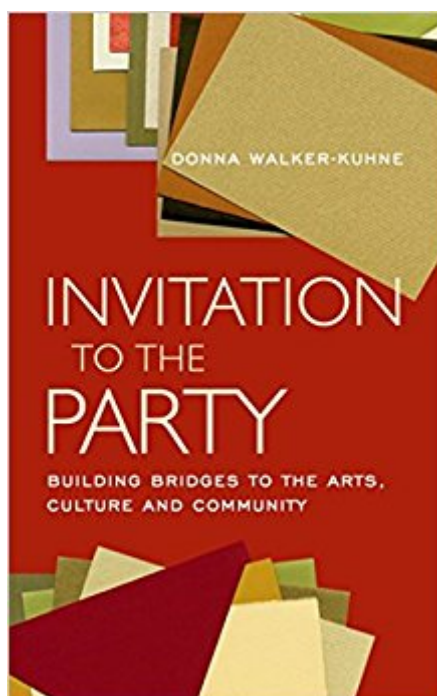


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Invitation To The Party: Building Bridges To The Arts, Culture And Community



Synopsis

Acknowledged as the nation's foremost expert on audience development involving America's growing multicultural population by the Arts and Business Council, Donna Walker-Kuhne has now written the first book describing her strategies and methods to engage diverse communities as participants for arts and culture. By offering strategic collaborations and efforts to develop and sustain nontraditional audiences, this book will directly impact the stability and future of America's cultural and artistic landscape. Donna Walker-Kuhne has spent the last 20 years developing and refining these principles with such success as both the Broadway and national touring productions of *Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk*, as well as transforming the audiences at one of the U.S.'s most important and visible arts institutions, New York's Public Theater. This book is a practical and inspirational guide on ways to invite, engage and partner with culturally diverse communities, and how to enfranchise those communities into the fabric of arts and culture in the United States. Donna Walker-Kuhne is the president of Walker International Communications Group. From 1993 to 2002, she served as the marketing director for the Public Theater in New York, where she originated a range of audience-development activities for children, students and adults throughout New York City. Ms. Walker-Kuhne is an Adjunct Professor in marketing the arts at Fordham University, Brooklyn College and New York University. She was formerly marketing director for Dance Theatre of Harlem. Ms. Walker-Kuhne has given numerous workshops and presentations for arts groups throughout the U.S., including the Arts and Business Council, League of American Theaters and Producers, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for Arts to name a few. She has been nominated for the Ford Foundation's 2001 Leadership for a Changing World Fellowship.

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Customer Reviews

As Director of Marketing and Audience Development at the Public Theater, Donna Walker-Kuhne has originated a range of audience development activities for children, students and adults throughout New York City. Ms. Walker-Kuhne is an Adjunct Professor in marketing the arts at Fordham University, Brooklyn College and New York University. She was formerly Marketing Director for Dance Theatre of Harlem. Ms. Walker-Kuhne has given numerous workshops and presentations for arts groups throughout the U.S.

Incredibly insightful. The author provides clarity, details and depth on her endeavors throughout the United States and beyond in engaging communities, building partnerships and expanding audiences for arts organizations. Reading Donna Walker-Kuhne's experiences in audience development elicits so much excitement as it makes the case that the greatest limitations are the ones in our mind, even in the bleakest circumstances. Donna Walker-Kuhne is honest on the demands of an effective audience development program as it takes time to manifest into tangible results. I was particularly moved of how Donna's initiatives prompted community key players to work together whom continued to support each other long after their participation in audience development. I can not resist retelling the stories Donna shared in this book, yes, it's that compelling. If you are interested in concrete strategies or inspiration to expand your imagination in audience development, this book is the best investment of your time and energy.

This book should be part of the foundation of arts organizations all over the world. If you're interested in learning more about engaging audience or even how the Arts is marketed towards the larger community as a whole - this is the book for you. This book list's Donna's experiences but also displayed what works and what doesn't work when it comes to reaching audiences. Its okay to have a comfortable crowd in your theaters, but wouldn't it be better to have an even more exciting and diverse crowd?

Awesome

I assign "Invitation..." to my M.P.A. students at the end of our Communication course. After slogging through 700+pages of theory, my students view Walker-Kuhne's book as a treat. Though she is well-versed in marketing theory, she devotes most of the book to the "how-to" aspects of social marketing. Set in dramatic locations and involving historic campaigns and events, her case studies are compelling and rich. She tackles important debates (e.g., is there such a thing as an "underserved" population?) and wrestles with perennial issues (e.g., how to get consumers to see theater/arts experiences as self-investments). Hundreds of Baruch College master's degree students have loved this book! It would work well in undergraduate classrooms or in public sector professional development. If you are an educator outside of New York, your students will relish the opportunity to visit our city's artistic community through Walker-Kuhne's vivid narratives!As a bonus: The author is extremely accessible (though busy because of it) and engaging. I loved her book and contacted her - she visited our campus several times to talk to students!

An excellent starting point for theatre artists interested in developing a more diverse audience for their productions. Walker-Kuhne, who was head of audience development for the Public Theatre and the Dance Theatre of Harlem, clearly outlines a general approach to diversifying your audience that is based on an ongoing relationship based on trust and dialogue. She outlines "ten tools for building audiences" and provides several chapters that are case studies of audience development campaigns that she personally was involved in: the Public Theatre in general (especially George C. Wolfe's commitment to make the Public audience "look like a subway stop in New York City"), and s[ecifically Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk; Harlem Song, the Dance Theatre of Harlem. These case studies describe specific programs, but to my mind what this book more importantly does is describe clearly and passionately the importance and value of the goal and the level of commitment necessary to achieve it.I recommend this book as a starting place for anyone wanting to expand their audiences. While the advice is specifically about diversifying your audience, in many respects the advice is applicable to audience development in general.

Both clear and insightful, Walker-Kuhne details her successes in audience development and frames them in such a way that is inspiring and achievable to arts administrators of any caliber.

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