

How valuable is the cradle-to-grave arts patron profile?

5 MIN READ



When my daughter was young, I was faced with the challenge of keeping her busy during the summer months while I was at work. Each year, I spent a considerable amount of time looking for events and camps she would love and that she could learn from too.

As I look back at all the music and performing arts classes and camps she attended, I can see how they've helped shape her lifelong love of live events. She's incredibly happy being on stage and watching others perform. And throughout her life (she's 23 now), she has been convincing me to spend a lot of money on arts and entertainment. There were costumes for plays and dance recitals plus instruments and other gadgets so she could improve as a musician. And there were years and years of lessons and so many tickets.

By now, you must be wondering why I'm going on and on about my daughter and what this could possibly mean for your arts organization?

You must find a way to start getting to know consumers when they are young.

Most organizations have programming for young people and/or a percentage of attendees at specific event types are children. Understanding who those kids are and what makes them tick has immense, lifelong value. Consider these important points:

- **You start to build customer profiles around kids.** By tracking and understanding their likes and dislikes, you are growing your database and future-proofing your business. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Arden Theatre Co. for example hosts summer camps for children in grades 1 through 12. Kids spend the summer collaborating and performing on stage at Arden. Camps foster a love of the arts and your organization specifically, both for the children who attend as well as their parents and extended families.
- **The children of today are your main customers tomorrow.** If it's hard for you to see that far into the future, remember that today's kids are tomorrow's college students. These are the people who will buy your student rush seats and encourage their classmates to attend with them. Eventually, they will have the money to pay full price for tickets. They will also be your future season subscribers and donors.
- **Today's season subscribers are tomorrow's major donors.** As an example, TRG Arts released research revealing that Generation X is responsible for [27% growth in donations and 10% growth in subscriptions since 2015](#). Imagine the power of cultivating more of these patrons from their early years. Clearly, there is value in watching and engaging kids as they grow up.

Building Lifelong Loyalty

This cradle-to-grave concept is something every live entertainment organization should implement. The cost of capturing and storing data is nothing if you have the right technology. By including customer relationship management (CRM) in your core organizational strategy, you at least ensure that you're collecting the right data at the right time, even if you haven't quite figured out how to use it yet. It's never too early to start.

Understanding your younger demographic also brings value because they are a gateway to people who have money to spend today. Parents of children are always looking for activities and events to attend with their kids. It's a simple equation: find the kids, get the money. Indeed, even at 23 years of age, artists and organizations that my daughter loves are still getting my money on a regular basis. On top of that, they're getting her money now too!

Creating and maintaining a lifelong relationship with people is hard, but it's also essential. Plant your seeds, grow your roots and cultivate those relationships for as long as possible. You'll be thrilled with the results.

Connect with one of our arts and culture experts to learn how you can leverage cradle-to-grave relationships in your organization. [Book a consultation today.](#)