

FAIR GROUND

SHARE, SERVE, SURROUND

We asked an exemplar leader in the field to tell us the secret—and magic—of his success.



At APAP|NYC 2011, leaders hobnobbed about good practices. Ken Fischer [right] agreed to share his Top Ten Principles.

JACOB BELCHER/ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

At the annual Arts Presenters conference in January, Ken Fischer, president of the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, received the 2011 Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award for Exemplary Service to the Field of Professional Presenting. Each year, Arts Presenters gives this award to a colleague whose outstanding service, creative thinking and leadership have had a significant impact on the profession of presenting and/or on Arts Presenters. Fischer is both an outstanding leader and a friend, and we asked him to share 10 principles about leadership. The list is made up of good practices, but in the end, Fischer says, relationships are key.

1→ Have an overarching relationship policy that guides your work. Mine is EINO—"Everybody In, Nobody Out"—the inclusion policy of my mentor, the late Patrick Hayes, founder of the Washington Performing Arts Society and a person committed to making the arts accessible to all. At UMS, I sought to honor him by adopting the same policy, which became key to our organizational transformation.

2→ Get out of the office. Go to where people are—their homes, stores, community centers, churches, offices—to sustain existing relationships and build new ones. One of my most valuable outings is my bi-weekly "Fleming Walk," when I walk the halls of the UM Fleming Administration Building, connecting with university executive officers and their staffs in a way I never could if I depended on formal appointments.

3→ Practice Sharon King's four relationship principles—communication, cooperation, vulnerability, reciprocity—to create authentic partnerships. The last two are the most important and most challenging because they require good listening, humility and making sure your

partner benefits as much or more than you do from the relationship.

4→ Learn people's names, their correct pronunciations and then practice what you learn. A great way to practice is by introducing people to one another and saying something interesting about them when you do. Doing so also helps you remember their names.



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5→ Hire people of proven or potential talent and then build a great team with them. Together with your team, create an inspiring mission and ambitious goals and then give your team the opportunity to succeed, individually and collectively.

6→ Learn from the best. When I entered the field, I randomly asked presenters and managers whom they considered to be the top presenters in the country. I sought those who were consistently named, and they became my faculty and good friends.

7→ Be willing to adapt. If you're continually learning, you'll be exposed to valuable perspectives and fresh ideas that will enable you to stay ahead of the game and make the

changes that will keep your organization successful.

8→ Share your passion and enthusiasm. I'm excited to be able to work in the performing arts field at a respected organization in a remarkably supportive community with talented staff and dedicated volunteers. I share this enthusiasm wherever I can and invite people to join in. Many do.

9→ Serve the field. The field needs good people to serve on grant panels, conference committees, boards of directors and other volunteer positions. I can tell you from experience that the return on the time you invest pays off significantly in professional development opportunities, benefits to your organization and new friendships.

10→ Surround yourself with young people. Give time to interns, students, younger staff and emerging leaders. Listen to them and share your knowledge and experience. At UMS, more than 30 percent of our full-time staff began as interns. And who knows? Some day you may be working for one of them! //▲