

## Knowledge and Knowhow: a qualitative research toolbox for small- and medium-sized creative organisations

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### Abstract

Our interdisciplinary approach to audience development research includes management theory and practice, in collaboration with artistic and policy partner 'insiders', and has been successfully developed and applied across a range of different creative settings (ESRC: RES-187-24-0014; ESRC: RES-331-27-0065). Our current AHRC Creative Economy follow on funding project responds to needs identified in the first author's AHRC Cultural Value project (AHRC AH/L006278/1) and subsequent research which applied emerging methods, particularly in relation to the diversification of potential audiences. The Knowledge and Know-how project is targeted at the direct application of research to benefit small- and medium- sized creative organizations that wish to refine their understanding of their actual and potential audiences, stakeholders, or participants using qualitative rather than quantitative approaches and lack in-house expertise in research and wish to develop this area.

Together with upward of fifty creative organisations and funders, we are co-creating and designing a web based qualitative research toolbox which will be adaptable to different audience/consumer/participant development research needs, and will take account of different stakeholder values and organisational goals. Our aim is to develop a 'research habit' and 'promising practices' among creative organisations. Promising practices are those which provide examples that can be adapted, selected from and reinvented in new situations (Delbridge, et. al., 2007; Beech and Gilmore (eds.), 2015). In line with our dialogical approach taken throughout the study, these practices are intended to be generative of new ways of doing things rather than a source for imitation. This approach to the co-creation process is sensitive to the differing levels of confidence to conduct research, in addition to the financial and time constraints, and the complexity of value-based decision making, within small- and medium-sized creative organisations. Thus, the impact of this knowledge and know-how toolbox will be to influence organisational decision-making, making possible more nuanced and informed planning and audience development, in addition to providing the evidence-base that is needed for funding applications. One impact on funders will be to facilitate a shared understanding of realistic research expectations between funders and clients.

### References

- Beech, N. & Gilmore, C. (eds.) (2015) *Organising Music: Theory, Practice and Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Delbridge, R., Gratton, L., Johnson, G. and the AIM Fellows (2007) *The Exceptional Manager*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

