MARKETING IN A SMALL RESORT TOWN:
A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

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MARKETING IN A SMALL RESORT TOWN:
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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

Among the Colorado Rocky Mountains on the western slope of the Continental Divide lies the Town of Breckenridge. This small town is located in Summit County, Colorado, a one hour and thirty minutes drive from Denver. Breckenridge was established in 1859 by a group of men and women who were drawn to the area due to the Gold Rush with the intent of seeking a fortune. Breckenridge is 5.5 square miles with approximately 3,406 residents. Although this town has a small number of permanent residents, it hosts approximately 3.3 million visitors every year. This resort town has many things for its visitors and residents to participate in during the winter and summer. While in town one can park in one of its several public parking areas and walk up and down Main Street, which is lined with locally owned restaurants, spas, boutiques, and other businesses. During the winter and spring, Breckenridge is filled with visitors who come to ski, snowboard, and participate in other winter sport activities. In the summer, Breckenridge is alive with visitors who have come for summer sports such as hiking, golf, biking, white water rafting, as well as for non-athletic activities.
Each year since 1960, the National Repertory Orchestra (NRO) has invited residents and visitors to Breckenridge to immerse themselves in music while they enjoy the area’s other attractions. The National Repertory Orchestra, which prides itself on “Nurturing the Future of Music,” is a preeminent intensive fellowship that equips young musicians for orchestral music careers while providing the highest level of musical experience for all stakeholders.

The NRO, originally called the Blue Jeans Symphony, was founded in 1960 in Estes Park, Colorado. In 1966, the orchestra moved to Evergreen, CO and changed its name to the Colorado Philharmonic. Twenty years later, the Colorado Philharmonic relocated to Keystone Resort. In 1986, the organization changed its name to the National Repertory Orchestra in order to better reflect the orchestra’s diverse composition. In 1993, the Town of Breckenridge invited the orchestra to perform in the newly opened Riverwalk Center, and that venue remains their primary summer residence. Today, the NRO is an eight-week intensive fellowship program. In 2008, the orchestra was made up of eighty-eight musicians chosen from the over eight hundred who came to the nationwide audition tour ("About the NRO", sec. A Little History).

The National Repertory Orchestra is staffed by full-time and part-time year-round staff and summer staff. The full-time staff includes the Executive Director, Development Director, and Artistic and Operations Manager. The marketing and press relations consultant is the one part-time staff member. During the season, summer staff is hired that consists of interns as well as employees. Summer staff members include a technical director, stage manager, recording engineer, orchestra manager, librarian, and assistant librarian. The interns serve as support and gain a learning opportunity over the summer.
Intern positions are in the areas of production, personnel, music library, education, artistic and business administrative, development, and marketing.

The National Repertory Orchestra has been led by music director and principal conductor Carl Topilow for the last thirty-two years. Under his leadership, the NRO has appeared at the Kennedy Center, the Olympic Festival in Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center. Topilow has a unique approach to programming that includes a great deal of audience involvement and showmanship. Topilow is currently the Conductor and Director of the Orchestral Program of the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has been a guest conductor with numerous orchestras globally, including those in Baltimore, Phoenix, Rochester, France, China, Switzerland, and Venezuela. As music director and principal conductor, Topilow chooses NRO musicians each year through auditions in many cities throughout the United States. He also determines the program, selects guest artists and runs seminars and classes during the season.

Musicians are chosen through an audition process held in January and February. Musicians must be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight to be eligible. Woodwind players are able to participate in NRO for only one season, and strings players for two summer seasons. All auditions are performed in person and are held across the country in places such as Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and New York. The musicians come from conservatories and universities all over the world. Most have earned academic degrees from renowned conservatories and universities such as The Julliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music, Australian Institute of Music (Australia), San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Eastman School of Music, and Aichi Prefecture University (Japan).
The National Repertory Orchestra differs from other summer music festivals in the experience they provide for their musicians. Aspen School & Music Festival, Killington Music Festival, and Eastern Music Festival, located in Colorado, Vermont, and North Carolina provide summer music experiences for young musicians ranging from ages fourteen to twenty-eight. These music festivals provide students with master classes, instruction from visiting artists and faculty, and an opportunity to perform along with faculty members in an orchestral and chamber music atmosphere. Musicians who attend these festivals must submit a payment of between $4,000 - $6,500 for tuition, room and board, and health fees. At the National Repertory Orchestra, musicians are provided with resort housing around Breckenridge. Rather than focusing on an instructional experience, musicians in the NRO receive an applied experience, performing an orchestral season and participating in master classes and the Career Perspectives program.

The Career Perspectives program addresses the often neglected aspects of being a professional orchestra musician. It provides a mixture of master classes and seminars designed to deal with the “whole” musician and the issues of career strategies and perspectives. Master classes are conducted by musicians from premier orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. Seminars cover materials such as audition techniques and contract negotiation, musician health and injury prevention, financial planning, and the changing role of the musician in American orchestras (“About the NRO”).

The NRO season begins mid-June and ends early August. It is during this time that the musicians perform in two full orchestra concerts each week at the Breckenridge’s
Riverwalk Center. The repertoire includes a full range of symphonic literature that the musicians can expect to perform during their orchestral careers. During the 2008 season, the NRO performed pieces such as Symphony No. 4 by Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5 by Mahler, and *Rhapsody in Blue* by Gershwin. Along with the task of learning challenging new repertoire in short time periods, orchestra members, are also led by guest conductors. In 2008, guest conductors included Jeffrey Kahane from the Colorado Symphony, Kristjan Järvi, and Robert Moody from the Portland Symphony Orchestra.

The National Repertory Orchestra not only performs at the Riverwalk Center but in other locations in and around Breckenridge as well. Small, free, chamber concerts are held at commercial locations such as Hamlet’s Bookstore, Breckenridge Real Estate Associates, and art festivals that take place in Breckenridge. Silverthorne, Dillon, Evergreen, Keystone, and Vail make up the towns that surround Breckenridge. These towns, like Breckenridge, are resort towns populated with winter tourists who come to ski, and summer tourists there for recreational sports. These towns also offer cultural events such as other music festival like Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival and Alpenglow Music Festival (Silverthorne).

Over the course of the summer, the NRO presents several chamber concerts in the nearby town of Silverthorne. These concerts are free and open to the public and are performed in the town’s pavilion. The NRO also performs in Denver at the Summer Gala each year. The Fourth of July is an important holiday for the Town of Breckenridge and surrounding towns. Each of the towns has unique activities to celebrate the Fourth of July. During this day, the National Repertory Orchestra performs three patriotic concerts traveling from Dillon, to Evergreen, and then back to Breckenridge (“About the NRO”).
Musicians also take part in community outreach throughout Summit County. The outreach program supports the NRO’s belief that the sustainability of the modern orchestra is dependent on the active participation of its musicians in the community. As part of the community outreach, musicians perform at area preschools and hospice centers. During the 2008 season, the National Repertory Orchestra partnered with St. Anthony’s Summit Medical Center located in Frisco, Colorado—a neighboring town—to raise awareness of the healing impacts of music therapy. They trained with Dr. Deforia Lane, a renowned music therapist, for their weekly music therapy sessions at the Frisco hospital.

The strength of the National Repertory Orchestra is evident in its fifty-year history. During these years, the NRO has attracted patrons who return year after year. It continues to attract promising young musicians who vie for positions in this prestigious music festival. During the 2008 season, the Silverthorne chamber concerts surpassed previous attendance records. The NRO has a strong bond with the community that it serves. This can be seen through its community partnerships with local and area businesses. The NRO’s relationships with Breckenridge Real Estate Associates and Hamlet’s Bookstore provide intimate venues in which to perform small chamber concerts. The National Repertory Orchestra also calls on condo owners and large hotels each year to rent accommodations to the organization for musicians and summer staff to live in for the summer. Even large hotels such as Beaver Run Resort and Spa, Hyatt’s Main Street Station, and Marriott’s Mountain Valley Lodge participate.

Breckenridge is not primarily known for the cultural opportunities it offers. It is a resort town. In the winter the peaks are filled with skiers. In the summer, visitors come
for the hiking, fly-fishing, biking, kayaking, white water rafting, and other summer outdoor activities are available. With the many activities available to visitors and residents of Breckenridge, unique target marketing must be developed in order to attract the attention of both residents and visitors.
The National Repertory Orchestra has two distinct groups of patrons – residents and visitors. Residents of Breckenridge and the surrounding areas already know of the NRO because of its long history, and because of the obvious part it plays in enriching the area as a summer tourist destination. On the other hand, visitors to the area may be unaware of the organization and its festival when they arrive.

There are several goals associated with marketing to residents. The first is to attract residents to the concerts, in order to increase ticket sales through their attendance at concerts. But the residents of the area have a secondary and ultimately much more important role to play. Residents are in direct contact with visitors who shop at local businesses. As the NRO markets to residents, an important goal is to make sure they are informed about the organization so that they can become distribution centers, spreading information and opinions about the NRO. They become the source of the most effective marketing tool--word-of-mouth. Another reason to cultivate residents is that, as owners and employees of local owned businesses, they are the key to local collaborative marketing ventures that benefit the NRO and the other businesses in the area as well.
There is no “usual” stay for visitors in Breckenridge or its surrounding towns. This fact creates a challenge in marketing because there is often a limited amount of time to reach the goal of gaining their attention and getting them interested in attending a concert. Marketing to visitors is made more complex due to the fact that visitors stay at different places, attend different events, and spend their time participating in different activities. This situation makes it essential that marketing materials and messages be widely distributed.

In the 2008 season, the National Repertory Orchestra used brochures, bookmarks, and posters as marketing materials distributed to the public. Prior to the beginning of the season, brochures were sent to patrons by direct mail. The use of direct mail only reaches those who have become a part of the NRO mailing list. Although the reach of direct mail is limited, these brochures reach “reliable” patrons—people who have a history with the organization—prior to the season. A second distribution method has a wide range as it distributes material across Summit County in the towns of Breckenridge, Silverthorne, Dillon, and Frisco to local businesses, concierges, and to brochure racks meant to promote the wide variety of activities occurring in the area. This distribution connects the NRO with the residents of Summit County. Those who work in local businesses and hotels not only find out about the orchestra and its season, they also participate in distributing marketing materials and replenishing the supply of brochures throughout the summer. As interns and volunteers distribute brochures, posters, and bookmarks, a personal connection is fostered between the NRO and the community. Visitors may not know about the National Repertory Orchestra when they arrive, but as they go to businesses and visit concierges at their hotels, they cannot miss the marketing materials
that were distributed. Bookmarks were an especially good source of marketing at
bookstores. Most bookstore retailers gave the bookmarks to customers who purchased
books, providing an opportunity for the bookmarks to be distributed and seen.

The *Summit Daily News* is the primary local newspaper in the area. It is free and
can be acquired at newsstands around Summit County and in most hotels. The *Summit
Daily News* is a source of information to both residents and visitors. The National
Repertory Orchestra placed a one-third page vertical color ad twice a week in the *Summit
Daily News* announcing upcoming concerts. In the “What’s Happening” section of the
newspaper, the NRO placed calendar listings announcing upcoming concerts. Having a
continuing visibility in these two sections of the newspaper creates a regular and updated
presence in the community. Additional coverage was provided during the 2008 season
through a feature article in the *Summit Daily News* about NRO musicians and interns.
The article included pictures as well as profiles of three musicians and two interns. This
is the kind of human interest story that gives a face to the participants of the NRO, taking
it from a performing institution to performing people, ultimately people relate to people
better than to abstract ideas.

The National Repertory Orchestra placed an advertisement in the Colorado
Mountain Express (CME) *Destination West Magazine*. CME is a shuttle service from the
Denver International Airport and Eagle County Regional Airport to the surrounding
mountain towns. CME provides ground transportation to Beaver Creek, Breckenridge,
Copper Mountain, Keystone, Aspen and Snowmass to more than 420,000 travelers each
year. Copies of *Destination West* are placed in the vehicles for the travelers to read on
their way to their destination. The magazine primarily reaches visitors of Summit and
Eagle Counties since they are traveling between the airport and the towns. The ad in the magazine provided visibility to visitors prior to reaching their destination. Another advertisement was placed on the Mountain Living website, an e-zine for those who enjoy the mountain lifestyle. The magazine features information about mountain homes, travel, lifestyle, and shopping. The advertisement was a banner at the top of the webpage. The website advertisement was a good way to broaden the reach to those outside the main groups of visitors and residents, and outside the geographic area. Another advertisement and public service announcement was placed on the classical radio station website of Denver based KVOD 90.1. The radio station reaches people in Denver and surrounding areas. The radio station and the NRO are likely to share patronage. An ad on their website and the public service announcement allowed prospective but unfamiliar patrons to learn about the organization and current patrons to learn of the upcoming season. Denver is only one hour and thirty minutes from Breckenridge, making it a great weekend getaway.

Over Main Street in Breckenridge banners were placed announcing events that are coming to Breckenridge. The Town of Breckenridge hung the NRO banner several weeks during each month of the festival. This form of advertisement was highly visible since Main Street is where all the shops are located and visitors and residents could not walk or drive through town without seeing the banner.

The National Repertory orchestra presented small informal chamber concerts during the summer throughout Summit County. These chamber concerts took place at Breckenridge Real Estate Associates, Hamlet’s Bookstore, art festivals, and other locations. During these chamber concerts coupons were handed out to the attendees. These outdoor concerts draw patrons who know about these mini-concerts. They also
attract people who simply are walking by. Coupons are handed out with buy-one-get-one tickets for the upcoming concerts promotion to encourage visitors who may be in town only for a couple of nights to attend an NRO concert. Coupon distribution also creates an opportunity for residents and visitors to have one-on-one interaction with an NRO employee or board member and to learn about the organization and the upcoming concerts. Though lowering the cost of a ticket may influence some people to purchase tickets, ultimately it is the personal contact and a “deal” of any kind that creates interest.

During the 2008 season, the National Repertory Orchestra was able to broadcast commercials and interviews on two of Summit County’s television stations. The NRO taped a commercial to be aired on SCTV 10 (Summit County Television Channel 10), a local educational and government access channel. The commercial consisted of taped interviews with the conductor, musicians, and the executive director. Interview topics included the following: What is the NRO? What can the audience expect from this season? With whom does the NRO collaborate? Where does the orchestra perform? How do the musicians enjoy performing with the NRO and are they enjoying their time in Breckenridge? Each airing showed one interview and gave information on ticket purchasing. The commercial could also be seen with all interviews on the SCTV 10 website. This community station is broadcast in the homes of residents and in most hotels. These commercials were a way for both residents and visitors to “meet” the people who work with the NRO and to hear them talk about the organization and the concerts. Since it ran throughout the day and evening, the commercial served as a constant reminder of the organization as an activity available in Breckenridge.
Every Saturday morning from June through the first week of August television interviews were held outside of the Riverwalk Center by RSN. RSN is a “national television network that specializes in creating and distributing outdoor content to America’s premier resorts, including more than 105 mountain and beach destinations across the country. RSN features local programming designed to provide information pertaining to recreation and entertainment options specific to those resorts” (About RSN).

The RSN correspondents hosted standard human interest and informational interviews with musicians. There was also an early morning interview during the week at the RSN studio in Frisco featuring the Executive Director and Board President. This television station also reaches both residents and visitors; and, through these interviews as well as SCTV commercials, both patron groups receive a reinforcement of the NRO brand message as well as specific information that might convince them to attend upcoming concerts.

The National Repertory Orchestra employs many tools to reach potential patrons. On its website, viewers can explore the performance calendar, purchase tickets online, find out more about the organization and its history, and sign up to be a part of the mailing and e-mail lists. As part of the e-mail lists, patrons receive e-blasts sent out on a weekly basis reminding loyal patrons of events and encouraging them to purchase tickets. The website inexpensively reaches a broader audience than traditional mass mailings or brochure distribution and provides the opportunity to increase patronage. E-blasts are a useful form of marketing because it keeps loyal patrons updated and reminds them to purchase their tickets.
In order to assess the effectiveness of the management of marketing resources, surveys are conducted. Chapter three will discuss the process employed in the 2008 NRO surveys.
CHAPTER III

SURVEYING THE AUDIENCE

Systematic surveying of audiences is unusually important to the National Repertory Orchestra because most of the audience consist of visitors—occasional or one-time attendees. Through surveying, the NRO is able to identify the composition of the current and potential audience members. The survey also helps identify the most effective marketing tools and provides quantifiable information that can be used to negotiate sponsorship.

The National Repertory Orchestra places a survey inside each Riverwalk Center concert program. Completed surveys are placed into bins at the rear of the hall. Without incentives it is difficult to motivate patrons to take surveys. In 2007 and 2008, respondents who completed surveys and provided contact (mailing list and/or e-mail) information were eligible to win four tickets to next season and a dinner for four at a restaurant in Breckenridge. This chapter does not report the results of the surveys but indicates the information that the surveys gathered.
Surveys are generated in order to learn the views and perceptions of patrons. The surveys distributed by the National Repertory Orchestra sought to find the composition of the audience, product satisfaction, reason for attendance, and effectiveness of media.

**Demographic and Psychographic Information**

Demographic information was extracted in order to learn more about the audience. Demographic information included basic information identifying patrons by such things as age, gender, marital status, income, and education. While each patron is unique, looking at trends in demographic data makes it possible to identify the average patron, or to identify specific cohort groups within the audience as a whole.

The survey is also essential in determining the ratio of resident patrons to visitor patrons, and if and how this ratio changes over several years. Matching this information with demographic profiles identifies changes in the NRO audience base, information that the organization is able to use in negotiations of sponsorships and marketing campaigns.

Psychographic traits were also explored rather simplistically through a question that asked which activities are enjoyed in Summit County. The use of psychographic information enables the organization to group audience members based on lifestyle choices, indicating the activities, interests, and opinions of audience members. Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff, writers of *Standing Room Only: Strategies for Marketing the Performing Arts*, described psychographics as a better explanatory variable than demographic information, due in part to the fact that they indicate the personality and lifestyle choices of audience members and how the arts best fit inside their lifestyle choices (Kotler and Scheff 100). The National Repertory Orchestra looked into
psychographics by asking the audience which activities they enjoy while in Breckenridge among these options—hiking, shopping, biking, skiing, golfing, and fishing. With this information, the NRO is able to make strategic decisions about the most effective ways to cross market. This information also informs the orchestra’s plans for creating fundraising events—even to the point of determining what patrons are most likely to bid on at the annual gala or raffle.

**Performance Evaluation**

The product of the National Repertory is its performances. In order to evaluate audience satisfaction with their experiences with NRO, the survey collected information to identify patron preferences and impressions. Because the NRO presents a variety of types of concerts, the survey had traditionally asked which concert the patron find preferable. Options on the survey allowed respondents to indicate a preference of genre including pop/jazz, kids and family, holiday events, classical, or “other.” In 2006 this question was removed from the survey because the organization found that its mission to present standard orchestral repertoire was embraced by its audiences.

The survey also sought to identify the overall impression audiences had of performances. Audience members were asked to rate the performance they were attending on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor. This question was discontinued as it did not provide the any new or helpful information. It was replaced in 2008 with a question that asked people to indicate the importance of attending an NRO concert during their visits to Breckenridge. The patrons rated the importance of their NRO experiences on a scale of one through five, five being most important. This question
helped to determine the number of frequent users as compared to occasional users, and if the organization was being successful at cultivating patrons who could potentially become moderate to frequent user. This data showing the integral part an NRO performance is to a visitor to Breckenridge is useful in negotiating sponsorships and in supporting grant applications.

A portion of performance evaluation studied during 2007 focused on performance times. Performances are held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Riverwalk Center. Especially for a mid-week concert, the time of performances is critical to attracting patrons. In order to determine preferences, the survey provided the following options: 6:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m., or 8:30 p.m. The results confirmed that the most popular time for concert performances continued to be 7:30 p.m.

Marketing Effectiveness

The National Repertory Orchestra uses many marketing tools to attract audience members to the concerts. One question asked respondents to identify from which of the marketing tools – radio ad, newspaper ad, print ad, internet, visitor information center, mailing, previous visits, word-of-mouth, or other—they learned about the NRO. This question was designed to help NRO allocate marketing resources. Over the seasons this question has changed as marketing tools were added and discontinued based on their effectiveness. In 2004 and 2005, print ad was used as an option but was subsequently replaced by the already existent newspaper ad and newly added magazine ad in order to be more specific. As email notices (2006) and posters (2007) became a part of the marketing they were also added as options.
In 2008, a question was added midseason in order to identify the critical factor(s) that influence decisions to attend. While it is unlikely that responses to this question will result in a change of repertoire, it allows the NRO to find what factor(s) draw a patron to an NRO performance as opposed to some other evening activity. The options were the following: repertoire, conductor, musicians, or other. The data from this question also provides useful information regarding focusing the message for future seasons. This question also serves as a way to seek a message for future marketing pieces in seasons to come.

**NRO Partnerships**

The survey also had several questions that would be helpful in supporting continuing partnerships with businesses in the area by providing them with useful data. For instance, the NRO has a partnership with the Colorado Mountain Express (CME). CME serves as the transportation the NRO uses to transport the musicians, summer staff, and guest artists and conductors to and from Denver International Airport. One question on the survey (which is part of the NRO/CME sponsorship contract) was designed to determine what modes of transportation were used to get to Breckenridge by non-residents. Choices were the following: personal vehicle, CME, rental car, and “other.”

The NRO also has a relationship with Breckenridge Real Estate Associates which is the site of chamber concerts throughout the summer. In order to assist in gaining and nurturing sponsorships within the real estate community a question asked if the patron was looking for real estate in Summit County. This information was useful for the Breckenridge Real Estate Associates to see how many potential clients there were in the
NRO audience. This information was also helpful for the NRO because it helped to point out any possible shift of more permanent or second homeowners in the audience.

**Supplementary Surveys**

At times when specific information was needed, separate surveys were created. For instance, behind the Riverwalk Center is a lawn where patrons can sit and listen to the concert. Lawn seating is used during the Fourth of July concerts and for several other concerts during the season. During the 2007 season, the NRO sought to learn the satisfaction of their patrons with their lawn seats and whether or not they would be willing to pay for them in the future. Patrons were asked to rank on a scale from one to five, with five being the greatest, their satisfaction with their lawn seating experience. They were also asked, yes or no, if they would be willing to spend five dollars to sit on the lawn for an NRO concert.

In 2008, the staff of the NRO decided to obtain more demographic information from audiences through unique one-question surveys. These surveys were taken during highly popular concerts at which ushers collected surveys prior to the beginning of the concert. Passes to Copper Mountain, a local resort, were provided as an incentive to get the best response. The first survey asked audience members their ages and the second survey asked their zip codes. These survey results are used in various sales and grant materials, to indicate the audience segments the NRO is successfully attracting and to demonstrate that the trend is that the audience is becoming more diverse.

The surveys that were taken by the National Repertory Orchestra were in no way perfect in their design. The surveys that are used are meant to collect information in order
for the NRO to have some hard evidence on the demographic information, psychographic information, and product opinions. This information is statistically valid and thus can be used when planning for future seasons in marketing and also when selling the organization as a good investment to individual and corporate donors. One thing that should be added to the surveys is an assurance that the personal contact information that is asked for will not be sold to third party solicitations, though this information was used by NRO for mailings and e-blasts.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Over a four year period, from 2004-2008, National Repertory Orchestra audience surveys generated most useful information about audience demographics and psychographics, which was in turn useful in identifying marketing strengths and weaknesses. This chapter will introduce some of the more useful findings.

The demographic information that was collected, found that the NRO had a typical audience that is not unlike the audience of other American orchestras. The audience consisted primarily of patrons over the age of fifty, with an annual income of over $75,000, and holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Unlike most American orchestras whose patron base is comprised of those who live within a relatively small geographic area, surveys showed that most people who attend NRO performances are visitors to the area, or have second/vacation homes in Breckenridge. Data indicated that in 2004 the audience consisted of the following:

- 34% visitors
- 33% second homeowners
- 19% residents
In 2005, the number of visitors in the audience increased to 47% and residents increased to 32%.

In 2007, the distinction between frequent visitor and one-time visitor was made. The question showed that in 2007:

- 33% of visitors were frequent visitors
- 4% were one-time visitors.
- 26.5% were residents
- 36% were second home owners

In 2008, a survey was used to collect the audience members’ zip codes. The data from this survey indicated that:

- 32% were from Summit County
- Of those from Summit County 16% were from Breckenridge.
- 53% of the audience were from Colorado
- 15% from Texas (this is the largest percentage outside Colorado).

Other major cities a significant number of patrons came from were New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Dallas, Houston, and Tucson. The survey indicated that there were a low number of Breckenridge residents attending the concerts. In the future, the NRO should consider ways to bridge the gap that is created between residents and the organization, perhaps a season kick off, in order to foster resident attendance.

Additionally, the introduction of a resident ticket package prior to the beginning of the season will act as an incentive for residents to purchase tickets for the season and increase their attendance numbers. As the survey indicated, visitors are a large portion of the ticket buyers, suggesting the need to stretch the marketing to reach outside of
Breckenridge to gain the attention of visitors on their return or in hopes of creating a
desire to return. This can be done through ads on the Breckenridge travel and hotel
websites.

According to the 2000 Census, the largest age category in the Breckenridge
community was the twenty-five to forty-four years of age group, making up 45% of the
community residents. Surveys from 2004 to 2008 indicated that:

- Approximately 80% of the total audience was over 50 years of age
- The segment of the audience under 50 years of age decreased from 15% in 2004-2006 to 12% in 2008

Through further study of age in a supplementary survey taken in 2008 it was found that:

- 61 years of age is the median age of attendees
- 57 years of age is the average age of attendees

This data shows that a large group of residents, ages twenty-five to forty-four years, are
not attending. According to the age survey that was taken, only 16.5% of that age group
is attending concerts. The gap indicates that action needs to be taken to increase the
number of residents from the twenty-five to forty-four years of age group.

In order to draw more patrons to concerts there are several objectives that the NRO
has put into place to increase their ticket sales and encourage more residents and patrons
in the twenty-five to forty-four years of age group. One objective is to increase brand
awareness by using 50th anniversary buzz. This will be important because there are
several music festivals in the area. The closest being the Breckenridge Music Festival
(BMF) that also performs at the Riverwalk Center. The BMF began in 1981 as the
Breckenridge Music Institute. The BMF includes professional musicians who perform
weekly concerts with music that ranges from classical symphonic and intimate chamber to jazz, blues, and rock and roll. (“Breckenridge Music Festival”) The BMF season runs from mid-July to the end of August. The NRO also faces competition from the Alpenglow Chamber Music Festival and Snake River Chamber Music Festival. Although these two festivals do not take place at the same time as the NRO, they share the same patron market, therefore competing with the NRO for donor dollars and patron time.

Through the 50th season, the NRO will be able to leverage its golden anniversary in their marketing and also collaborate with the Town of Breckenridge as it will be celebrating 150 years.

Another action to be taken to grow the twenty-five to forty-four year demographic would be to set up a young professionals group, providing another aspect to the performance. Activities such as a wine tasting, a post-performance gathering, or a networking social hour prior to the performance could prove to be something of interest to increase ticket sales in this demographic area. As a portion of this age group is starting a family or raising younger children, the continuation of Parent’s Night Out and Kid’s Night, would help in fostering this portion of the demographic group. During Parent’s Night Out in past seasons, the NRO would partner with the local recreation center, so children were able to play under careful supervision while parents could enjoy a night out at the symphony. Kid’s Night offered parents to bring their children to the Riverwalk Center early so for a pre-show performance so children could learn about the different parts of the orchestra.

In regard to marketing three sources proved to be the most effective in 2008:

- Newspaper ads: 50.08%
• Word of Mouth: 49.44%
• Mailings: 34.14%

Responses to the question regarding where audience members heard about, or received information about performances indicated that marketing decisions had increased the effectiveness of direct mail and ad placement. Responses mentioning newspapers ads increased from 16% in 2004 to 50.08% in 2008, while responses mentioning mailings increased from 4% in 2004 to 34.13%. The least successful marketing tool was television (3.03%).

In order to increase ticket sales, it is the NRO’s objective is to engage musicians and alumni in promoting the organization. As shown by the survey results, word-of-mouth is an effective form of marketing for the NRO. To assist in increasing the ticket sales, it would be helpful if the musicians could be engaged in promoting the organization and the concerts while they are in Breckenridge for the summer. Alumni have a new section on the website as a way for them to interact with each other and stay up to date with the NRO. This is an opportunity for alumni to share information they learn with people outside of Breckenridge. As shown by the zip code survey, a portion of the audience comes for the outside the Colorado area. Alumni, through word-of-mouth, can help increase the number of patrons that come from across the country.

The National Repertory Orchestra’s main marketing objective is to increase the ticket sales for each upcoming season. Concert attendance was increased 5% in 2008 and the goal is to continue this trend in 2009 and future seasons. This objective is accomplished through the execution of their marketing plan, the use of their marketing tools and leveraging their strengths. As the NRO looks at prior seasons and their surveys,
the organization can assess what has worked in the past and what they should do in the future. Based on the surveys, newspaper ads should be continued since it had the best return on investment. Television having the lowest return on investment should be reexamined in its use for the upcoming season. Based on preliminary budgets for the 2009 season, television ads are being discontinued and new venues for marketing are going to be used such as League of American Orchestra festival guide, Mountain Public Radio, and Summit Chamber Map. Beyond these new sources, advertisements should be placed on the Breckenridge travel websites, such as GoBreck.com, because of its visibility to those who are planning to visit the area and most likely looking for activities while in town.

The National Repertory Orchestra is a preeminent music festival, located in the small mountain town of Breckenridge. The orchestra performs in a resort town where, at times, there are more visitors than there are residents. This creates a challenge when marketing to both patron groups. Through their marketing tactics, the National Repertory Orchestra has been successful in bringing great orchestral seasons to the Town of Breckenridge’s residents and visitors.

The Future of the NRO

Since the original analysis was taken the National Repertory Orchestra continues to grow and change. Currently, the NRO is looking toward using more social media in their marketing. As social media has become a more common marketing tool, the NRO has begun to direct their patrons to their website and Facebook page. Their Facebook page once was a place that their musicians and summer staff went to meet each other
prior to the summer season. Currently, it is being used by the organization to announce concerts and events, changes to the National Repertory Orchestra, and ticket giveaways. The increase in the use of social media, the website, and e-blasts shows in the change of their most effective marketing tools. In 2008, the most effective marketing tools were newspaper ads, word of mouth, and mailings. As of 2010, the most effective marketing tools are newspaper ads, newsletter and e-blasts, and radio.

Visitors made up the majority of the NRO’s patrons. While currently visitors are still the majority the number of residents are increasing. This increase is due to the addition of a winter concert series that are performed by the alumni. Julie Chandler, Director of Sales and Marketing, in an interview described the winter concerts as, “…enhancing the mission since our mission is to nurture the future of music, we are nurturing our musicians over the years and keeping them involved.” The winter series has also added to the donor base along with the fundraising events held during the off season.

Another change that has occurred is the decrease in the under 50 years of age demographic. In 2008, the audience under the age of 50 was 12%. In 2010 it decreased to 8%. When asked about this decrease Chandler stated that, “We are not concerned about these numbers. People tend to enjoy orchestral music more into their golden years. Since the population is always aging, it would make sense that the numbers will stay consistent…”

Beyond the decrease of a younger demographic, the patrons of the NRO have remained loyal supporters. During the past two seasons the NRO has remained financially strong. The NRO has raised their ticket prices and attendance has remained
flat and the NRO has seen more day-of ticket sales than ever before. Since, 2008 ticket revenue has increased from $115,619 in 2008 to $124,884 in 2010.

Going into the 2011 summer season the NRO finds they continue to engage the entire Summit County community and feel that they have succeeded in being considered an orchestra for the entire county and not just the town of Breckenridge. Recently, they have hired a new Executive Director, Doug Adams. Adams is the past Executive Director of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and Dallas Symphony Orchestra; they anticipate that Adams will be able to create national recognition for the National Repertory Orchestra and gain national sponsorship.
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