

TOP TIPS: AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Audience engagement is a two-way interaction between you and your audience. Engaging experiences provoke emotional responses in people, and get people actively participating, talking about and sharing their experiences, as well as inspiring them to want to find out more.

Here we share some of our top tips for creating memorable, inspiring and engaging experiences for audiences...

1

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE'S NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Everyone has different attitudes and perceptions relating to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) which may not be the same as your own. How can you help to make everyone feel welcome and confident to take part? What will their needs be? Find out as much as you can beforehand to help pitch your content and activities at the right level.

2

SET LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

What do you want your audience to take away from the experience? What would you like them to feel, do or understand? What would success look like – for you, your audience and your organisation? Consider all these things before you develop your experience to help you focus your content and plan activities.



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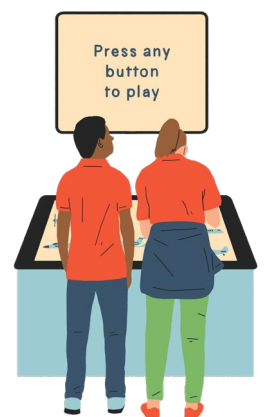
CAPTURE PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

Spark interest by introducing your content or activity in surprising ways. This can be as simple as a good question, an intriguing object or image, an exciting story, or a link to popular culture or to people's everyday lives or interests.

4

SHARE CONTENT IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

Think about how you can link to and build on people's existing knowledge. There are lots of formats you can use, including objects, images, videos, activities, demos and sharing stories. Sensory experiences are especially great for audiences with additional needs. Avoid jargon and make sure to explain key terms. Using a variety of formats will make your experience more inclusive and accessible.



5

GET PEOPLE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING

Enable and encourage your audience to contribute and do something active with your content. Ask questions that encourage them to think about and share their views with you and with each other. Invite them to create something, play a game or complete a challenge. Think about activities for groups as well as individuals and consider any access needs.

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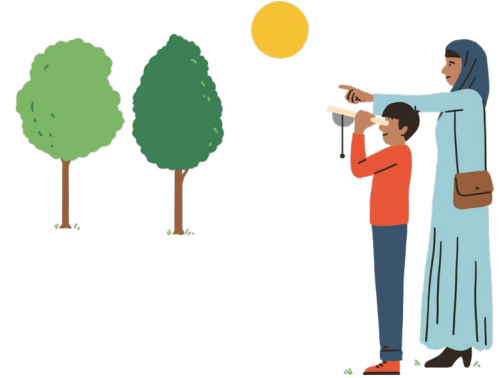
RESPOND TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Observe, listen to and talk with your audience. Are they getting involved? Do they look distracted or bored? Does anyone appear to be left out? Make changes and adjust your content where needed. Try to use your audience's terminology and the examples they have shared with you in your responses, and include personal stories and relevant popular or cultural references.

7

EXTEND THE EXPERIENCE

How can you help your audience build longer-lasting connections with the content? Can you suggest where they could go next or share links to where they can find out more? Can you leave them with a discussion-sparking question, take-home activity or challenge for the way home? Leaving them with something to think and talk about will help them to continue exploring and making connections.



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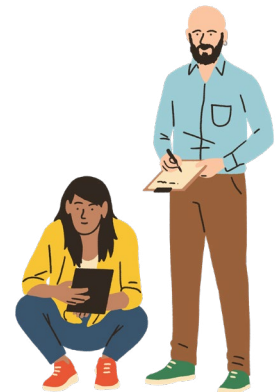
TEST OUT YOUR IDEAS

Practise and pilot your interactions and activities with others. Will your content work with your target audience? Are your instructions clear? Be conscious of timings. Plan some questions to ask your audience in advance, and when thinking about your whole experience include time for people to respond to your questions and ask their own.

9

EVALUATE

How will you know if your activity has been successful? Would you do anything different next time? There are lots of ways to get feedback, including observation, pebble voting, getting your audience to add responses to a scale on a board or making them stand along a line, questionnaires or follow-up interviews. Take time to reflect on whether the experience was successful for you and your audience.



10

ENJOY YOURSELF

Meeting and interacting with different people and audiences is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Your passion and enthusiasm can have a really positive impact on your audience's experience. Don't underestimate this!

EXPLORE MORE

To find out more about Science Museum Group Learning, including resources to use in informal learning experiences, at home and in the classroom, training opportunities, and insights and research around STEM engagement, visit: learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk

For further information, contact us at: SMGAcademy@sciencemuseum.ac.uk

Please write 'Top Tips: Audience Engagement' in your email subject line.