TRY-ANGLE

FINAL MEETING

INTERNAL REPORT

Friday & Saturday 3-4 May 2024
Dresden (DE)

LIVE
DMA

Introduction

The Try-Angle experimentation process offers representatives of 18 live music venues in Europe the time and resources to take a step back and find new perspectives on audience development.

Live music venues selected to be part of this project are working together on audience development strategies, notably via the Try-Angle prototype model designed by Live DMA.

On 3 & 4 May 2024, the Try-Angle group met in Dresden (DE) for the foruth and last time, in Scheune venue, and as part of the Music Match conference. This final Try-Angle meeting intended to focus on validating the audience development tool, which includes the feedback from last sessions, before developing the tool and disseminating it to all venues in Europe starting in 2025.

You can read the report of the first Try-Angle meeting in Bilbao here, the second meeting in Lyon here, and the third meeting in Helsinki here

This report of the third meeting aims to convey the main points of discussion and decisions taken regarding the Try-Angle prototype tool.

Venues part of the Try-Angle experimentation project:

- Phil Henrion for Atelier Rock, Huy (BE)
- Egija Salnikova from Cesis Concert Hall, Cesis (LV)
- Jaani Haapsalo for G Live Lab Helsinki and G Live Lab Tampere (FI)
- Mike Naert from Het Depot, Leuven (BE)
- Jean-Christophe Gérard and Alain Brohard for L'Autre Canal, Nancy (FR)
- Charlotte Olejnik for Le Gueulard Plus, Nilvange (FR)
- May Linn Vollen Heggertveit, Bente Søfting and Frode Kleveland Baardsen for Lie Bydelshus, Skien (NO)
- Gonçalo Riscado for Music Box, Lisbon (PT)
- Marine Idir for Petit Bain, Paris (FR)
- Elio Giacoma and Michele Bordone, Povero Ragno, Cuneo (IT)
- Steffan Lykke Møller and Sidsel Thomassen for Radar, Aarhus (DK)
- Célia Carron for Rocking Chair, Vevey (CH)
- Tomi Legido Sanchez for Sala Mardi Gras, A Coruña (ES)
- Aitor Bengoetxea for Sanagustin Kulturgunea, Azpeitia (ES)
- Ben Zschorn and Levi Van Huijgevoort for Scheune, Dresden (DE)
- Waldo Volmer for Stad als Podium, Harderwijk (NL)
- Kukka Hytönen and Raine Pulkkinen for Tanssisali Lutakko, Jyväskylä (FI)

In addition to the venue representatives taking part in the meeting, an illustrator and graphic designer, Philip Volkenhoff, was invited to attend this session to gather some materials for the graphic reporting of the project, which will tell the project's story in the final version of the tool.

1. DAY 1 | Presentation of new prototype tool, feedback & validation

Based on the feedback from the three previous Try-Angle meetings, a new prototype tool was developed by moderator Ken Veerman and the Live DMA project officer prior to the Dresden meeting. This prototype, created using Prezi software to simulate the user journey on the future website, was presented to the Try-Angle group for review. Each participant was asked to evaluate the prototype and provide final feedback.

The new prototype incorporated the group's earlier suggestions, resulting in a simplified and more engaging tool. It consists of a fill-in-the-blanks text to be completed by venue teams through six steps. Each step prompts teams to reflect on specific questions, discuss them collectively, and then enter their responses into the provided text. Examples are included at each step to inspire teams and encourage them to think beyond their usual approaches.

During the meeting, Try-Angle participants divided into small groups to review the new tool. Some groups chose to evaluate it directly, while others simulated real-life scenarios in which they might use the tool.
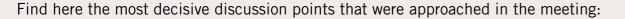
General feedback on the new prototype included:

- Overall, the new tool was well-received, and the group could envision using it in their work environment.

- Participants were pleased to see that all points discussed in previous meetings were incorporated into the prototype.

- Only a few important details required further review or modification, such as the order of questions, minor content additions or clarifications, and adjustments to specific wording.

Find here the most decisive discussion points that were approached in the meeting:

Audience vs Community	Getting into action
The group was unable to reach a consensus on whether to use the term «audience» or «community» within the tool. Some argued that «audience» is a more politically correct and general term for concert attendees, though it typically implies a more passive role, as it is often associated with mere observation rather than active participation. On the other hand, others felt that «community» conveys a more active, engaged group, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose, often with a stronger inclination towards collective action or political involvement. These terms represent distinct dynamics both semantically and in practice. Ultimately, we decided to use both terms concurrently within the tool to capture these nuances. For the title, we opted for the word «crowd,» as it seemed more neutral and descriptive than the other two.	The tool is designed to prompt venue teams into action. By following the tool's process, teams should not only feel a sense of accomplishment but also have made tangible progress. This includes creating a clear strategy, assigning tasks, and establishing a timeline. We encourage teams to define these elements after each step of the Crowdbuilder tool. To ensure teams focus on evaluating their strategy from the start, Step 6 asks them to identify measurable indicators of success for their audience development or community-building efforts. This step led to a discussion about what constitutes success: When can a team consider their work successful? How can they determine if they've met their goals? Should success be measured qualitatively, quantitatively, or both, and within what timeframe?
Audience dialogue and partnerships	**Finding a new name: Crowdbuilder**
The primary goal of the tool is to emphasize the importance of communication: engaging in dialogue with venue team members, partners, communities, and audiences. To support this, the group decided to dedicate an entire step of the tool to fostering partnerships and collaborating, rather than working in isolation as an organization. Additionally, several other steps explicitly encourage users to seek input and feedback from their audience, allowing them to refine their strategy with external perspectives.	The original prototype, named *Try-Angle*, was designed to reference the triangle theory developed by the 2018 Working Group on Audiences, which focused on the triangular relationship between audiences, artistic propositions, and settings. The name conveyed an emphasis on experimentation («Try») and the exploration of various perspectives or approaches («Angle»). This initial prototype was closely tied to the triangle theory. However, as the theory became less central to the tool's function, it became necessary to select a new name that would better reflect its evolution and symbolize its advancement. In light of the group's discussions on the semantics of the terms "audience" and "community," it was decided to avoid these words in the new name. Instead, the more neutral term "crowd" was chosen. To capture the essence of the tool's process, the name *Crowdbuilder* was adopted. This name suggests a venue that thrives on the energy and participation of its audience, implying that the crowd plays an integral role in shaping the experience.

ACCESS HERE THE NEW PROTOTYPE OF THE TOOL: CROWDBUILDER

Please note that the prototype linked above is definitive in its content (= the text), but not on its format. It's ugly and confusing, we know. The contents will be turned into a clear, enticing and interactive website in 2025.

2. DAY 1 | Panel at Music Match Conference "Audience Dialogue instead of Marketing"

Audience dialogue instead of marketing: How small live music venues can benefit from a two-way conversation with their audiences.
In a post-covid era with an ever-growing cost of living, it is easy to find reasons why it is hard for small live music venues to reach audiences. But what if it is not just the multicrisis? What if our communication strategies itself are failing us? In this panel we'll look at how music venues can shift their perspective from merely selecting bands to building communities. This panel features an international group of music venue professionals who have collaborated on a European project about audience development. They will share their concrete experience and ideas on how to kick-start a dialogue with the audience in your venue. The session will be moderated by Ken Veerman, a writer and consultant on audience development for cultural spaces. Speakers: • Moderator: Ken Veerman, Independent consultant for cultural organisations (BE) • Kukka Hytönen, venue manager at Tanssisali Lutakko (FI) • Mike Naert, general and artistic director at Het Depot (BE) • Michele Bordone, manager at Povero Ragno (IT) • Marine Idir, cultural actions and audience relations manager at Petit Bain (FR)

The panel underscored the importance of audience dialogue for audience development and community building strategies, as it is in the Crowdbuilder tool, and highlighted by participants' concrete examples. This key element, particularly the storytelling required to engage various stakeholders and discuss the venue's project, was examined in greater detail on the second day of our meeting.

3. DAY 2 | Exercises on story-telling

The second day of the Try-Angle meeting in Dresden focused on the theme of storytelling within the context of music and cultural organizations. The discussion explored how storytelling can be used as a tool to engage different stakeholders and adapt communication strategies to diverse audiences.

STORYTELLING AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT

The session began by highlighting the importance of storytelling in contrast to traditional marketing. It was noted that while marketing often carries connotations of manipulation, storytelling is viewed as a more genuine approach to involving people in a narrative. The discussion emphasized that the way a story is told should be tailored to the audience, changing depending on whom you are addressing, without compromising on truthfulness.

An example provided was of volunteers who participate in events primarily for the social connection and love of music. In this case, the story told should center on the social experience rather than just the event itself, making the social aspect the focal point of communication.

Participants were encouraged to consider the interests of those they work for and adapt their storytelling accordingly. A Venn diagram exercise was proposed, wherein participants were to map out the overlap between their story and their target audience's interests, ensuring the narrative hits the intersection where both align.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT TYPES OF CUSTOMERS

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to understanding the different types of «customers» within the music and cultural sectors. Beyond the traditional customer who purchases a product, two other types were identified:

• Service Users: These include individuals who benefit from the service without direct payment, such as beneficiaries of free tickets to attend a concert

• Donors: Those who contribute financially, not for a product, but to support others, such as through subsidies or sponsorships. It was emphasized that donors also expect something in return, often a sense of contribution or impact, like feeling that they have «helped the venue» or "helped more people enjoy music" through their donations.

The group explored how volunteers fit into this framework, noting that while they might seem like classic customers who exchange time for a free ticket, they are often more akin to donors, seeking to contribute to a cause larger than themselves.

EXERCISES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Two key exercises were conducted to deepen participants' understanding of their customers and how to engage them effectively:

Customer Identification Exercise: Participants were asked to list the groups of people they work for. An example discussed involved a children's theater company where the direct customers are the cultural centers that purchase the shows, while the children themselves are indirect beneficiaries. This exercise helped clarify who the real customers are in different contexts and how to tailor storytelling to them.

Empathy Map Exercise: This exercise involved creating an empathy map for one type of customer. Participants answered four questions about their customers:

• What does the customer say?
• What does the customer do?
• What does the customer think?
• What does the customer feel?

An example provided was of a venue addressing a local public funder, who outwardly promotes the village as a quiet, ideal place to live but privately thinks that nothing happens there, making it boring. The venue would dynamise the town, and so funding the venue is crucial for it to happen. This contrast was used to identify the real obstacles and potential areas for engaging the customer emotionally through narrative.

CRAFTING EFFECTIVE NARRATIVES

The session concluded with a focus on crafting narratives that resonate with audiences by addressing obstacles and presenting solutions. A storytelling framework was introduced, consisting of four key elements:

Narrative Setup: «I know what you think, but you are wrong.»
• Twisting the Knife: Presenting the emotional obstacle clearly.
• Solution: Our project can be a solution to the obstacle
• Imagined Future: Describing a positive future where the obstacle is overcome.
• Call to Action: Encouraging the audience to take a specific action, such as subscribing, following, or purchasing.

In conclusion, the day emphasized the power of storytelling in connecting with various stakeholders in the music and cultural sectors. Through practical exercises, participants were encouraged to refine their storytelling techniques to better engage their audiences, whether they are customers, donors, or volunteers.

4. DAY 2 | Goodbyes & Dresden Club Tour

The final day of the last Try-Angle meeting concluded with the traditional group photograph and a brief farewell ceremony, marking the close of the Try-Angle project and the launch of the new «Crowdbuilder» tool. This innovative tool, developed through extensive testing by live music venues across Europe, represents a major advancement in the field. Participants reflected on their experiences, expressed their gratitude for the collaborative effort, and shared their excitement for the tool's future. The day wrapped up with a guided tour of Dresden, highlighting local music venues and clubs that contribute to the city's vibrant music scene. This farewell marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter.

NEXT STEPS: 2025 AND BEYOND

• Develop the Crowdbuilder prototype into an interactive website.

• Translate the tool into all languages spoken within the Try-Angle group and the Live DMA network, with support from voluntary Try-Angle participants.

• Disseminate the tool across the European live music sector, with assistance from voluntary Try-Angle participants.

• Collect feedback from venues using the tool and incorporate their experiences as examples within the tool.

• Consider reinitiating the test-driving process.

PAPER VERSION

A "print-it-yourself" version of Crowdbuilder will be created for venue teams preferring to work with paper rather than digital formats. This version may also be used for tool dissemination through workshops at professional music events.

GRAPHIC REPORTING

Illustrator and graphic designer Philip Volkenhoff attended the Dresden session to gather materials for the project's graphic reporting. This visual documentation will be included in the final version of the tool, using construction site imagery to reflect the collaborative nature of the Try-Angle project and the collective effort required for using the Crowdbuilder tool.

THANK YOU!!

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