

FACTSHEET

Marketing Welsh Language Events



As with any arts event how you decide to promote a Welsh language arts event will depend on the nature of the event itself and who it is likely to appeal to – its target audience.

This factsheet identifies some of the things to consider when promoting a Welsh language event, some of the promotional tools available and tips on providing a bilingual customer service.

Welsh Speaking Population

The 2001 Census found that 28% of people (age 3+) speak Welsh. This is an increase since 1991 and is largely associated with children being taught Welsh in school. In all age groups, women are more likely to have Welsh language skills than men.

There are enormous differences in the percentage of Welsh speakers in the different regions of Wales. The percentage of Welsh speakers is highest in Gwynedd (76% of people aged 3+) and lowest in Blaenau Gwent (13% of people age 3+).

The Census data does not ask Welsh speakers to assess their linguistic ability. Recent research for the Welsh Language Board found that only 11% of adults (aged 16+) identified themselves as fluent Welsh speakers. Census data can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk.

The **Area Profile Reports** (available from the Arts Council of Wales) help with identifying postcode sectors where Welsh speakers live in your catchment area.

The 'Living Life through the medium of Welsh' (2006) research report examines how Welsh speakers aged 22-45 live their lives through the medium of Welsh. The report is available on the Arts Council of Wales' website (www.artwales.org.uk/Decision Making/Research/Research Publications).

The Arts Council of Wales' 'Arts In Wales' survey also has information on Welsh speakers (www.artwales.org.uk/Decision Making/Research).

Promotional Tools

- Word of mouth is considered one of the most effective promotional tools for Welsh language events. Consider networks for Welsh speakers in your area e.g. Menter Iaith, Welsh medium schools, Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (early years), Merched y Wawr, ambassador schemes, Welsh learners classes.
- Welsh-language publications i.e. Golwg, Y Cymro, Y Selar, Barn, Papurau Bro (Welsh language community newspapers)
- Broadcast media - S4C, BBC Radio Cymru
- Golwgargymru.co.uk – Welsh language events listings website managed by Audiences Wales

- Audiences Wales mailing database has people registered who are interested in receiving details of Welsh language plays, films and folk music
- Maes-e.com – Welsh language forum for posting events info
- With the growing number of Welsh learners consider targeting English language publications with bilingual editorial or a bilingual advert
- Public sector publications and networks as Welsh speakers are more likely to work in the public sector

Bilingual Audiences

As a result of the existence of so many mixed language households (e.g a Welsh speaker living with a monoglot English speaker), plus a rise in the number of Welsh learners, some venues are providing services at shows that cater for the needs of people with only a little knowledge of Welsh or who are unconfident Welsh speakers but are keen to attend an event performed in Welsh.

Some examples:

- Sherman Cymru provide an advance show synopsis information sheet and obtain audience feedback at the end of a play
- Arad Goch give pre-show talks
- Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru has given talks to advanced Welsh learners classes
- Surtitling or Stagertext captioning (from Welsh into English)
- Signposting the level of Welsh required for an event in a direct mail letter, brochure or box office briefings

Bear in mind that the type of support will vary by artform, for example, a music event is likely to need less linguistic support. Also, for children's events, in some parts of Wales where many children who attend Welsh medium schools come from English-speaking homes, promotional material should be in both English and Welsh to ensure that the ultimate ticket purchaser (mum, dad or granny!) understands the marketing copy.

A Directory of Contacts for bilingual arts marketing is available to download from the Arts Council of Wales website (www.artswales.org/publication.asp?id=291).

A Bilingual Service

Some arts organisations find it difficult to provide a bilingual service for box office or front of house roles because of the difficulty of recruiting bilingual staff. This type of recruitment issue will of course vary enormously for different parts of Wales.

Cwmni Iaith, the Welsh language planning service, suggests clarifying the exact language requirement needed for a job, so that possible applicants do not screen themselves out. For instance, many Welsh speakers feel more at ease with spoken Welsh than written Welsh. Using phrases such as 'Welsh is essential or desirable' can make some people exclude themselves if they think their Welsh is not of a good enough standard. If you require 'good conversational Welsh' for a job role, then specify the language requirement in this way.

Translations

Experience of translating copy for live arts events has found it is best to have copy originating in Welsh, as opposed to a direct translation, and where possible to have the translator attend a rehearsal or the performance itself (if on tour) to obtain a good feel for the event.