

Appendix B

TEST DRIVE THE ARTS NI ONLINE

Why Test Drive the arts online?

- Test Drive the Arts is a new city-wide audience development program that invites the people of Belfast to see our artists and performers.
- It offers first-time arts patrons a "try before you buy" experience, inviting them to experience a variety of performances at numerous venues around the city.
- It's about breaking down barriers and encouraging people to be part of the arts community by giving them a VIP invitation to a show.
- For the venues and companies taking part in Test Drive, it harnesses an untapped asset – unsold seats.
- Test Drive has been a proven success in the UK and has been taken up by other countries including New Zealand and Australia.
- The 'Test Drive the Arts Online' model, proposed for Belfast in 2009, is currently (only) running in Australia and is the largest Test Drive initiative of its kind, with 20 companies and venues taking part across Queensland.
- The Belfast project has the potential to be the biggest of its kind world-wide.
- The aim of the project is two-fold: (1) to maximise the value of unsold tickets, in allowing new attenders to experience the arts in a 'risk free' environment and (2) to turn those new attenders into paying customers.
- Once the project has been set up, it can continue to run indefinitely with very low on-costs.
- The project has the potential to enable most arts organisations to reach their PFG 2% PSA target for increased attendance
- In a time of economic downturn the project enables arts organisations to take a pro-active position in terms of maximising attendances and giving value to the public and funders
- There is good potential for a media partner and for some very positive PR/news coverage
- The Test Drive model is a proven model and will deliver long term ROI in direct financial terms
- The project delivers on a number of the BCC ICS objectives
- ACNI have informally offered match funding to take the project NI-wide

- Potential for TSN specific element to the project

HOW IT WORKS:

If members of the public are interested in Test Drive, they can register via a website for complimentary tickets from a menu of performances.

The list of available performances is updated daily as new organisations come on board with new shows.

Once the patron has selected a show, they sign-up to confirm that they are a new attender at the venue and are placed in contact with venue staff who then deliver the customer service element (tickets/info/programme/welcome desk etc)

Then, if they enjoy the Test Drive experience and want to stay a part of the program they're eligible for further special offers and discounts.

People are taken up a 'loyalty ladder' from 'first time experience' to 'valued and loyal customer' – this enriches their experience of the arts, provides income for the venue and return on investment for the funder