



## Nine ways to up

# Audience Engagement in the experience economy.

#### Introduction

Run an Internet search for how to increase audience engagement and generally, the first few articles that pop up will be centred on social media – more pictures, more regular posts etc.

Whilst social media, and how a website is optimised, certainly has a crucial role to play in increasing traffic, views and hopefully subsequent interactions, it is only one element in the experience economy and visitor attractions arsenal.

Given that visitor attractions the world over, are still to reach pre-COVID figures, if they ever do, and considering the change in behaviour the pandemic has wrought, there is a pressing need to investigate alternative means for growing visitor and audience engagement and income.

Here are a few ways that will help in this regard.





#### 1.0 Know Your Audience



Getting to understand who your visitors are, what they like and dislike starts with installing an audience engagement platform (AEP). One solution with multiple applications, this AEP spins out a customised visitor/audience experience app, which looks and feels just like an in-house branded app. The app, downloaded onto any smartphone, is tracked by the platform through the device's unique ID, thus following the visitor through their audience journey on site.

Capable of intelligently processing enormous amounts of information, these Software as a Service (SaaS) AEPs are transforming the experience economy, helping visitor attractions to address any shortfall in visitor numbers whilst bolstering new ways to create engagement, diversify revenue, improve learning and increase accessibility. They can do this in several ways, such as those listed below.



#### 2.0 Personalised Communication



The right content at the right time to the right person. This tops our list for generating audience engagement, and for just reason. In 2021, a Google/Greenberg study reflected that 61% of people expect brands to tailor experiences based on their preferences. The same is now expected of the visitor attraction sector. Analytics on dwell time, for instance, are automatically generated by heat mapping the mobile device that has the installed app. This in turn, assists with the segmentation of data to tailor communications. Receiving something pertinent to a visitor's likes goes a long way to winning fans.

Seamless integration with the AEP's trigger manager, means the operator decides how and when the content is activated, with management reporting to deliver valuable insights around your audience at your fingertips. Apps that allow the operator to customise their audience experience, also rank highly on the list of engagement desirability. AEPs can facilitate this even better, do so in real time, fulfilling the instant gratification culture.



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#### 3.0 Enriched Content



The content that can be delivered through an AEP to the app is vast and varied. From text to multimedia and everything in between. On site, it's as easy as sweeping the mobile device's camera over a given object and unlocking the available content or triggering it via web-based beacon technology for a fully immersive experience. Off site, additional content can be delivered and accessed too, keeping the visitor engaged.

This also plays to the growing edutainment sector, as education itself shifts into digital gear, and educators search for different ways to 'engage' young minds. Gamification is likewise an element that can be delivered by an advanced AEP, which again appeals to the younger market – the lifeblood of visitor attractions all over.



#### 4.0 Reward and Redemption



Who doesn't like a little spoiling or being recognised for their achievements? An AEP, having already determined the high likelihood of the visitor's interests, can automatically send them participative engagement such as questionnaires, quizzes, and surveys. This could also be a trail, tour or treasure hunt, whose reward, on successful completion, could be the treasure (redeemable at say the gift shop or tearoom), or an unlockable digital token (think NFT's).

The beauty of encouraging redemption on site, is that it can also lead to additional purchases – merchandise, lunch etc. The entire visitor journey is tracked and recorded for future use, since the AEP will pick up the arrival of the visitor next time they visit, or send them information they may be interested in, in advance, if they pre-book.



#### **5.0 Triggered Experiences**



Integrated trigger management makes it easy to configure triggers such as beacons, QR codes and image recognition with full monitoring capability for a transformed 21st century experience – even if you are serving up ancient relics. The novelty doesn't get old either, as there are numerous ways to initiate surprise and delight in audiences.

Using trigger technology is an inexpensive way to transform a visitor experience. With beacon hardware costing as little at £20 a unit, a small hardware investment matched to the right platform can not only transform the on-site experience but deliver a wealth of valuable insights into your audience activity.





### 6.0 Integrated Applications



We are fast entering a time where everything is stored or integrated onto a smartphone. Perhaps, we are already there. The point being is that we no longer need to necessarily carry cash or even bank cards, as payment functions are now integrated into the phone or apps, like audience experience apps. We don't need to carry diaries either, as event planners are also digital these days and automatically send reminders when needed.

This is all built into the audience engagement platform too, with the capability to integrate with a wide variety of e-ticketing and eCommerce solutions. And being API developer friendly, advanced AEPs can bolt on other additional digital enhancements too, making engagement even more seamless.



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#### 7.0 Ease of Use



Simple and intuitive navigation of the platform and audience app are imperatives. Many operators in the attraction sector have limited time, resources and technical expertise, with personnel performing many functions in small to medium sized attractions. The curator can also be the marketing officer for instance. Therefore, a platform and app that is quick to deploy and simple to use from the start, ensures that everyone gets what they need and want out of the experience.

Believe it or not, how you store your digital assets and access them contributes to deepening the engagement process. Integrated into the AEP, this becomes another useful tool to assist busy attractions short on staff and know-how.





#### 8.0 Responsiveness



An audience engagement platform (AEP) is what the operator uses to push the content to the audience experience app on the visitor's smartphone or tablet. Speed is of the essence for both. The faster the platform can assimilate data and turn it into insights that can deliver personalised communication, the better the chances of catching the attention of the visitor and keeping it. For example, with the experience app downloaded on the audience's device, the attraction can immediately send a survey or quiz to someone who has just experienced a talk. This can be in the form of asking the visitor to rate the show or extending the learning journey. The AEP knows who and what time and therefore, which talk that visitor attended and can send pre-planned automated activity or questions, saving time and resources whilst deriving real time insights.

Further, audience experience apps can be delivered either as a native or as a progressive web app. For the most part, they can be configured not to rely on a constant signal or connection to function, meaning the audience experience is always engaging.



#### 9.0 Extended Experience



The joy of attending the attraction need not stop when it's time to go home. It's here that AEPs truly excel, facilitating communication and dispensing engaging content after the visitor has left. For example, by tracking audience behaviour at an attraction, including dwell time and exhibit interaction etc , further customised and targeted information can turn day visits into memberships, an interest in conservation into fundraising or the love of a painter into art classes. The options are as creative as can be thought of.

With continued onsite visitor attendance not always an assured bet, enhancing visitor engagement with new and interactive experiences at every opportunity becomes more of a business imperative than ever. **To discover more, get in touch today.** 

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