Open house events

How many visitors are new?

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It has been a priority for a long time at The Royal Danish Theatre to offer a broad variety of free 'open-house' arrangements. One of the purposes with these arrangements is to attract new guests. Prior to this survey, we had little information about what type of guest these events attract. We usually work intensively with transactional data in order to learn more about our customers and audiences, and these free events, of course, don't involve any transactions. We therefore carried out a simple survey to get in touch with these guests and to answer the question *Who is new?* This report is a brief overview of our survey and our results.

About the survey: The dilemma of open doors and information hunger

For more than 25 years, Culture Night has been one of Copenhagen's most well-attended cultural events and The Royal Danish Theatre is part of the festivities. Each of our venues have a varied program, and everyone with a so-called Culture Pass can attend.

For the past couple of years we have had many thousand visitors on Culture Night, but up until now, we don't know how many of them that are new to us.[1]

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[1] We define new visitors as anyone who haven't been to one of our venues in the past three years.

The idea behind Culture Night is to be open and inviting, and thus making it easier for everyone to experience the theatre and get a better understanding of what we do and how we work. It would therefore be counterproductive to stop each visitor and ask them for their email or other personal information we needed in order to identify them as new visitors. So instead we chose to base our survey on the open and inviting principle of the Culture Night and hand out small gifts to the visitors – a little information voucher, which gave them a discount on their next ticket purchase.

Survey design

Before handing out this voucher, we asked the following question to as many visitors as possible: *"Have you been at The Royal Danish Theatre within the past three years?"* Depending on the answer (yes/no), we gave them a voucher saying either "Welcome…" or "Welcome back to The Royal Danish Theatre". At the end of the night we counted how many of each voucher we had handed out, and we got the percentage wise distribution of new and familiar visitors for this event. See an example of us handing out the flyers here.

After the Culture Night, we had extra vouchers to spare. We therefore carried out the same survey on an open rehearsal in the Opera called "Lunch and Opera".

Brief facts about the survey

Events:
Culture Night. October 12th 18:00-23:00.

Lunch and Opera. October 13th 12:00.

Research question: How many new visitors attend our open house events?

Research format: Both events were based on an open house-format. The first one required a Culture Night pass and for Lunch and Opera the visitors could just show up on the day.
On Culture Night we had extra front of house staff to help with the survey. We found that it worked best to loosely ask people passing through the doors without actively stopping every single one coming into the house. We wanted to avoid creating even more lines and disturbing people too much.

Duration: We handed out vouchers for a couple of hours during Culture Night. After a while we ran out of red vouchers (for new visitors) and we had to stop the survey. Cf. the results.

Interview questions: *"Have you been at The Royal Danish Theatre within the past three years?"*

Results
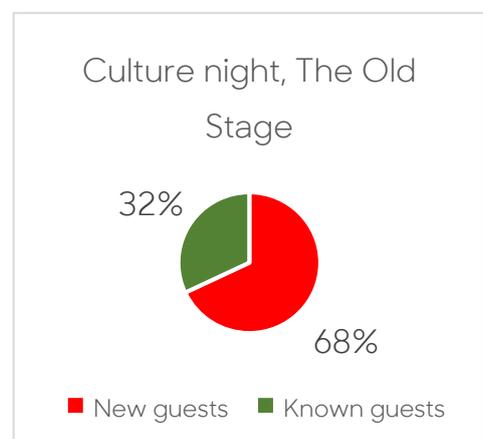
The survey on Culture Night

The Opera

Facts

- **New guests: 67 %**
- **Known guests: 33 %**
- The survey ended at 20:43 pm
- Guests inside at the time: 3.905
- Number of flyers handed out to new guests (red): 1000. 67 % of the respondents.
- Number of flyers handed out to known guests (green): 495. 33 % of the respondents.
- Total number of handed out flyers: 1.495
- Total number of guests: 6.664

Culture night, The Opera

33%

67%

■ Known guests ■ New guests

The Old Stage

Facts

- **New guests: 68 %**
- **Known guests: 32 %**
- The survey ended at 22:00 pm
- Guests inside at the time: 5.346
- Number of flyers handed out to new guests (red): 1.120. 68 % of the respondents

Culture night, The Old Stage
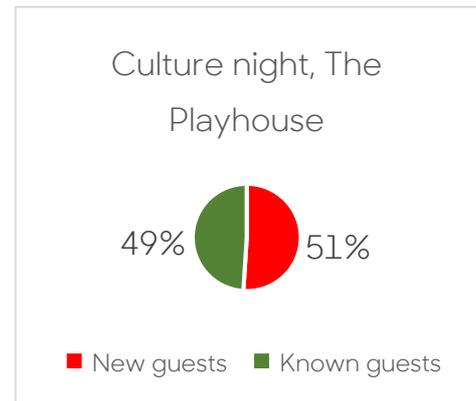
32%

68%

■ New guests ■ Known guests

- Number of flyers handed out to known guests (green): 528. 32 % of the respondents.
- Total number of handed out flyers: 1.648
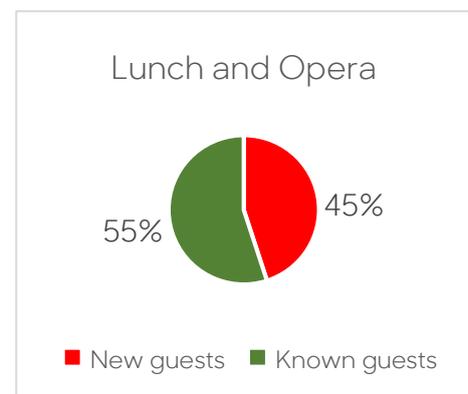- Total number of guests: 5.868

The Playhouse

Facts

- **New guests: 51 %**
- **Known guests: 49 %**
- The survey ended at 22:33 pm
- Guests inside at the time: 2.900
- Number of flyers handed out to new guests (red): 587. 51 % of the respondents.
- Number of flyers handed out to known guests (green): 554. 49 % of the respondents.
- Total number of handed out flyers: 1.141
- Total number of guests: 3.009

Culture night, The Playhouse

49% 51%

■ New guests ■ Known guests

Lunch and Opera

Facts

- **New guests: 45 %**
- **Known guests: 55 %**
- Total number of guests: 432
- Total number of handed out flyers: 221
- Number of flyers handed out to new guests (red): 99
- Number of flyers handed out to known guests (green): 122

Lunch and Opera

55% 45%

■ New guests ■ Known guests

Conversion rate:

- Total number of guest using the discount **44**
- *New* guests that used the discount: **11** (25 %)
- *Known* guest that used the discount: **33** (75 %)

Ticket sales with Culture Night Discount

25%

75%

■ Nye kunder   ■ Kendte kunder

Survey summary

This survey gives us two basic insights:

1) The Culture Night attracts an impressive number of new guests to our venues. They want to experience our houses and the history and aesthetics that characterize them. However, it seems to be slightly more difficult to attract new guests when the event involves a more traditional theatre experience.

2) Only 11 Culture Night guests used the discount on the voucher. This indicates that a new audience need more than an economical incentive to actually purchase a ticket. It seems to be easier (and thus more appealing) to experience Thea Royal Danish Theatre's buildings than its art on stage. From another study we are currently working on, we know that our non-users find us relevant and important as an institution, but quite a few of them are unsure if our productions are a 'fit for them'. More on that in a later report.