

ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FY2010 TO FY2012

BY THE MEMBERS, FOR THE MEMBERS...

June 2009

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK

This three-year strategic framework is the capstone effort of more than two years of member and field research, a strategic review conducted by the Roan Group, adoption of a new mission/vision/values statement, restructuring of Arts Presenters' board of directors and staff, and a multi-month facilitated planning process undertaken by the board and staff. This framework is intended to provide a unified direction for Arts Presenters over the next three years, as the board and staff adopt specific goals, annual objectives and activities.

The framework contemplates improving existing programs, such as the conference, considers new approaches to programs, and in some cases provides for establishing entirely new programs. Arts Presenters staff and board will undertake improvements to existing programs and services, and will develop new programs as feasible over the three-year period.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Association envisions a world where all people experience the transformative power of live performance and the performing arts presenting field is strong and vibrant—a world where performing artists are integral to all communities, where ideas circulate vigorously and freely, and where people from all cultures affirm and understand themselves and each other through the arts.

VALUE STATEMENT

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

We foster an appreciation for the performing arts among our members and their audiences. The performing arts, in all of their diverse forms, offer a way for people to know and understand themselves. Live performance is a universal form of human communication and is fundamental to civic community life.

KNOWLEDGE

We value the opportunity for members to share with and learn from one another, drawing upon their more than 50 years of collective wisdom. Continually building new skills, seeking greater insights and challenging convention fosters innovation and encourages new thinking among our members and advances the overall health of the performing arts presenting field.

CULTURAL INCLUSIVITY

We believe the performing arts bridge differences among individuals, communities and cultures. For the performing arts to flourish, we must have cultural diversity in our membership, our organizations, our presentations and our audiences.

LOCAL TO GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

We are a national service organization, operating internationally. We provide services to members to help them serve their local communities utilizing a national and international perspective. We believe in the power of identifying and promoting local innovations that have the potential to resonate on the national and international stage. We value the sharing of the stories and perspectives that fuel new opportunities for global exchange.

EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY, CURIOSITY

We deliver best-in-class service to our members, which is possible only if our work is of the highest quality and is undertaken with integrity. We accomplish what we say we will. We strive always to improve what we do. Our curiosity about the needs of our members, the state of the field and best practices invigorate all our undertakings. In this, we lead by example: the performing arts presenting field is more vigorous and values and goals more easily reached if as a collective, we undertake our work with excellence, integrity, and curiosity.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Association develops and supports a robust performing arts presenting field and the professionals who work within it.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS TO ENSURE YEAR-ROUND VALUE

The following goals answer the over-arching questions: “How will the Association of Performing Arts Presenters move the field forward? What are we doing to help our members and the wider field thrive and adapt to change?”

STRENGTHEN NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Arts Presenters will provide physical and virtual opportunities for meaningful, focused communication and sharing among professional peers; we believe it is essential to support both long-established, formal networks and self-identified, more unstructured networks. We will activate networking and relationship building to create an efficient marketplace, where agent/managers, presenters, self-representing artists and other presenting professionals find opportunities—and have the tools and resources they need to help capitalize on them.

DEEPEN AND EXPAND CAPACITY IN INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Arts Presenters will provide people and organizations with capacity-building opportunities, so that they have or can acquire the resources they need – knowledge, opportunities, funding, audiences – to build effective organizations. We seek to construct a learning environment so that our members have access to the knowledge that helps them grow and provides tools to help them be effective – and by extension, create stronger organizations. We will identify and research topics of interest for the field and will disseminate results, as well as provide avenues for thought leadership to emerge from the field and be heard. We will provide targeted funding and technical assistance to leverage what is learned by funding recipients, and will make lessons learned clear and accessible to the membership. We will ensure that Arts Presenters has the financial capacity, infrastructure and intellectual capital to provide best-in-class services to members.

PROMOTE THE VALUE OF THE PRESENTING FIELD

Arts Presenters seeks to place the performing arts presenting field within the arena of public discourse and at the policy-making table, so as to influence public- and private-sector decision makers, arts supporters and the general public in civic deliberations. We will advance understanding of the presenting field within the performing arts community to ease crossover opportunities, and will provide the

presenting field with centralized information and advocacy tools to provide effective, current information about field activity and impact.

HOW WE FULFILL OUR MISSION

NETWORKING

Our strength is our membership, and Arts Presenters is committed networking with and among our members and the broader field to achieve our goals. We provide the platform and opportunities that encourage member interaction, both spontaneously and formally. We support the creation of networks at all levels: member groups, functional areas, communities of practice, and topics of interest/concern. We facilitate opportunities within and across segments and ensure that there is communication across networks.

KNOWLEDGE & LEARNING

The discovery and systemization of knowledge are key to advancing the field, and Arts Presenters is committed to building members' collective wisdom through the ongoing collection and exchange of information, stories and ideas. We achieve this by drawing upon the experience and expertise of colleagues within and outside the field of performing arts presenting. We further will work toward the creation of systematic methodologies for the active pursuit of knowledge and skills to advance the field. We will focus learning opportunities in particular areas of interest and will enrich this strategy by activating creative thinking, exploring a wide array of ideas and problem-solving by connecting knowledge to strategies to achieve our goals.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is derived from the Latin root *voc*, meaning "voice." *Advocare*, with *voc* at its core, means "to give voice together." Using advocacy as an organizational strategy means providing a context for a unified voice for the field, and specifically helping practitioners within the field **make the case** for the performing arts in their communities, and use this voice to advance their organizations and themselves.

ENGAGEMENT

Central to achieving our goals is to effectively identify and clearly communicate innovative practice, changes within organizations, the membership and field as well as opportunities presenting field exposure within national social discourse. Quality participation and communication must permeate all interaction with and among our members.

BRINGING THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO LIFE

The major service areas below are where the rubber meets the road and forms the foundation of our member value proposition. Each service area uses multiple core strategies to achieve multiple organizational goals. For example, as we develop a re-granting program, we ask, “How can we use **networking, knowledge, learning, advocacy and engagement** (core strategies) to **deepen and expand capacity, strengthen networks** and **promote the value of the field** (organizational goals)?” The more core strategies and goals each service area activates, the more robust the service. The resulting matrix also provides a means to set objectives and effectiveness measures. Major service areas are as follows:

PEER KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Serve the members by supporting the creation of communities within the membership – both in-person and virtual – that will be able to locate and use collective wisdom to deliver solutions-oriented knowledge. Interaction occurs within a peer-driven, multi-channel platform that promotes the easy exchange of ideas and stories. Additional content and thought leadership are also provided by Arts Presenters’ Research and Discovery services (listed below).

Existing services or those under consideration in this area include: the conference EXPO Hall along with the development of a year-round online performing arts marketplace for agent/managers, self-representing artists, presenter, and other segments of the field; webinars/phone ins; a new web platform to support affinity groups and web-enabled professional networking; interactive round table discussions; and a peer resource center including new coaching circles and formalized mentoring.

Outcome: a better connected, dynamic membership, which can easily find and/or supply answers to a range of questions. Members support each other, receiving and supplying assistance on the issues and challenges that face the field. Additionally, a robust exchange will lead to a more efficient, thriving industry and marketplace.

RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

Serve the membership by providing financial support and forums for identifying the challenges individuals and organizations face, and the new practice and innovations that emerge to address these challenges. The organization of R & D programs will have a new focus on more aggressively identifying lessons learned from these member explorations, and more effectively making the results of the R&D efforts useful and available to members.

Existing services or those under consideration in this area include: re-granting programs; issues-based think tanks and symposia; field research and surveying; awards and recognition programs.

Outcome: Success with these programs will result in enlivened discussions in the field on topics of pressing concern and will provide individuals and organizations with reference points for the development of their own successes.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADVOCACY

Serve the members by identifying and managing issues of concern to the field, and speak on behalf of the membership with regard to these issues; empower the field to “make the case” for the performing arts in their communities; provide direct advocacy for the field on the national and international level. While national advocacy has historically been an area of strength for the organization, this service area is currently retooling to move more quickly to respond to new issues at the local as well as the national levels. This service area is particularly focused on improving use of our networking and communications strategies.

Existing services or those under consideration in this area include: issue management and direct lobbying; partnership with the Performing Arts Alliance (PAA) – our advocacy coalition; grass-roots mobilization on advocacy issues; opinion makers and leaders relations, including media, elected officials, funders; programs to help the performing arts presenting field make the case for the performing arts in their communities.

Outcome: A membership that takes effective action on critical issues at the local, state and national level, and movement on issues of concern to the field from our coalition- and direct-lobbying efforts.

FIELD-WIDE DIFFUSION

Serve the members by amplifying and distributing information and knowledge about the field through Arts Presenters’ own communications function, as well as through Arts Presenters-affiliated networks, sister organizations, and other partnerships. Diffusion embraces traditional dissemination in addition to focusing on how ideas and knowledge are taken up, modified and used within the field – as well as embracing the need to track how ideas and knowledge permeate the field. Arts Presenters is placing more emphasis on working with partners and affiliates to deliver ideas and services. Arts Presenters values its position as a “network of networks” and a new focus in this program area will help to extend our understanding of the field and to present the Association’s value to potential new members.

Existing services or those under consideration in this area include: technical assistance and expert referrals; publishing via paper, electronically, and on the web, such as with Inside Arts, newsletters, case studies, and member-generated knowledge; conference speakers and discussants; seminars and workshops, affinity programs; and nurturing our partnerships and alliances in order to solidify our field-wide communications efforts. These types of relationships include quasi-governmental organizations, sister service organizations, information networks, consortia, showcaser, and grantee/professional development alumni, among others.

Outcome: A well-informed membership that is engaged with the Association and with each other. An extended ability for Arts Presenters to serve the membership by supporting other organizations that deliver targeted value to our members.

A WORD ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Conference will continue to be one of the premier services of the organization, and can most effectively be improved and efficiently delivered by being dynamic: the conference is represented in the various program areas above, where appropriate – i.e. the EXPO Hall is contained within Peer Knowledge Exchange, showcasing and professional development sessions are in Field-wide Diffusion, conference administration is in Infrastructure (below). The commitment to an ever-improving and essential conference is unwavering and the conference committee is scheduled to work with staff to consider a major conference redesign for 2011-2012.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A final, critical component of service is the infrastructure that makes delivery possible. A solid infrastructure serves members by ensuring that the Association has the financial, intellectual and support resources needed to provide excellence. Infrastructure is largely focused on providing service internally to the Association, so the Association can effectively serve the members.

Existing services or those under consideration in this area include: Development/fundraising; conference operations and marketing; membership operations and marketing; board of directors and committees; and internal Arts Presenters functions such as finance, member database, and web site construction and support.

Outcome: A skilled and service-oriented support organization, which ensures that services are delivered to members in an efficient and consistent manner and that Arts Presenters' resources are responsibly deployed.

Input sources:

Roan summary

Governance/Membership/Nominations/MVV task force

Staff & Board process

Consultants/Facilitators