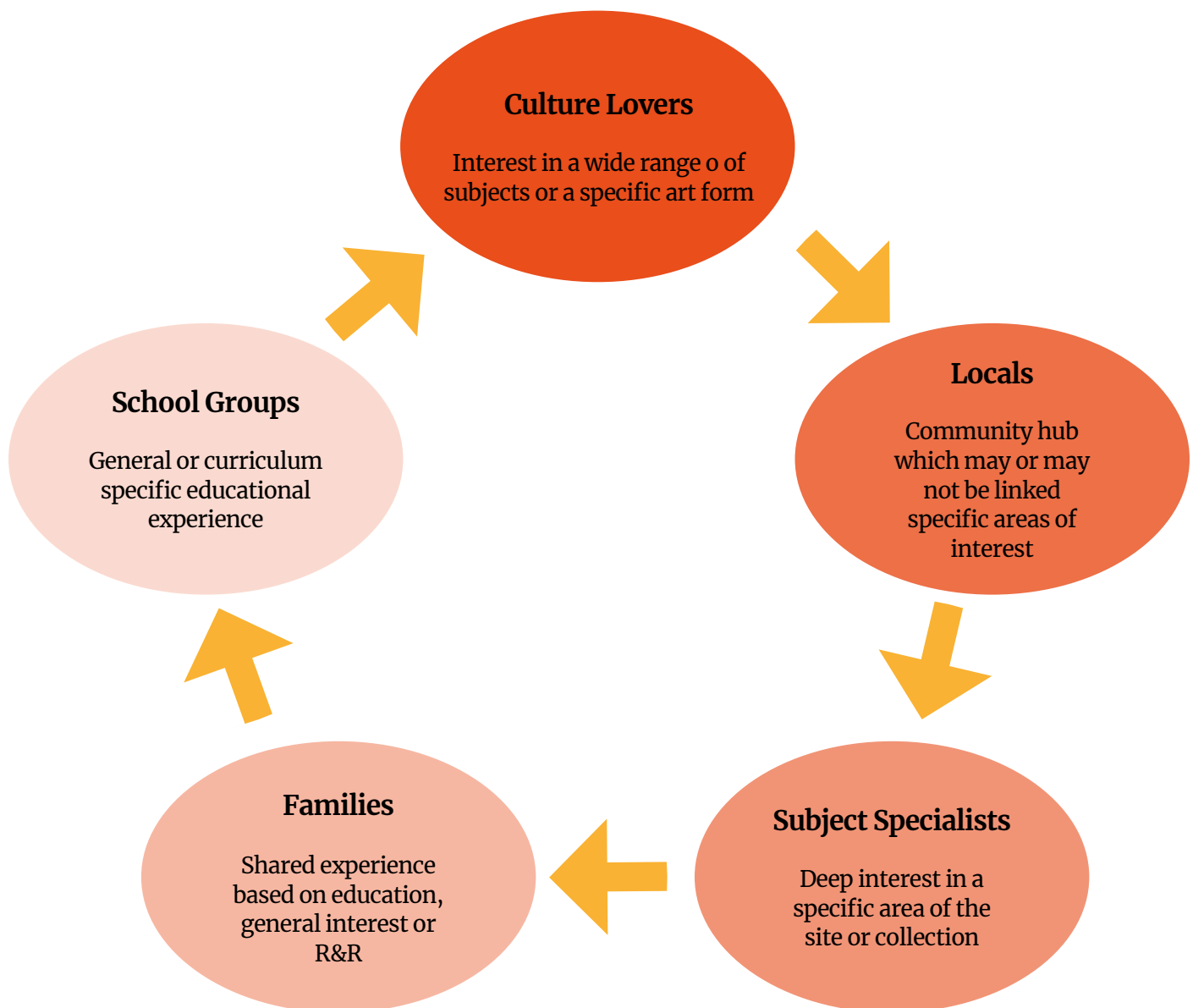# Understanding your Customers

A museum without visitors is unlikely to survive. Never have consumers had as much choice, or as much money to spend. There is so much competition for their time and money that your museum and shopping experience must be the best that it could be.

Understanding your visitor types, who they are and when they shop will give you the insight you need to get your range right.

Core visitor types motivation

Culture Lovers

Interest in a wide range o of subjects or a specific art form

Locals

Community hub which may or may not be linked specific areas of interest

Subject Specialists

Deep interest in a specific area of the site or collection

Families

Shared experience based on education, general interest or R&R

School Groups

General or curriculum specific educational experience

Find out more at culturalenterprises.org.uk/academy/resources/cultureshop-tv

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Understanding your Customers

Understanding why your visitors might become customers in the shop will give you valuable insight. Possibilities are:

- Retail therapy
- Time killer
- Memory maker
- Covert donation
- Something different
- Me time
- Tactile experience

You still need to understand who it is that spends the money in the shop, and you need to be careful not to make assumptions. Your main type of visitor might not be the customer who spends money in the shop. Buying for the shop is about what your customer wants – not you or the organisation.

Which visitors are most likely to become customers?

- Your customers are likely to come from several visitor segments
- Visitors that love buying gifts
- Visitors that always spend time in the shop

Identify who your core customer is. The better you know who the customer is that spends the money in your museum shop the more successful you will be. You need to get under the skin of the customer, find the likes and dislikes, creating a personality so that you have a reference point in your product selection as well as for visual merchandising layouts and displays.

Look for simple ways to track who the customer is – creating and completing a simply tally sheet for a few weeks can be useful can be useful and will challenge many assumptions.

Top Tips

- Think about what differentiates visitor attraction retail from mainstream retail
- Establish what your venue's visitor profile is
- Make a note of which visitor types visit your shop

Give your target customer(s) a name and always keep them front of mind

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