

MARKETING 2010

Adapt and Thrive for success

Our approach in 2010 will be to continue to adapt our marketing strategy to follow the realities of the market. Our approach in 2009 has been to cut marketing costs while still maintaining the same promotional outcome. We shall continue this logical development.

We will be cutting our spend with external suppliers by doing more labour intensive strategies focusing on the internet: both on our website and on other events/ tourism promotion sites which offer free listings; social networking sites, expanding our email service, bringing in text messaging, continuing our targeted mail shots, using wider postering and more use of fliers provided for us, and by necessity more time on supporting commercial rentals, which are now a larger part of our programme.

Even in these constrained times we can move forward positively and optimistically. In 2009 our average attendances per show are up considerably on 2008. To use the language of Ryanair, our overall flight numbers may be down but seat occupancy is up! This shows that our target of being more efficient and effective is being achieved.

While originally there was a clear division of role between the Marketing and Box Office teams over the years they have become integrated with the box office staff using any available time to engage in marketing functions. Many of the staff have taken on extra responsibilities and extra training which is very beneficial to us and allowing us to develop and adapt especially for the growth in relationship marketing which is a very focussed and time intensive activity. More of our marketing work that in previous years was outsourced such as Graphic Design is being done in house, and all new initiatives are handled in house by members of our Box Office and Marketing Staff, making for very considerable savings compared to outsourcing this work.

Online Sales

We have launched our online ticketing service and it is working very successfully for us, and for our external clients: The Balor Theatre, The Earagail Arts Festival, Oireachtas na Gaeilge. While the focus in the initial period has been to get it up and running smoothly, in 2010 we will push it out to other prospective clients, focusing on the North West. The future of ticketing is undoubtedly online and anyone who does not have an online presence will lose out. Already we are seeing certain shows selling up to 30% of their tickets online. The Box Office team have administered the running of the system alongside their other daily tasks, making for a smooth and efficient changeover from the previous system.

Changing Patterns

The changing economy has had two main effects on how we work: customer-booking patterns have shifted towards later bookings, and agents and companies are making later decisions about touring. Our brochure has in the past served us very well, and indeed has been copied by many other theatres. The current brochure spreads itself over three to four months and between design, printing and distribution costs us in the region of €██████ per edition. In the past when we posted out a brochure there would be many advance bookings. This has largely dried up except for those shows with high name value as customers choose to hang onto their money until later, a trend felt by all in the economy.

This makes the current brochure style much less cost effective, so for 2010 we are looking at a new approach.

New Brochure

Our plan is to move to doing five or six smaller promotional listing brochures per year. This will allow us to do a shorter print run and we will cut down on print costs, envelopes and by targeting our direct post we will make savings in this area as well.

The primary purpose of this promotional material would be to point people towards the other sources of information such as our website, local newspapers etc. where more information can be found. The shortened run of the brochure should also help to keep a more current focus in the audience. It has long been thought that in a brochure covering three to four months shows at the start and end of it suffered – on one end from lack of lead in time and on the other as a result of the brochure becoming over exposed and tired.

Another side benefit will be that the very time consuming and intensive gathering and collating of the material for the brochure will be spread more evenly throughout the year.

This brochure will be strongly supported by low cost, high return initiatives such as email, text messaging, targeted mail shots, postering, flyering, etc.

Shows will also be able to have immediate release whenever they are confirmed rather than having to wait for the next brochure to come along. As modern technologies such as the internet are 'instant', there is no turn around time to get the information out there. This means that for those who do still book ahead, or for those shows for which there will be high demand, we can get the box office income in as soon as possible, thereby aiding cash flow to the whole organisation.

The Main Responsibilities of the Box Office and Marketing Team

Reception and Sales.

- Telephone Sales
- theboxoffice.ie online ticket service and website
- General Enquiries

Press

- Press Releases: separate releases to separate papers.
- Two weekly arts columns are compiled and placed into two local papers, The Letterkenny Post & Donegal People's Press.
- Setting up interviews, press pieces, competitions etc.

Publicity

- Distribution of Fliers & Posters - An increasing amount of the graphics is being done in house- time consuming but saving costs
- Liaising with promoters
- Design, layout and placement of Newspaper ads
- Organising Interviews and editorials

New Media

- Design and maintenance of our website angrianan.com
- Facebook, twitter, email and text messaging services.

- Administer listings on entertainment and tourism websites
- Programming Digital display signage.

Relationship Marketing

- Running of our Friends scheme
- Group bookings/Schools bookings
- Internal promotions eg. Culture night and 10th Anniversary events
- Promotional ideas such as the Meal Deal.
- Targeted mail shots.
- Marketing campaign for in-house productions on tour.

General

- Creating and managing events: cafe bar gives us a new focus for income generation.
- Archiving – press cuttings, posters, programmes, brochures, show recordings etc.