & Analytics:

- Take the time and resources to understand the information the organization is already collecting through ticket sales and post-event survey reports.
- Restructure how information is received, stored, and analyzed so that information can be productively exchanged, while cutting down on repeat work processes in multiple departments.
- Streamline data to allow effective identification of changes from the baseline to the target goal.

Relationship Building:

- Segment audiences by frequency of attendance. The *theater buff* and *entertainment seeker* have different preferences, expectations, and concerns.
- Create marketing plans based on frequency of attendance.
- Reevaluate surveys. Continue to measure overall satisfaction while drilling down to understand what frequent customers value to increase satisfaction, appreciation of the experience, and overall commitment to the organization.

Are you interested in more details on Relationship Marketing in the Performing Arts?

Contact:
Dani L Pruitt
danilpruitt@gmail.com