



Audience Development Plan Template

The purpose of an audience development plan is to increase the discoverability of your project. The plan tells what the project aims to achieve in terms of audience reach and engagement, and the process for realizing those objectives.

[Bell Fund](#), [Shaw Rocket Fund](#) and [TELUS Fund](#) have standardized their requirements for audience development documentation.

This document outlines their requirements for a comprehensive Audience Development Plan. If you are just starting out, you may want to begin with the earlier stage Audience Development Preliminary Plan which is sometimes sufficient to apply for funding. Consult the program guidelines at each Fund to determine whether a preliminary or comprehensive audience development plan is required.

Your comprehensive audience development plan should include four essential elements: objectives, target audience(s), research, strategy. A detailed schedule and budget will also be required prior to funding.

1. Overarching Objectives

When it comes to designing an audience development plan, it often works best to start at the end. What do you want to achieve? Try to be specific with your objectives, for example:

- Drive viewership for a broadcast premiere or online/digital launch
- Gain recognition, e.g., win awards, secure festival entries.
- Monetize content, e.g., sell digital downloads.
- Drive traffic to a YouTube channel.

2. Target audience(s)

Identify the audience segment or segments the project is targeting. Demographic data (age, gender, geolocation) is essential. Try to add insights about their interests, lifestyle, values, media consumption habits, activities, etc.



3. Research

Market research examines opportunities and barriers for building audiences. It should include:

- Target audience research, e.g., analysis of comparable content to inform the segments to be targeted, the online destinations your target audiences frequent, potential influencers.
- Partner review, e.g., the online reach and influence of partners with whom you will be collaborating to build audiences for your project, including their reach on social media, email/ mailing lists, and website. As appropriate, include relevant information about their real-world footprint, e.g., live events or traditional marketing/advertising opportunities that may be leveraged to promote your project. Partners may include, for example, broadcasters, digital streaming channels, distributors, sales agents, sponsors, venues, expert individuals and organizations, celebrity influencers and marquee talent.
- An assessment of potential press outlets, offline activations, and other real-world opportunities for connecting with target audience segments.

Your research may also include findings, e.g., content that may compete for viewer attention or provide useful insights about audience building.

4. Strategy

The strategy is based on the research findings and should include the following components:

- **Audience touch points** – Which channels, platforms and tactics will you use to reach audiences? Channels and platforms are the places audiences will visit to interact with your content, for example, social media platforms, websites, email marketing, games/apps, live events. Tactics include other means by which you will connect with audiences, for example, public relations, advertising in traditional media, newsletters.



For each audience touch point that will be managed by the Applicant outline the following:

- **Rationale** - This is a simple sentence or two describing why you have chosen the touch point to play a role in the strategy. For example, you may pull a key finding from the research such as *the target audience is large and actively engaged around similar content on Facebook*, or *the project involves marquee talent so public relations will play a key role in securing earned media*.
- **Goals** - These are the specific goals for the audience touch point. They relate to the overarching objective but are unique and appropriate for the touch point. For example, your overarching objective may be to *drive views for your series on YouTube*. The goal for your project's Twitter account might be to *facilitate two-way conversation with viewers between episodes*.
- **Approach to content** – Outline the content plan and assets that will be created for each audience touch point. Include detail about the creative approach, the format (e.g., scripted video vignettes, behind-the-scenes images, toys, or other merchandise) and an estimate of the number of assets you expect to create. For example, *a DIY Watch Party kit (French and English) containing a video greeting from the cast, exclusive images, and menu ideas will be created and posted to the website*, or *Each day for two weeks leading up to the premiere, an image and text post will be published to Facebook, introducing audiences to the story world. A community manager will monitor and respond to comments daily*.
- **Success metrics** – Share the data points you intend to track to measure success. The data you measure should relate directly to your objectives.
- **Partner Plans** – Which partners will help build audiences for the project? Partners may include for example broadcasters, digital streaming channels, distributors, sales agents, sponsors, venues, expert individuals and organizations, celebrity influencers, and marquee talent. Attach links to partner platforms along with a description of their plan.



- **Alignment** – Describe how your audience development strategy integrates with the plans of any partners, e.g., broadcaster, partner organizations.
- **Paid Media** - If paid media is part of the audience development strategy, detail the proposed budget and platforms as well as the metrics which will be used to measure success. It is also important to explain how the paid media efforts will work alongside any partner plans and organic social media efforts to amplify audience reach.
- **Schedule** - Build a high-level calendar that identifies the dates when:
 - The audience development activities will begin in market (**the Pre-Launch date**), typically 4-8 weeks prior to the first broadcast, premiere or online release of the primary content.
 - The primary content will be released (**the Launch date**)
 - Audience development activities will wind down.
- **Budget, Expertise, and Resources**
The project’s audience development strategy and schedule must match the available budget, expertise, and resources.

Identify the total funding available to execute the audience development strategy.

Identify who on your team will be accountable for implementing or overseeing the audience development strategy activation. Are you working with, or do you intend to engage an external audience development agency or marketing expert? Be sure to include links to brief bios of proposed experts and agencies.

If Partners have committed finances, expertise, or resources to deliver audience development strategies for the project, include letters of support that outline the nature of their commitment.

A detailed audience development budget may be required at the time of applying for funding. The [standard line items in an audience development budget are listed in this Bell Fund template](#). These line items may appear within or separate from the production



budget of the project. Consult the program guidelines at each Fund to obtain detailed information on standard budget requirements and when to submit this document.

The latest version of the Audience Development Preliminary Plan is [available here](#).

If you have any questions or feedback on these new audience development tools, please send an email to info@bellfund.ca.

Bell Fund, Shaw Rocket Fund and TELUS Fund are collaborating to drive the discoverability of Canadian content and equip content producers with new tools, insights, and knowledge to help build audiences for their projects. This Audience Development Plan standardizes requirements across the three funders. These guidelines were developed with the expertise of [Magnify Digital](#).