



The Suitcase and the Segments



By Nina Gram & Christina Østerby

As described earlier A Suitcase of Methods is part of a mixed methods-setup at The Royal Danish Theatre where we continuously gather large amounts of both qualitative and quantitative information. In addition to data about ticket sales and ticket purchasers we collect information about audiences' reactions to their experiences at The Royal Danish Theatre (RDT). As an appendix to this ongoing collective and analytical work with information, we carried out a brand reputation analysis in the summer of 2016 in collaboration with the research and data analytics firm YouGov. This survey informs us about the Danes' cultural habits and their opinion about The Royal Danish Theatre.

Before this survey was initiated A Suitcase of Methods had carried out its first exploratory studies. These resulted in new ideas regarding themes and questions might be interesting to pursue further in this large brand reputation survey. For instance, we had learned that many different factors affect how we experience our theatre visit. We therefore made sure to focus on the overall experience instead of specifically and "only" on the art experience. We also asked about the function of the theatre visit for the individual (read more about this perspective [here](#)), and what connection the individual has had to the theatre throughout his or her life.



A circular motion in our knowledge work

The brand reputation survey is part of a new way of working with knowledge at The RDT. We have gone from dealing primarily with quantitative data about the audiences' transactional behaviour and their interaction with our website to, for instance with A Suitcase of Methods, also focusing on the qualitative aspects. This perspective provides greater detail to questions such as why people visit a theatre and what they perceive as relevant experiences.

The brand reputation survey contributes with a perspective on how people perceive The RDT, and it helps to structure and segment our various customer types. In collaboration with YouGov we tested different so called segmentation engines on their large database. We wanted to learn more about what precisely *creates* a segment and understand what behaviours and attitudes best define who we are in terms of values, habits, etc. and thus what segment these values can be ascribed to. After this investigatory part of the process, we ended up with our initial focus on the behaviour of our ticket purchasers. It turns out that our behaviour is exactly what determines our segment. According the YouGov survey, it is how we *act* and what we *do* that says the most about us. But how do we put this knowledge to use?

What we learned from the survey

The brand reputation survey gave us useful knowledge about the Danes' cultural habits and divided the Danish population into different segments, characterised by their cultural preferences and behaviour. The survey thus provides an overview of the different customer types – our frequent customers (the green segments in the overview above), our occasional

customers (the yellow segments), and a group of people who is disinterested in culture and thus out of our reach (the last segment in the overview). Furthermore, we got information about why people choose specific art forms and cultural genres; whether they plan activities before or after a visit to the theatre; whether they prefer entertainment or more complex and demanding productions; and if they prefer to be informed in advance about the practicalities and the artistic content. Or if they belong to a different group, who want to be challenged, surprised, and learn something new. A group who, in their quest for a spectacular experience, is willing to take a risk of experiencing something they don't like.

I will not go through all the segments in detail here. Instead, I will highlight a few interesting tendencies, which seem to accentuate the fact that art and culture mean different things to different people. We learned for instance, that the different segments that arose from the survey all have different ways of preparing for and warming up to a theatre visit. We saw that the group of people who most often visit The Royal Danish Theatre ('The high frequency intellectuals') spend a lot of time preparing for the experience that awaits them. They do so for instance by researching facts about a specific production and about the work's contemporaries etc. Art and culture means a great deal to this segment. It is an identity marker. It is important to them to appear informed and enlightened when they talk to friends and family about their theatre experiences.

The 'Broad culture consumers' also visit the theatre as part of an entire evening out. This group often goes out afterwards or meet up at a friend's house. Culture is important to this group as well, but here the social aspect of going out is the most important.



For the segment 'Theatre-ish', which often include families with children, the theatre visit is a family event. It is a social experience similar to a trip to a castle, a museum or other tourist attractions. The purpose of the theatre visit is to share an experience and passing on the interest for art, culture, and entertainment to your children.

Finally, we have a segment we call 'Musical theatre' for whom entertainment and a guaranteed good time is crucial. This group wants to feel assured that everyone in their party is enjoying themselves. They often start their evening by going out before the visit to the theatre.

It is obvious, when working with these segments that art and cultural experiences meet different needs for different people, and that these needs and wants are to some extent connected to our age. But if our segment is determined primarily by our behaviour, why do we need a qualitative perspective?

The segments meet the personal stories

A Suitcase of Methods contributes to this data and knowledge about the segments with details about the audiences' experiences with performance art and knowledge about what is important and relevant to the audience when going to the theatre. With this project we access knowledge, which the audience is often not aware of themselves and

therefore rarely report about in traditional questionnaires. We have for instance learned that audiences (not surprisingly) react differently to various elements in a production. Where one group of audiences is drawn to and have emotional reactions to realistic and fact driven stories, another group feel distanced by many, very realistic details. A woman, who has experienced the play *Human Outphasing*, described how this production spoke to her in a very rational way. This made it harder for her to surrender emotionally to the story, the characters, etc. She explained how she in contrast reacted spontaneously and very emotionally when she first experienced an opera. Even though she didn't understand the plot, she was very moved by the music, the singing, and the staging. (Read more about these reactions in our [Report #8 Open rehearsals](#)). We often have audiences who want more facts or more dialogue in a production as well as the opposite - audiences asking for more abstract elements. Such contrasting requests may come from people within the same segment, and nevertheless they prefer different artist forms of expression.

It is thus interesting to combine the big data from the surveys with the 'thick' and detailed data from the qualitative explorations. Combined, these perspectives give us relevant insight into what the theatre and performance art means to people, and what role it plays in their lives. At the same time, this knowledge helps us to raise new questions and point out themes and areas, in need of further study and exploration.