

# Building Audiences who Belong



Stone —  
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# Repository of research covering a multitude of topics



Audience habits  
and behaviours

Barriers to  
participation

Philanthropic support of the arts

Perceptions  
towards the arts

How to inform and  
reach audiences

Impact of the arts

How to inspire audiences

Consideration  
and decision-  
making process

Community  
sentiment

Content and programming preferences

Creating  
remarkable  
experiences

Spending and  
affordability

Subscription and  
ticketing options

Arts education

Communication  
preferences

Role of  
digital vs. live

Enhancing  
the overall  
experience

The role of  
messaging and  
advertising

**Conditions have shifted in the last 5 years.**



# The contexts for engagement are shifting



The Alberta advantage looks a lot different today.

**47% / 25%**

Falling behind  
or Getting by

Optimistic  
about their  
finances

**79%**

Belonging is evident,  
but uneven.\*

**46%**

Among unemployed



**66%**

Good or Excellent  
Quality of Life\*

**43%**

Expect it to worsen



**12%**

**Positive Public Mood**

**19% Negative**

# The contexts for engagement are shifting



People are busy.  
Out of 168 hours in a  
week **only 16 are**  
**free** for experiences.



Discretionary  
spending is  
**cautious.**

77%  
More **selective** about  
what they will spend.



Audiences choosing  
based on  
**social, emotional, &**  
**experiential**  
**motivations**





**There are some built-in advantages  
for the arts.**

# 1. Recognize that arts experiences matter to our community.

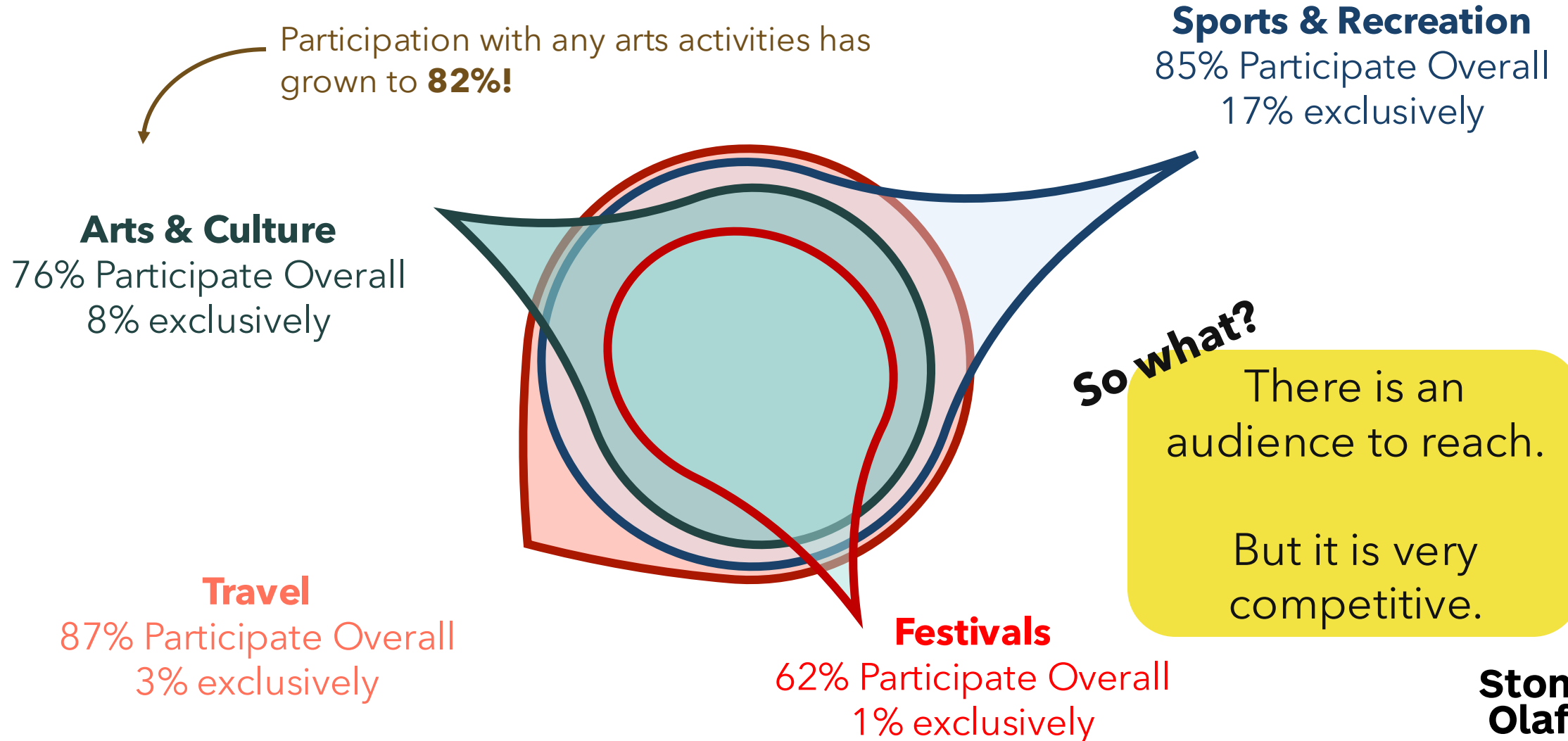
- ✓ **80%** feel arts have a positive impact on community
- ✓ **79%** think it enhances their community as a place to live.
- ✓ **69%** think arts creates a sense of belonging\*

**So what?**

As a sector, what you offer matters to the community. This is a basis for relevance.

\* Courtesy of Calgary Foundation 2025 Quality of Life Report.

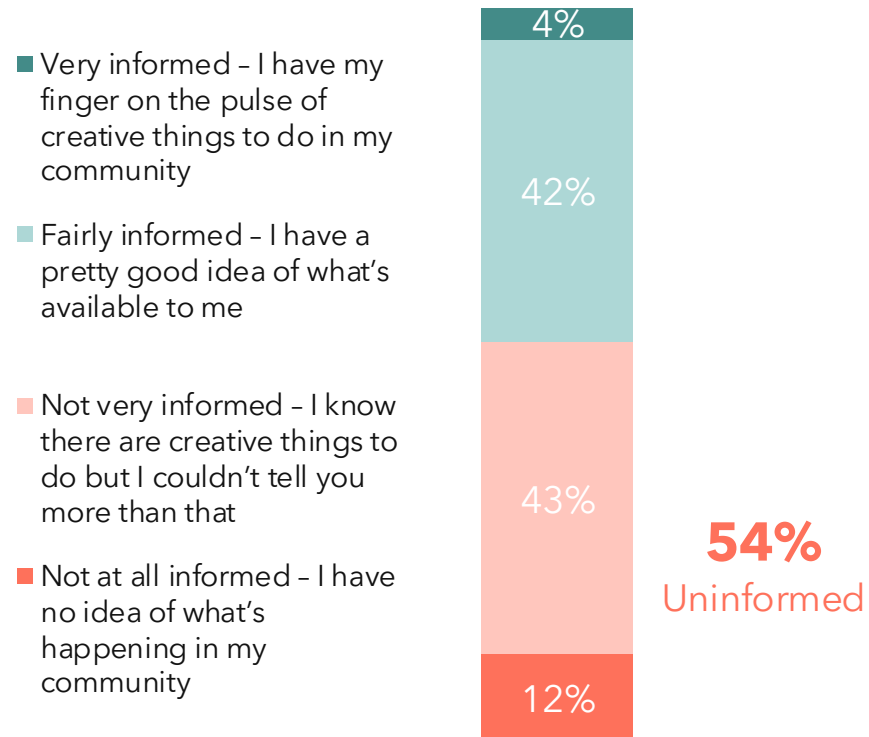
## 2. We operate in a market of active experience pursuers.





### 3. Audiences are not as informed as we might like, but they are interested.

#### "In the know" on Arts and Culture Experiences

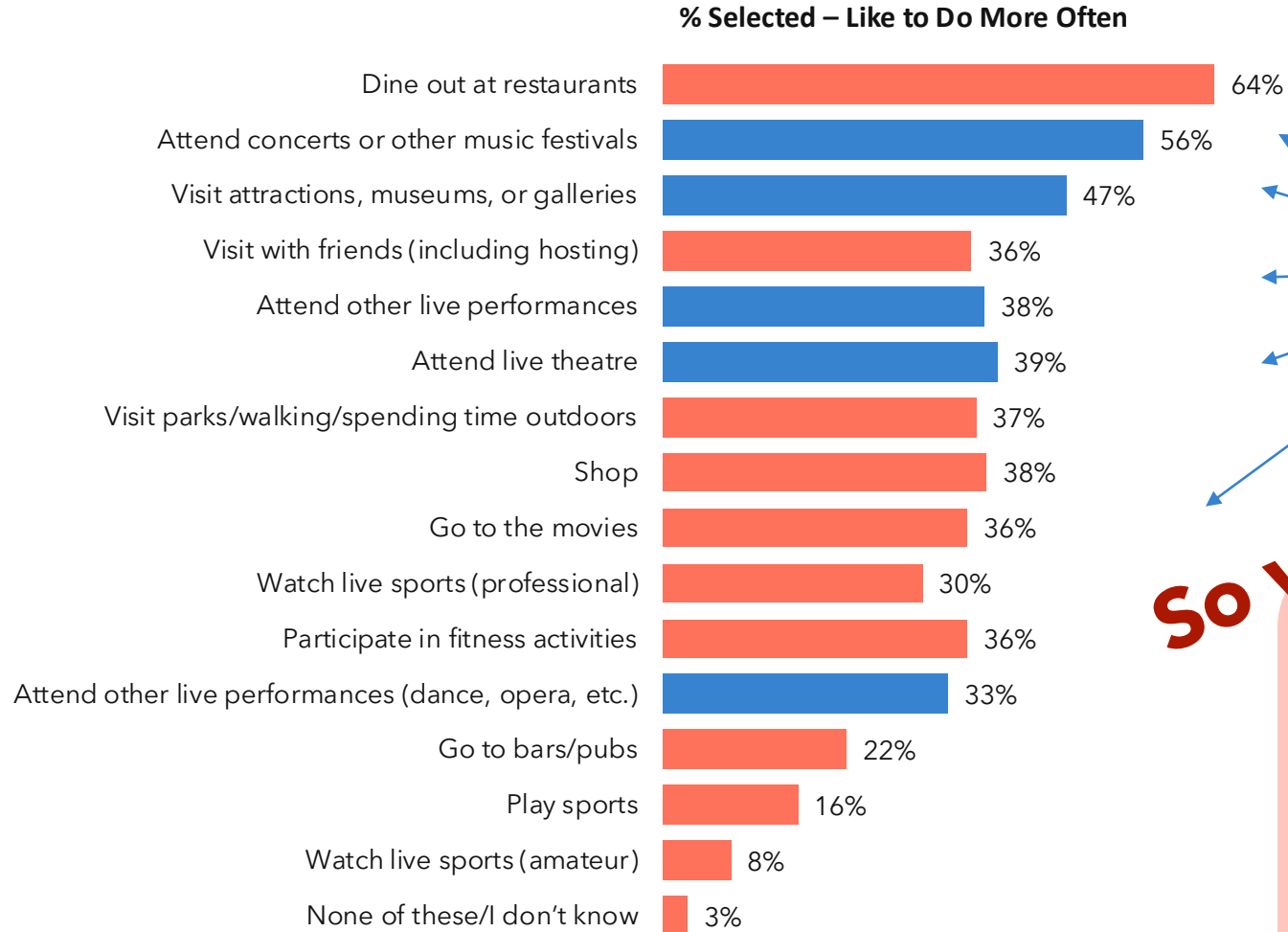


#### % Interested

- ✓ 85%: Performing arts
- ✓ 85%: Museums or galleries
- ✓ 81%: Arts based festivals

40% think there are too few arts events available in their community. (59% - Just enough)

## 4. And they want to spend their time with us.



Engaging with arts experiences more often is clearly an **aspiration** for Calgary audiences.

**So what?**

Arts organizations will need to 'connect the dots' for audiences.  
Help them see the benefits of engagement.

## 5. Consumer trends favour the consumption of arts experiences.



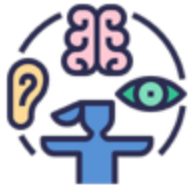
- Brand relevance & trust hinges more on meaningful connections and value alignment than transactions.



- Customization, personalization, flexibility are table stakes. Consumers are always moving.



- Social/human connections are prized in a technological era.



- Experiences are increasingly valued over material goods.

So what?

Arts experiences align well to these lasting changes in consumer behaviours.

# 6. Being remarkable is important, but achievable.



So what?

Creative experiences and practical considerations can combine to make remarkable happen.

A microphone with a silver mesh grille is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the left. The background is a blurred crowd of people walking outdoors, with green foliage visible at the top. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey rectangle containing text.

# **This sector is well positioned to succeed.**

- Collective experiences foster belonging.**
- Proven ability to delight and lift sentiment.**
- Natural creativity can more easily adapt to conditions.**



# The opportunity may require a shift.

## Customer-centric

*adjective. The practice of designing every decision, experience, and action around what matters most to the customer – their motivations, identities, and expectations. Ensuring Calgarians feel reflected, welcomed and connected every time they consider showing up.*

# Trust your art.

Audiences revel in the remarkable experiences you already deliver. Chances are they're delighted. Now you can enhance other elements that drive delight, not just what's on the wall or the stage.



# Understand your current customer to inform growth.

Gather intelligence about why they are there, their journey, expectations, experience levels and needs.

Understand their '**why**' to inform your growth.



# Be wholistic in building experiences.

The audience experience starts with inspiration and consideration. Invest effort in the media, planning, arrival and departure elements.



# Put yourself in their shoes to focus your message.

What does the audience need to hear or see to make a commitment?

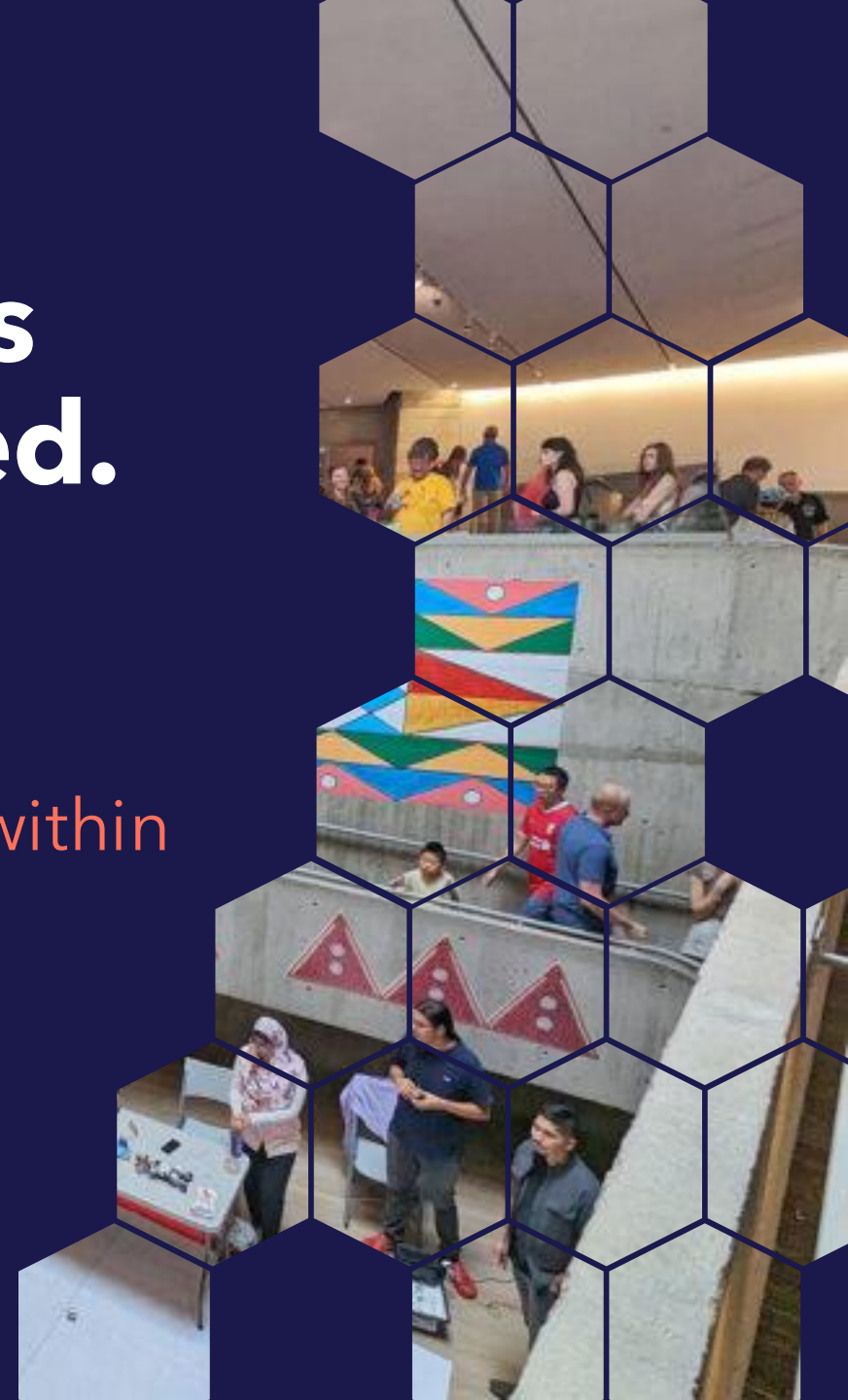
That it will be **fun**. That they **belong**. That it will be **hassle free**. That it will be **unique**. That they can **share** it. That they can **afford** it.





# Evolve programming choices to align with community need.

Excellence in art and excellence in meeting community need are not mutually exclusive. Programming choices can enable connections within community.





**Trust your  
Art**

**Know your  
customer**

**Be  
Wholistic**

**Put  
yourself in  
their shoes**

**Evolve to  
meet  
needs**

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Thank you.



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