

## **Ongoing local networking**

You have to spend a lot of time talking to people...

For... a lot of networking happens.

People pass you onto other people

who pass you onto other people.

But initially you have to have a lot of conversations

and you have to continue

having a lot of conversations

that you know you're not going to go anywhere.

You know, in every five conversations

we might have with somebody

who might be interested

in promoting a piece of theatre

in their neighbourhood or to their community,

four of those will come to nothing at that point.

Probably more than that I would think.

But by having the conversation

you're planting a seed in somebody's mind

and then later on when they are ready,

something perhaps then triggers them and they go,

"Oh, that Black Country Touring,

that might be a good connection for this."

So people come back.

So a lot of the time, it's making...

networking to people, talking to people,

going out and seeing people,

even though you know it's not going to

any direct benefit back.

You just have to relax into that.

You just have to say that you know,

this is time invested, it's not wasted.

So, when we started, we worked a lot

through the people you'd expect.

We worked through schools, we worked

through community centres,

we worked through local churches.

And those have different

communities of interest attached to them.

A lot of the time, community centres

for example, are not like village halls.

They're run by professionals generally,

those people are really trying

to manage a booking service

for that community hall.

And are not actually looking at seeing

how the community can be served by it in a more active way.

And that's not blaming them, is just it's not their job,

they are managers of the community facility.

So in the end, you have to go past them

to the users of the hall and find out

what they're are interested in.

I mean, we've done a lot of work

with a lot of different people.

You know, that go from like

mother and toddler groups,  
we've done work with...  
obviously, schools, we've done a lot of work  
with youth groups, we've done work with people  
who have lots of different reasons  
for wanting to come together  
and if you can find a way  
that cuts across their agenda,  
so that what you're offering  
fits with what they want and need,  
that's when you tend to find the biggest take up.  
So, if we are going and approaching a group,  
for example, we had a very successful promotion  
not long ago, with a group  
of African-Caribbean people  
who wanted a celebration for a particular event.  
Now, we can put them in touch  
with a company that does  
African dance, for example.  
It suits them, it suits us,  
and they'll bring an audience in  
that if we just decided to put  
that company on, on our own,  
we would've never been able to reach.