

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.