

Marketing for Composers

Research Your Audience Worksheet

Now that you know who your audience is it's time to know about them. Your research should reveal two things and provide clarity on a third:

- It will reveal how your audience buys their music
- It will reveal your audience's demographic and psychographic information
- It will clarify what your audience's needs and desires are

In his book *Ask*, Ryan Levesque points out there are three clear benefits to doing significant audience research and to asking questions of your audience:

1. You get back priceless information to help you know what they want to buy and when they're ready to buy it. They'll become a happy customer who'll come back to buy, time and time again.
2. You find out why they *didn't* buy, providing opportunities to revise your campaign, fix your product or promotion, and reengage them so they'll eventually become that happy customer who returns to buy again and again.
3. Once optimized, it gives you the ability to *scale* your business significantly, limited only by the size of the market in which you operate.¹

You can conduct this research in a number of ways. The easiest way is to simply ask! Get in contact with members of your audience and talk to them on the phone, take them out for coffee, send them emails, and have them fill out surveys.

Next to in-person conversations surveys might be the best way to research your audience. A large reason this is true is because most online surveys (if you use a service like Survey Monkey or SurveyGizmo will compile the answers for you into spreadsheets or by question so you can do some analysis. My first survey was on SurveyGizmo (for free) and you can check it out here: <https://app.surveygizmo.com/builder/build/id/2392529>. I sent it to all the composers I knew at the time, my mailing list (which was very small), posted it on Facebook and Twitter, and sent it out to the SCI (Society of Composers, Inc.) listserv. Composers were my audience so that's who I got it in front of. The results have, in part, led me to the creation of this course because an overwhelming response was along the lines of, "Connecting with the right people who are passionate about performing your music and getting paid to do so." And, "Marketing

¹ Ryan Levesque, *Ask: The counterintuitive online formula to discover exactly what your customers want to buy... create a mass of raving fans... and take any business to the next level*, Nashville, TN: Dunham Books (2015), 7–8.

my works and convincing people to perform them it.” I learned some other things, too, but this was a biggie.

Levesque points out that there are really only two types of questions people can answer with accuracy:

1. What they *don't want*; and
2. Questions about their past behavior²

Never ask what your audience wants. That's a difficult question to answer and it forces people to speculate.

Open-ended questions are better than closed-ended questions because it forces people to provide more than a yes or no answer. When analyzing the results give more weight to the answers with a greater amount of words in them. That indicates the respondent actually thought through an answer.

Some questions might be (these should be tailored to fit your audience and situation):

- What problems or frustrations do you have with the music that is available to you?
- What is your #1 single biggest programming challenge right now?
- [For school and ensemble directors:] List all the ways in which you find music to program.
- How do you decide which music to purchase?

Also collect demographic data while you're at it. These can be closed-ended with radio buttons or drop-down lists to choose from:

- Age brackets.
- Gender (this could affect how you market your music)
- Income (or if it's educational you could ask about their annual budget for new music (scores and parts, etc.)).
- Geographic information.
- Education/Occupation.
- Ethnicity/Religion/Race/Sexual Orientation, etc.
- Lifestyle (activities, interests, and opinions)
- Personality (conservative, risk-taking, status-seeking, compulsive, ambitious, authoritarian, gregarious, etc.)

² Ibid., 80.

- Which best describes you? (provide a list of options that are audience specific. I.e., student, teacher, parent, board member, fan, political activist, album collector, etc.)

Lastly, ask for contact info. You can promise to not add them to your main mailing list (like I did in the example above). But if you know who they are and how to get a hold of them you can do over-the-phone follow ups for even more information.

Keep your survey between 6–8 questions. Be sure to come up with your own that are audience specific and will help you better understand what the needs and desires are of your audience so that you can serve your audience better.

Once you asked your audience answer the following questions:

1. How does your audience buy their music?
2. What is your audience's demographic and psychographic information?
3. In your audience's own words, what are the needs and desires of your audience?