

Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Strategic Review: Final Engagement Report
April 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In preparation for reaching its 50-year benchmark as a leading national service organization, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (Arts Presenters) engaged The Roan Group, Inc to conduct a Strategic Review with the following purpose: *to better prepare it [the organization] to meet the service, collaboration, and advancement needs of its membership, the field, and its peer arts service organizations. The process necessarily evaluates the effectiveness of program and service strategies, both for members and, through them, for the field.* The 15-month project formally commenced in January 2006 at the 49th Annual Members Conference.

The Review's findings, strategies, and recommendations are presented as both options for action and as a work program to be accomplished over the next decade and beyond. Some recommendations are in the process of being executed, and others will necessarily be sequenced for attention over time. The Strategic Review was intended to better prepare Arts Presenters to increase its ability to build: 1) capacity in individuals, 2) stronger, sustainable presenting organizations, 3) a more effective field, and 4) a robust and vibrant presenting and touring community.

A Strategic Review Working Group was convened to inform and guide the process. Although the process was designed to be independent of the Board of Directors and of management, the Working Group and the Board collaborated in two nearly full-day work sessions. The Working Group, which included some board members, endorsed the formation of an Info-mediary Committee that was tasked to investigate Arts Presenters current and future info-mediary (INFOrmation interMEDIARY) role applied to organizational, informational, strategic, and infrastructural needs. The Committee explored how to leverage emergent, self-organizing networks that, in order to function optimally, requires sophisticated information and logistical organization and communication

Process

A plan was designed to ensure that broad member and field input informed and guided the assessment process and was inclusive of all aspects of the organization – from governance to operating systems to programs. The 10-month Discovery process included: 54 hours of in-depth interviews, three Working Group meetings and an Info-mediary Committee meeting (committees included Board and at-large members), and 12 hours of member meetings (*Conversations with the Field*) in eight cities around the country and forums at three Regional conferences.

The *Conversations* were convened for two purposes: 1) to seek feedback on draft findings and strategies emerging from the strategic review process, and; 2) to identify, inventory, and discuss current challenges and opportunities facing the presenting and touring field. Over 200 people working in the presenting and performing arts fields – representing large, small and mid-sized

organizations and companies from every region of the country gathered to voice their concerns, hopes and issues regarding the present and future of presenting. The facilitator prompted participants to catalogue challenges and opportunities facing the field surrounding key questions that included:

- What opportunities and challenges do you face?
- What do you need and want to work more effectively?
- What learning objectives should Arts Presenters champion?
- How could the mix of programs and services shift to create more lasting value for your time and money?
- How can we strengthen other networks and organizations that deliver value to you?
- How can Arts Presenters re-design its programs and services to deliver a year-round capacity building agenda for its members?

Members and the wider field reflected upon and discussed how marketplace, political, social, and economic shifts have affected the field's operating environment, and strategies needed for the Association to meet the field's operating needs, while advancing its sustainability and effectiveness. Members received greater detail on the review findings, proposed recommendations and more developed strategies for the association to consider at the Annual Membership Meeting in January 2007.

The Roan Group presented the draft Strategic Review report to Arts Presenters' Board of Directors in April 2007. The Board reviewed and prioritized recommendations for immediate action and has formed new task forces and committees to discuss priority recommendations and identify short- and long-term objectives and strategies for adoption. The following is a synopsis of the major findings and recommendations from the Strategic Review final report.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Arts Presenters is a means by which stakeholders manage and advance the presenting and touring sector's interests in a culture and leisure landscape that is becoming increasingly more important in civic, social, economic, and national terms. – statement from the Final Engagement Report

Currently Arts Presenters employs a clearly announced Vision, Values, and Mission policy governance framework. The language is uplifting, inspiring, and challenges readers to step up and play a role in their community leadership. It communicates a big vision with a robust role for the performing arts. There is a question, however, regarding applicability to organizational governance, policies, and ultimately programs and services. Each framework should be tested with respect to its usefulness in guiding the development, implementation, and evaluation of Association goals, programs and services. Given the importance of Arts Presenters' marketplace function – its financial viability; attractiveness to international presenters, managers, and government cultural sector representatives – it should be more specifically addressed in the Association's policy governance framework.

The current Arts Presenters Mission would benefit from re-thinking and a direct connection to what the organization does and aspires to achieve. While Arts Presenters may occasionally present, it is not a presenting organization, but rather a service organization. As reflected by

hundreds of Strategic Review participants, the purpose of Arts Presenters is understood to be “to advance the professionalism of the presenting field.” In addition to describing what is desired via the mission statement, it is important to address the values that guide actions and the mandates (actions) that will accomplish the ends. During the Discovery process, respondents identified the following values as being most important to the Association: diversity and inclusiveness, listening, efficiency, focused and knowing limits, innovation, leadership, ethical excellence, honesty and transparency, connectedness, service, and awareness of and responsiveness to member needs.

The Association’s name implies a presenter-member organization rather than the inclusion of agencies, artist, artist managements, consultants, producers, publishers, service organizations, vendors (e.g. equipment, service and technology), etc. that comprise the current membership mosaic. As the organization considers new names, it is recommended to 1) avoid using a descriptive naming strategy, and 2) avoid generic keywords. Descriptive naming is limiting and contributes to brand fade-out.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 1. Convene a process to re-craft the mission statement in outcome terms. During that process, develop organizational vision, values, and mandates.**
- 2. After clarifying mission, programs, service constituencies, brand issues, and costs of implementation, convene a process to rename the organization.**

Governance

The Association should explore the expansion of its board governance structure to allow for points-of-entry by a variety of interested constituencies to include: board members of its member institutions, other professional volunteers with the interest and expertise to further the goals and objectives of the Association, as well as other professionals who might assist the organization with reaching and expanding its fundraising capacity. The Association should research the mechanisms, including auxiliary structures, through which individuals who are not members of the field but are committed constituents, might help enhance revenue generation efforts. – Strategic Review Working Group

The Association has been served by many distinguished professional practitioners over the years who have generously given their time and commitment. Nothing is more important or more high-leverage than having effective, respected, and well-connected leadership people involved in and guiding the governance process. The Arts Presenters’ Board has worked hard to diversify itself, however, it remains a trade board with Directors recruited from the ranks of working professionals. While there are some advantages to this, Arts Presenters would benefit substantially from drawing on a more diverse set of sector-related publics, including lay membership, philanthropists, and prominent people who are related to the cultural industries and who, by virtue of their accomplishments and resources, are well-positioned to advance the organization’s agendas.

A set of governance strategies should be defined and adopted that: 1) ensure the integrity of Association governance; 2) educate Directors about their fiduciary duty and their legal and ethical obligations; 3) seek to include the many diverse points-of-view and sets-of-experience

that enliven and animate the creativity and industry within the membership; and, 4) inculcate the value that no Director sits to represent any particular constituency's interests, but rather governs to ensure that the Association delivers on its mission for the benefit of all its members.

To provide strategic leadership, the Board must clarify policies, set priorities, and direct, through policy goals, organizational activities to give them life. It must understand and facilitate the agendas and needs of networks and groups (i.e. sub-convenors) and understand how their goals and agendas are complementary, competitive, or dissonant. The key to the organization's success is 1) communicating goals, 2) managing expectations, 3) meeting them, and 4) communicating accomplishment. These things are especially important with the governance audience since Directors are a primary channel in reinforcing that the organization is on the move and meeting its goals. Goals should be translated into key performance indicators (KPIs) – organizational KPIs – that can be used to establish baseline benchmarks.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 3. Explore the expansion of the board governance structure to allow for points-of-entry by a variety of interested constituencies including: board members of its member institutions, other professional volunteers with the interest and expertise to further the goals and objectives of the Association, as well as other professionals who might assist the organization with reaching and expanding its fundraising capacity.**
- 4. Upon completion of the Board's clarification of Arts Presenters' mission, vision, and values, the Board should involve more members in the governance process by expanding the Committee structure; empower the Board's Executive Committee with greater authority.**
- 5. Convene a commensurate review of governance documents (bylaws, articles of incorporation) and develop a communications strategy to educate the members on Board processes and governance (i.e. foster a transparent governance process and culture).**
- 6. Determine governance core competencies needed to optimize the organization and refine the nomination process that allows for points-of-entry by a variety of interested constituencies; ensure that the nominations process includes explicit disclosure of policies, expectations, and sanctions; consider diversity – race, generation, creed, role, etc. in recruitment.**
- 7. Develop a comprehensive Board member orientation and formal evaluation process that defines what it means to govern and includes the establishment and enforcement of Board standards and behavioral policies.**
- 8. Design and implement a process that solicits the goals and objectives of those networks with which Arts Presenters collaborates to fuel the creation and adoption of the Association's own policy goals, initiatives, and program frameworks.**
- 9. Create a strong, intentional culture by 1) establishing and communicating clear and constructive behavioral norms, 2) focusing on the agenda of the organization, and 3) encouraging and rewarding accomplishment.**

Membership

I know as a small presenter, my dues dropped by about \$600, and that was terrific for me ...I'm not happy about the impact, but it's good for me to know what that true impact is, that sacrifice on the part of Arts Presenters. To really be more inclusive and make it economically viable, there's expense. – Respondent, Conversations with the Field

Among many Arts Presenters members, there is the perception that the organization is awash in money, primarily because of Conference attendance growth. As of January 2007, there were 2,050 members and over 4,400 Conference attendees. However, a new dues structure imposed in July 2005 created unintended consequences for the Association's coffers. The intent of the restructured dues was to create more access for smaller organizations and for individuals; to equalize the dues rate between small and large organizations that is based upon overall budget for artist fees; to deepen penetration in current markets, to appeal to "flagship" organizations; and, to develop growth. All member dues have decreased from an average of \$620 (2004) to \$496 (2006) and new member dues have declined from an average of \$441 (2004) to \$291 (2006). In aggregate, membership dues have declined by nearly \$151,000 or 17 percent while operating costs have increased as has the number of members of the association.

As part of the Strategic Review, the staff accomplished an ABC (activity-based-costing) Analysis. The Analysis showed that the real cost to serve a member is \$797.81 (at the time of the analysis). This reflects lower costs than previous years because the organization has lowered its overhead by eliminating staff positions. The cost-contribution dynamic (i.e. what the member pays versus the cost of programs and services per member) equates to a loss averaging \$302 per member (at the lowest \$150 member rate, the loss gap is \$648.). Arts Presenters' ability to serve its membership, create value, ensure sustainability – and advance the memberships' interests – was weakened by the restructuring of dues. The Review process also revealed a series of concerns about some members under-reporting dues-calculation variables. Any member who seeks to benefit at the expense of colleague organizations should recognize s/he is taking advantage of all of the other members who pay their fair share.

In reviewing the deliberative process with the staff and Working Group, it was determined that the process used to re-set dues levels was flawed, primarily by: 1) a lack of information about real costs; 2) a lack of information about member-organization budgets, artists fees paid and manager/agent gross receipts from touring; 3) a failure to fully test the new dues model which might have revealed that significant numbers of members would use the change in dues calculations and policies as an opportunity to reduce their dues payments; and, 4) the assumption that a carefully constructed dues-calculation plan, based on the engagement of an expert membership organization consulting firm, could somehow be adjusted "on the fly" for the better. A year and a half passed before implementation, by which time membership-organization budgets changed (some got smaller) and marketplace conditions had changed.

More flexibility in setting dues levels is in the best interests of both the organization and the membership. At the very least, dues levels should be calculated from a variable (e.g. organization budget size, actual dollars spent on artists fees) that is a key indicator of the economic health of membership organizations.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 10. Develop a policy goal that addresses what percentage of overall revenues should be made up of dues revenues, Conference fees, etc. The organization's professional staff should set dues levels and these dues levels should be vetted by the Finance Committee and forwarded as a motion for approval by same to the entire Board.**
- 11. Update the ABC (activity-based-costing) analysis annually.**
- 12. Simplify the formula for calculating dues so it employs no more than one factor multiplied against one organizational variable that is easily verifiable.**

The current culture is y'all come. Arts Presenters is not for everyone, and we need to be real about that. Clarity will aid self-selection and create more value. – Working Group

Taken together, members have significant expectations of Arts Presenters, but taken singly, members have specific and often mutually exclusive needs of the Association. Some want better conference content or a more productive marketplace experience. Others come to the Association for professional development, seeking to learn in seminar, workshop forum, or discussion formats. Many come to expand their experiential horizons, to broaden their tastes, and increase their familiarity with the work of artists and companies that showcase during the Conference.

Research indicates that the culture of most professional service organizations is one in which membership inspires pride-of-belonging and a strong desire to contribute. These organizations are not by design elitist nor exclusive, except by announcing a policy goal to recruit members that: 1) meet eligibility standards, 2) desire to be members, and 3) value what membership means and confers. There are many professional associations, including peer arts service organizations like Arts Presenters, into which people must: qualify for membership, be invited to join, and pay substantially higher dues as a condition of membership.

In its attempts to remain accessible and to signal inclusion, Arts Presenters has implemented a variety of initiatives ranging from lowering dues to recruiting and marketing various member prospects. In some cases, respondents reported that Arts Presenters isn't a good fit for their needs, but in reality, Arts Presenters cannot be all things to all people. The core of the Arts Presenters value proposition is opportunity. The Association can promise and deliver opportunities to learn and grow in most senses of those words, both professionally and in marketplace terms. It is recommended that Arts Presenters engage its members in a process 1) to assess members' perceptions of the value of each of the member benefit offerings and 2) to develop more appealing benefits. Eliminate and/or change those benefits that evidence low value. Membership is a signal of arriving at a certain level of professional and organizational accomplishment. It should be positioned as such.

Arts Presenters current membership model designates primary members as organizations, not as individual people. This creates challenges in directly connecting value to members, because value is experienced by people, not by organizations. For example, the current communications strategy to send all communications to the principal member contact (most often the chief executive), is based on the assumption that they will be forwarded to an appropriate staff

member, which rarely happens. It is recommended that the Association consider re-defining membership that motivates participation from both the executive and authorizing environment in addition to opening opportunities for professional and associate-track memberships.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 13. Examine and consider a membership-basis change from organizational to individual membership to include the following criteria: Any member organization must have at least one Principal, Partner, or Governor member. Professional membership is only available after the organization has one Principal or Governor member. Associate Membership is available only after one Professional member.**
- 14. Move from a rolling renewal strategy to an annualized membership date, e.g. all members renew by October 15. Establish incentives to renew on-time by establishing a lapse penalty.**

The Annual Conference

The Conference is the reason we remain a member. – The Conference is my only contact with the organization. – It's an organization that puts on a great Conference. – Discovery Respondents

It is no surprise that for some 95 percent of Arts Presenters' members, the Annual Members Conference and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters are experienced as one and the same. The Arts Presenters annual conference is the world's largest global marketplace, with 10 percent of attendees including promoters, artists and organizations from around the world. Unlike regional booking conferences, it's also an open marketplace, not juried and easy to become affiliated with once one becomes a member and delegate. That coupled with the access to the market, the exhibit hall, and the opportunity to be seen in New York, also contributes to the large attendance numbers. Many emerging artists talk about graduating to the New York Arts Presenters conference as an important career milestone and opportunity.

The Conference program is both a precious Association asset – a major service to all categories of the membership – and an evolving organism that has become so large and important that it has 1) taken on a life of its own, and 2) eclipses many other important activities of the Association, especially in the minds of members.

Without question, the showcasing activity of the Conference is a significant drawing card for many people today across the entire membership spectrum, for the following reasons. First, artists and their agents/managers are convinced that there is no substitute for the real performance experience when it comes to creating interest in booking an artist, company, or attraction. The possibility of creating a successful tour is a powerful incentive for mounting a showcase. Second, a very high field-cultural value is placed on aesthetic and artistic literacy by the whole membership. Many people believe that the best way to develop taste and fluency is to see as many performances as possible. Third, and perhaps the most potent force that has driven showcasing, is that most people who work in this field love live performance. Arts Presenters staff believes that presenters like and want a large number of choices. Presenters report that they would like to see consistent levels of production value – in some cases higher production values – across the showcases.

While ‘round-the-clock showcasing offers many benefits to members, it has weakened Arts Presenters’ ability to convene its member organizations for other purposes, e.g. plenary sessions, professional development forums, and even the Association’s annual meeting. As a purely practical matter, Arts Presenters’ ability to convene and focus its membership is critical to its ability to advance the field. Presenters want navigational tools and peer advice in order to know what to attend.

Because it has become such a pre-eminent event, discipline-based organizations, regional networks, block-booking consortia, and other arts organizations plan their meetings around, within, and throughout the Arts Presenters conference. Arts Presenters has significantly increased the space and opportunities to accommodate the above activities, which have grown organically. Arts Presenters hosts some 80 interest-area and network meetings of members. These sessions cannot help but take away time from the organization’s programmed professional development opportunities.

The scalability of the conference experience for each member is important to the future. It is recommended that the physical design and schedule of the Conference be re-engineered to focus on the following objectives: 1) enhance the workshops experience and separate it from Resource Room and showcasing time to encourage attendance and focus; 2) create Super Sessions for longer periods of learning time; 3) consider single or duo speakers in lieu of panel discussions so that speakers can communicate in depth about a particular topic; 4) develop minimum requirements in terms of presentations, incorporating more technology and learning modalities. In sum, the Conference model should be simplified and streamlined in scheduling, logistical, and geographic terms so the event is more intuitively navigable. Staff began implementing these recommendations during the 2007 Conference.

As Arts Presenters, as an organization, embraces the value of social network, it needs to harness such opportunities through the Conference. This includes creating additional opportunities for peer-to-peer learning networks within the Conference in the same way that the Emerging Leaders network has worked. This may include dedicated spaces and rooms that are organized around function (e.g. programming, marketing, finance, development, IT, operations) where people can gather in an informal setting to discuss and organize for themselves a learning and sharing agenda that leverages peers and invited content experts within a particular area. It may also include peer-to-peer learning forums with expert facilitators to keep the conversation focused and moving (i.e. in addition to the dance forum, music forum, festival forums, and specially produced programs currently included on the Conference agenda).

Summary of Recommendations:

- 15. Explore a multiple-stream conference concept where members and member networks are encouraged and empowered to create their own content and delivery strategies. Harness, formalize, personalize, and energize network-based and peer-based learning.**
- 16. Engage a Conference Design Specialist and explore ways to simplify and streamline the Conference model in scheduling, logistical, and geographical terms so that the event is more intuitively navigable. Create dedicated spaces and rooms that are organized around**

function. Schedule professional development time outside of Resource Room time. Create navigational tools that make the conference less “terrifying” and easier to use.

- 17. Content-wise, create more ideational coherence across the experience (i.e. central conference themes). Integrate issues, ideas, and strategies, including across all Association channels (e.g. website, *Inside Arts*, membership meetings, etc.)**

Knowledge and Professional Development

Create a Knowledge Division to build knowledge-building capacity in individuals and organizations. Create a learning culture within the membership. Develop learning objectives that are year-round, peer-based, multi-channel, network-driven, experiential, and iterative. – Info-mediary Committee

Over the years, Arts Presenters has been a valuable information and knowledge source. For decades, member organizations have looked to Arts Presenters as a comprehensive source about all-things-presenting. The organization has a long history of providing educational programs ranging from basic to advanced seminars and workshops on discreet artistic disciplines, curation strategies, marketing, fundraising, leadership, research, and audience development. The number one priority for those attending the *Conversations with the Field* was “professional development year-round throughout the country.”

Arts Presenters’ learning forums have not only advanced learning, but they have also been crucibles of meaning where a common language about presenting has been forged. Emerging Leaders Institute participants learn about pressing field issues and are given the opportunity to explore critical performing arts leadership skills. Yet, with all the advances that have occurred, it is generally agreed that the culture of the presenting field has not historically been one in which systematic learning has been valued. Unlike the fundraising field, which developed learning programs leading to professional certification (CFRE), there is no established set of curricula and standards for common professional roles within presenting organizations.

It is recommended that Arts Presenters come to terms with establishment of a field-advancement policy framework that is values-driven and mission-coherent. In order to build capacity in the membership, Arts Presenters must build capacity in the individuals that work within member organizations. The question, therefore, is not *whether* the Association should attend itself to advancing the professionalism within the field or not, but rather *how* to design programs and delivery systems that will be most effective in advancing the knowledge, skills, and competencies within the field. It has to market and sell the importance of continuing education, itself. Corporate and trade association sectors are increasingly subsuming educational roles. People expect that their employers and their trade associations will continue to help them build skills and knowledge.

In addition, to actualize the Association’s implicit mission to “advance the professionalism and sustainability of the field,” the Association would be well-advised to consider developing professional development program tracks and services for functions in presenter-member organizations beyond the programmatic and executive roles, including: audience development, development, finance, marketing, and operations. Likewise, the Association should develop Business Membership tracks in business-to-business sales and marketing, project management,

producing, finance, and tour management. It will probably be necessary to offer these programs beyond the Annual Conference time frame – perhaps at a second convening that is focused on learning and professional development.

Respondents perceive professional development as a robust solution: a necessary means for capturing and transmitting knowledge and skills to secure the health and sustainability of the arts for future generations. Additionally they perceive professional development programs as a forum in which the field's emerging leaders can be identified, groomed, and trained in order to build winning leadership succession for the future.

Arts Presenters represents a large and complex network of networks – nested dependent and interdependent networks, both formal and informal – that is constantly morphing and evolving. Arts Presenters connects and facilitates communication between these networks that present opportunities to utilize the networks as a primary delivery system for learning and as an info-mediary organizing principle.

Leadership and professional development initiatives are informed by up-to-date and easily accessible industry data. One of the most important roles that any trade or service association plays is to assemble and report industry data that supports professionals in understanding both the comparative condition of their home organization as well as the condition of the industry as a whole. Access to this data permits the development of key performance metrics that will quickly and meaningfully indicate how things are going. Industry data is important for a host of reasons, but clearly the most important is related to survival. Without a central data bank to analyze the state of the field, the entire sector could be in a death spiral and nobody would know it.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 18. Build a Knowledge Division that preserves 50 years of advancement and identifies the universal issues facing the field (in collaboration with thought-leaders). Provide top notch research and metrics with navigation tools and easy access.**
- 19. Develop curriculum-based learning objectives for year-round professional development activities that are peer-based, multi-channel, network driven, experiential, and iterative. This should lead to a certificate program and eventually a certification program**
- 20. Utilize networks (e.g. national and regional arts service organizations, regional presenting networks, consortia) as a primary delivery system for licensed professional development programs year-round.**
- 21. Reinvigorate sector data collection. Assemble and report industry data that supports professionals in understanding both the comparative condition of their home organization as well as the condition of the industry as a whole.**
- 22. Hire an adult-learning education specialist and establish collaborations (e.g. with the Association of Arts Administration Educators in providing educational program design inputs) to bolster professional development; foster a learning culture within the membership.**

23. Expand the Emerging Leaders Institute.

Info-mediary and Technology

Arts Presenters is a large cluster of social networks, an assembly of members who happen to convene. Emergent, self-organizing networks are information –exchange channels. – Info-mediary Committee

Info-mediary (INFOrmation interMEDIARY) is defined as “an information provider that gathers content from several sources and functions as a data aggregator for a target audience.” This is not a new concept or role for Arts Presenters. Historically, Arts Presenters collected a large amount of programming and financial data, but participation has been so minimal in recent years that the respondent group is too small to credibly report trend data or key performance benchmarks. What has changed is the extent to which commonly available technological tools can dramatically enrich the Association’s ability to serve its members. A more robust info-mediary function will create the ability to: 1) gather, manage, analyze, interpret, and report relevant management data; 2) extend and strengthen member networking and relationship-building; 3) empower information sharing; and, 4) inexpensively convene educational informational forums year-round.

Management data can be input or retrieved for the purposes of creating meaningful benchmarking comparisons between organizations. The current limiting factors are the accuracy and timeliness of the data and the cooperation of the membership in providing (and executing) the data inputs. Using real-time dynamic tools, presentations can be made; conversations can be facilitated; panels can be moderated; tour routing can be negotiated; debates can occur; vital grant proposal data can be obtained; and educational programs can be delivered. Webinars and podcasts can extend the Conference. Through conversations, members’ expertise and knowledge becomes available throughout an Arts Presenters virtual community.

The principal barrier moving forward is that a significant number of member organizations do not cooperate with the Association in providing their organizational data. It is important that Arts Presenters establish clear usage and retrieval guidelines for the data that include fees and conditions for reporting that can be equitably applied across member categories. The Association already owns hardware and software platforms that offer significantly greater information, analytical, and interpretive power than is currently being used. It will be necessary to expand the human resources (e.g. hiring new IT staff and training existing staff) and establish strategies and protocols necessary to provide enhanced and integrated services to Arts Presenters members and the field. In summary, Arts Presenters needs to extend member value throughout the year using info-mediary technology to fuel community, connection, and learning.

Summary of Recommendations:

24. Establish a field Knowledge and Metrics Depository – an information clearinghouse – by making data submission a condition of membership, considering other incentives and sanctions to encourage participation, and developing data security and privacy policies.

25. Fund database customization to: 1) eliminate manual processing thus reducing staff costs/overtime, 2) customize communications, and 3) develop trend data, profiles, and statistics.

- 26. Re-engineer the Website, making it easier to use and facilitating easier access to extend member value past the Conference into a year-round forum. Create a user-organized, job-alike or “members like me,” and issue-driven online forum tool to facilitate knowledge-sharing and network-building. Establish a protocol that allows for the user to define the social aggregator.**

Communications and Marketing

I have no idea what the Association does beyond conference and magazine, which I don't read. –
Discovery Respondent

Arts Presenters challenge is not communication, it is engagement. Surprisingly, many members are ignorant of the extensive array of programs and services that the Association offers. Many respondents were forthright about not having the interest or the time to read Association communications. This is particularly evident by many of the suggestions for improvement made during interviews or *Field Conversations* that are already fully operational and in effect.

The Working Group recommended: “Define policy goals for communications that more clearly defines success in communications. If the organization delivers more targeted communications more broadly across organizations, the organization will create more value for organizational members, but may negatively impact the associate member revenue category. Enable members to designate and drive member communications for their interest areas. Broader interest area communications and more value delivery may improve membership retention.” This will be important to galvanizing the membership to think of and interact with Arts Presenters at times other than pre-conference. It will require a congregational paradigm where a sense of belonging (i.e. the creation of an intentional culture of “we”) drives membership and participation. In addition, Arts Presenters would be well-served by creating communications lists that are not just segmented by membership type, but also by role, area-of-interest, and organizational size.

Arts Presenters’ brand promise hinges upon its ability to connect its members to knowledge, networks, people, and expertise – building capacity in people and in organizations – however, members persist in evaluating the organization’s value in Conference terms only. Arts Presenters suffers from some lack of continuity of key messages, positioning, and semantic and visual cues. It is recommended that the Association consider a brand-refreshment program and develop a case for membership that is based on a case for support model (i.e. a clear explanation of the value created for those who participate as opposed to a transactional service for cost analysis).

Summary of Recommendations:

- 27. Develop communications policy goals that clearly define communications success, and a customized communications planning process aimed at creating an intentional culture of “we.”**
- 28. As part of a Brand refreshment process, determine and articulate how Arts Presenters creates value for individuals and networks (i.e. develop a case for membership). Develop a**

key messaging strategy that positions the organization as “the Big Tent” and reinforce the organization’s points of differentiation.

Staff

Second to the membership, Arts Presenters’ most valuable asset is its staff. The organization’s ability to operationalize its mission depends on its capacity to recruit, train, and sustain a competent, committed cadre of people. A fully functioning, appropriately sized and resource staff team is critically important in moving the organization forward. Over the course of the 15-month Strategic Review, the organization has made significant progress in addressing many issues that are defined in this report. Communications quality between departments has improved markedly over the past year.

The CEO’s (Sandra Gibson’s) exceptional skills with and focus upon building external relationships are one of the key drivers for the organization’s rapid growth. However, because organizational revenues are insufficient to fund the staffing levels, programs and services that members want and expect combined with pressures to fundraise and keep the organization financially stable, place a considerable burden on the CEO to focus externally. An intense travel schedule diminishes the CEO’s availability to accomplish day-to-day management responsibilities. It is for this reason that a senior level managerial position should be established to ensure the effective and functional operations of the organization.

If the recommendations in this report are executed, the staff structure will change and job responsibilities will shift as members engage with Arts Presenters on a year-round basis. The organization will probably become flatter, working in teams around projects. During an Organizational Culture Retreat, senior staff envisioned the values by which they want to live. These values were later discussed and adopted by the entire staff team. The CEO worked within the Strategic Review process and the Working Group to identify and consider various staff structural designs and positions.

Summary of Recommendations:

- 29. Establish a senior level managerial position to run the day-to-day operations; re-structure and secure adequate human resources necessary to provide the programs, services, and initiatives identified in the Strategic Review recommendations (i.e. expanding capacity in the areas of knowledge and professional development, info-mediary services, and communications-marketing).**
- 30. Increase external relations responsibilities of the staff (they must know the field and the field must know them) and provide professional development opportunities for staff that enhances their performance and the capacity to retain staff.**

Key Volunteers and Participants

Working Group

Stephanie Hughley, Co-Chair, Executive Director, National Black Arts Festival, Georgia
Janet Cowperthwaite, Co-Chair, Managing Director, Kronos Quartet, California
Neil Barclay, President & CEO, African American Cultural Center of Greater Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Lisa Booth, Lisa Booth Management, Inc., New York
Arni Fishbaugh, Executive Director, Montana Arts Council, Montana
Sandra Gibson, President and CEO, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Theresa Holden, Co-Director, Holden & Arts Associates, Texas
Terre Jones, President and CEO, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, Virginia
Laura Kendall, Assistant Director, Community Engagement and Learning, Lied Center, Nebraska
Maurine Knighton, Senior Vice President for Program and Nonprofit Investment, Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, New York
Abel Lopez, Associate Producing Director, GALA Hispanic Theatre, Washington, DC
Mark Kimble, Vice President, Finance & Operations, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Patrick Madden, Vice President, External Affairs, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Cora Mirikitani, President and CEO, Center for Cultural Innovation, California

Info-mediary Committee

Alan Brown, Principal and Founder, Alan S. Brown & Associates, Connecticut
Jean Cook, Director of Outreach, Future of Music Coalition, New York
Terry Dowdy, IT Manager, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Andrew Taylor, Director, Bolz Center for Arts Administration, Wisconsin

Discovery Respondents

Donna Gay Anderson, Director, Columbia Theatre for the Performing Arts, Louisiana
Neil Barclay, President & CEO, African American Cultural Center of Greater Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Paul Beard, Managing Director, Bass Performance Hall, Texas
Philip Bither, Senior Curator, Performing Arts, Walker Art Center, Minnesota
Lisa Booth, Lisa Booth Management, Inc., New York
Robert Bluestone, Artist, New Mexico
Alan Brown, Principal and Founder, Alan S. Brown & Associates, Connecticut
Wallace Chappell, Executive Director, Paul Taylor Dance Company, New York
Kim Chan, Vice President, Programs, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Jean Cook, Director of Outreach, Future of Music Coalition, New York
Janet Cowperthwaite, Managing Director, Kronos Quartet, California
James Dumas, Government Affairs Director, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Terry Dowdy, IT Manager, Association of Performing Arts Presenters

John Ellis, Managing Director, Diana Wortham Theatre at Pack Place, North Carolina
Susan Endrizzi, California Artists Management, California
Susan Farr, Executive Director, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at Maryland, Maryland
Peter Feldman, Executive Director, CAPACOA, Ottawa, Canada
Rachel Ferrara, Programs Manager, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Ken Fischer, President, University Musical Society, Michigan
Arni Fishbaugh, Executive Director, Montana Arts Council, Montana
Robert Freedman, President and CEO, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Florida
Nancy Gabriel, Vice President, Co-Director, Dance Division, IMG Artists, New York
Sandra Gibson, President and CEO, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Laura Giroux, Finance/Operations Associate, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Stephanie Hughley, Executive Director, National Black Arts Festival, Georgia
Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, Executive Director, ASU Public Events, Arizona
Terre Jones, President and CEO, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, Virginia
Josh LaBelle, Executive Director, The Paramount, Washington
Eric Larivière, General Manager, Central Florida Cultural Endeavors Inc., Florida
Margaret Lawrence, Director of Programming, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire
Mark Kimble, Vice President, Finance & Operations, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Patrick Madden, Vice President, External Affairs, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Nello McDaniel, Director, Arts Action Research, New York
Samuel Miller, President, Leveraging Investment in Creativity, Massachusetts
Mark Nerenhausen, President and CEO, Performing Arts Center Authority, Florida
Halsey North, Consultant, The North Group, New York
Sue Noseworthy, Membership Manager, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Anita Scism, President and CEO, Walton Arts Center, Arkansas
Sue Sergi, President and CEO, Clay Center, West Virginia
Dr. Larry Simpson, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Berklee College of Music, Massachusetts
Amy Stoller Stearns, Theatre Administrator, Historic Holmes Theatre, Minnesota
Patti Hannan Swofford, Director of Performing Arts - Performing Arts Series, Miami University, Ohio
Andrew Taylor, Director, Bolz Center for Arts Administration, Wisconsin
George Troxler, Dean of Cultural and Special Programs, Professor of History, Elon University, North Carolina
Tim Van Leer, Executive Director, The Lied Center of Kansas, Kansas

M.K. Wegmann, President and CEO, National Performance Network, Louisiana

Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director for Arts & Cultural Programming, Montclair State University, New Jersey

Jeanne Wikler, General Director for Cultural Affairs USA, Consulate General of The Netherlands, New York

Thomas Wolf, Chair and CEO, Wolf, Keens & Company, Massachusetts

Steven Wolff, Founding Principal, AMS Planning & Research Corporation, Connecticut

Jerry Yoshitomi, Chief Knowledge Officer, Meaning Matters, LLC, California