

CreativeNEXT Listening Tour - Rooting Our Strategies in Industry Needs

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To-Do List

1. **Develop targets and partnerships.** Set target regions and industries. Identify leaders in those industries and regions to host events, pick dates and venues, and help get their contact to the event.
2. **Identify quantitative metrics.** Suggested questions:
 - Is your business: for-profit, non-profit, or sole proprietor?
 - How many people are employed by your business (full time equivalent employees)?
 - Do you plan on hiring in the next: 6 months? 1 year? 3 years?
 - What industry are you in? (list all industries)
 - How long have you been in business?
 - What is the main market for your creative good(s) or service(s)? (Geographic area)

Collect quantitative data through an RSVP system (I used and suggest Eventbrite)

Note: Set two ticket types, “Creative Businesses and Organizations” and “Supporters.” Do not collect data from “Supporters.” To evaluate the data, go through the attendee list to make sure there are no duplicate attendees, check questions answered on Eventbrite and fix any problems with the results. Export to Excel and develop a Master Excel for all events, develop graphs from Excel.

3. **Identify qualitative metrics.** Collect qualitative data through a written form and conversation at the event.

The form questions:

- **Competitive Advantage:** What sets your business apart from other businesses?
- **Opportunity:** What is the biggest opportunity for your business to grow?
- **Support:** When you think of organizations that support the development of your business, what is the first one that comes to mind? Why?
- **Mentors:** Do you have access to business mentors to help your business grow? Y/N. If no, are you looking for one, or are you interested in finding one? Y/N
- **Support:** If you were seeking additional support for your business, what would you look for?
- **Barriers:** What are the biggest barriers to growth?
- **Additional Thoughts?**

The conversation guide:

- Where are the opportunities to grow?
- What is the biggest thing happening in your industry right now?
- How are you trying to change your business to keep up with changes in your industry?
- What support is needed to grow?
- Are there major barriers to the growth of your business?
- What's NEXT for you, your business, and your industry?
- How can we help?

Evaluate findings by reviewing and identifying “themes” from your notes and forms from each of the events, and begin to tally the number of times a theme is mentioned. Put it into a report or findings document. Consider adding appendix outlining findings from each event.

4. **Turning Findings into Strategies:** Once top themes are identified, turn them into “Areas of Action” to guide future strategies.

Report from CreativeNEXT Listening Tour can be found on mass.gov/hed/CreateMA.