

Respecting customer pronouns in live entertainment

4 MIN READ



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In times past, addressing formal notes and letters had a very standard protocol. Authors like Emily Post, who was famous for writing about etiquette, provided very specific recommendations that society dutifully followed.

As we evolve, our desire for formality can conflict with our need to demonstrate respect for customers and supporters by not misaddressing or misgendering them. To evolve alongside our customers, we as live event professionals must start to ask a simple question: **“What are your pronouns?”**

In 2016, [Merriam-Webster](#) added the honorific ‘Mx.’ alongside Mr., Mrs. and Ms. The title Mx. was originally suggested in the 1970s so that women could avoid identifying their gender. More recently, it been adopted by non-binary individuals.

To that end, in late March, United Airlines announced that it would [begin allowing customers to book tickets using Mx.](#) in addition to Mr. and Ms. Around the same time, researchers unveiled Q, a new [gender-neutral voice assistant](#). On top of hoping it will one day become an option for Amazon Alexa, Apple Siri and/or the Google Assistant, Q’s developers expect it will open a global conversation about gender and inclusivity.

As a live events or entertainment organization, you of course have a variety of options in addressing personalized email campaigns and fundraising messages. These may include ‘Dear {Firstname}’, which some consider too informal, or ‘Dear Friend’, which eliminates the benefit of personalization. In situations where you don’t know a customer’s preference and choose to do some online research, using Dear Mr. or Ms. {Lastname} still carries the risks of assumption and offence.

Really, what this comes down to is treating your customers with respect.

A great way to avoid any doubt is to simply ask your customers when they buy a ticket or make a donation. AudienceView easily accommodates this through its family of software solutions so that organizations of any size or type can address their customers and supporters according to their individual preferences.

As you continue to do everything you can to create a great overall customer experience, take the time to educate your staff and yourself too. As the team at [The Pronoun Project](#) so eloquently said, “We know change won’t happen overnight, but progress can.”

Here are some helpful resources as you evolve your personalization and educate your team:

[She? Ze? They? What's In a Gender Pronoun, NY Times](#)

['What do you call a Donor', Dennis Fischman](#)

[How to respectfully use gender pronouns in the workplace, Forbes](#)

If you are an existing AudienceView client and want to learn more, reach out to our Customer Success team and we'll walk you through the title field and open-text solutions for pronouns. If you're not currently a customer, you can learn more about our solutions at audienceview.com or contact our team at marketing@audienceview.com.