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Overview

The Board of Directors of the Ohio Arts Presenters Network (OAPN) held a strategic planning session on Tuesday January 22, 2013 at the Midland Theatre. Prior to the planning session, I contacted Executive Director, Lydia Ohman; President, Stuart Sector; Immediate Past President, Keith Rawlins; and Vice-President, Laurel Canan. The purpose of the conversations was to determine what discussion topics the leadership held in common, and what priority those items carried.

A common thread was the need to bolster membership, and ostensibly conference attendance as a result. A constant drumbeat over the years, the volume of which is increasing, is concern over the decline in presenter attendance at the conference. The thought was that increased membership and member interest would increase conference attendance as well as improve the now solid balance sheet. Further expanding member benefits will provide the tools needed to retain and attract members.

The other broad category that surfaced was the possibility of attracting neighboring states to the fall showcase conference, perhaps partnering with them in presenting the conference, or perhaps even considering the consolidation of the organizations.

To address the membership concern, I broke membership expansion into two categories. The first was increased market share, asking the question, "Has OAPN reached a saturation point in membership within Ohio?" The answer was a resounding "no." There is widespread belief that there are many potential new OAPN members in Ohio. We then identified who those members might be, where we might find them, and how we might reach them.

The second part of the membership expansion discussion concerned increasing market area. There was agreement that, with Midwest Arts Conference being held in Austin, TX, and Minneapolis, MN, in 2013 and 2014 respectively, the timing is right for aggressively seeking the participation of neighboring states' organizations in the OAPN fall showcase conference. Lydia has had preliminary conversations with leadership from Michigan, Indiana and Pennsylvania. Kentucky and West Virginia are also potential partners but we lack the level of familiarity with their constituencies that OAPN enjoys with the other three states.

An outgrowth of this conversation was the potential for shared services among the organizations mentioned, specifically executive director services. It was agreed that this would be a desirable outcome as such an arrangement, in addition to expanding the fall conference, would enable OAPN to return the

Executive Director to a full time position. It was recognized that the process of achieving consensus and forging an agreement with the potential partners would take considerable time, but should be begun at once.

We then addressed the member services currently available to OAPN members, and those that might be added. The goal was to assemble a package of member benefits that will cause members and potential members to believe that, even without the fall showcase conference, an OAPN membership is an excellent value. Those member benefits are detailed in a separate sheet as part of this strategic plan.

A benefit to be added immediately is reduced registration fees for OAPN-produced regional professional development gatherings. There will be four held between March and August, one in each quadrant of the state. Each meeting will offer two topics, an invitation to join OAPN, and an opportunity for networking. Topics were identified, regional hosts designated, and prospective regional partners named. The details are given in the strategic plan and on a summary sheet. A significant outcome was the decision to pull professional development sessions for the fall conference from these regional meetings, using post-meeting evaluations as a decision-making tool.

The final topic was the fall showcase conference. It was generally agreed that the format of the 2012 conference was excellent and only minor adjustments would be needed, most of which were likely to be site specific. The only specific addition was the possibility of 'Ask the Expert' sessions to allow attendees time with an individual with proven success in an area in which the member seeks guidance.

The final exercise asked the board members to make two lists:

1. If this board has done its job, in one year the following thing(s) will have happened.
2. If I have done my job as a board member, in one year I will have accomplished these objectives.

I asked that the answers to the first question be returned to me; a summary of the responses is part of this plan as a separate sheet.

I asked that the board keep the responses to the second question and refer to them from time to time throughout the year. The responses to these two questions can form the basis for the board's self-evaluation at the January 2014 meeting.

The 2013 goals are below, arranged in the order of priority assigned by the board. In my introductory comments at the session I stated that if the meeting identified three (or four or five) goals that were reasonable and achievable and that, in January 2014, the board could look back on as having been accomplished, the session would have been a success. I believe those objectives were indeed identified, are achievable and will have an impact on the organization. I appreciate the participation of the board and Lydia, and their thoughtful and creative contributions to the process.

Ohio Arts Presenters Network Goals and Objectives for 2013

1. Increase market share within our current service area (Ohio). An integral part of this process is a survey of former members focusing on the reasons they have not renewed and/or have opted not to attend the fall showcase conference.
2. Implement a series of four regional professional development sessions; one in each quadrant of the state.
3. Begin the process of exploring collaboration or consolidation with neighboring states both in terms of conference attendance and shared services (specifically Executive Director services).
4. Enlist the support of Ohio Arts Council in:
 - a. Reinstating the Network Advisory Service or a similar peer-to-peer support program.
 - b. Collaborating on promotion of regional meetings.
5. Develop an enhanced block booking program, key components of which will be:
 - a. Self-managed by participants
 - b. Sort by venue or artist
 - c. Exclusive to members, accessible only to presenters.
6. Implement a Peer-to-Peer support program.
 - a. See #4 re: Network Advisory.
 - b. Consider 'Ask The Expert' sessions at the showcase conference

**Summary of Board responses to the question -
If we have been an effective Board, what will have been accomplished by the end of 2013?**

By January 2014, we will have:

- Increased membership, specifically presenter membership. (6)
Increase by 8-10%
- Completed and assessed regional professional development meetings and their outcomes. (3)
- Supported our executive director with action on the 2013 strategic plan. (2)
- Increased conference attendance, specifically presenter attendance. (2)
Increase presenter attendance by 15 presenters.
- Continued offering a great showcase conference.
- Remained financially stable.
- Continued to redefine the mission of the organization and offer support and expanded services to members.
- Fostered greater and deeper connections among our peers and networks; solidified our reputation in the Arts community.
- Demonstrated an increased energy for the work and process.

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Objective 1 - Increase Market Share in Ohio
Outcome – Increased membership and thus membership income.
Increased conference participation

Tasks in order of priority	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Offer membership to IMPACT presenters and those attending Midwest Arts and APAP state meetings				
Secure presenters list for past three years	Midwest Arts, APAP, PAE – Laurel; IMPACT - Lydia	February 15	February 28	
Review at March Board meeting	ALL			
After selection by Board members, personal contacts to each past IMPACT presenter	Various	March 1	March 30	
Survey former members and non-returning conference participants from past three years to obtain information regarding their decision to cease participation				
Create list of common questions	Lydia	February 15	February 28	
Create list of participants	Lydia	February 15	February 28	
Determine form contacts will take – personal calls or written/web survey	Mem & Marketing committee	February 15	February 28	
Assign contacts/duties related to survey		March Board Meeting	March Board Meeting	
Evaluate responses and implement initiatives based on results		May 1	May Board Meeting	
Research regional/metropolitan arts councils memberships to identify prospective members				
Identify organizations (such as ArtsWave, GCAC, Cleveland CPAC, etc.) and assign Board members to research area organizations	ALL	March Board Meeting		

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Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Personal Contacts to prospective members gleaned from regional organizations' membership lists	Specific to prospective member		April 30	
Review list of prospective members from 2012 Board Retreat				
Identify potential members	ALL	April 1	May board meeting	
Board members assigned to prospective members	Various	May board meeting		
Personal contacts with prospects		May board meeting	June 1	
Research college and university presenters, campus programming boards as well as performing arts centers, among them:		April 1	April 30	
Consider appointing sub-committee, including agencies that serve this market.		March board meeting		
NACA	Drew			
Univ. Cincinnati	Drew			
Miami Univ. (2)	Drew			
Bowling Green				
Ohio Univ.	Drew			
Ohio Univ. – Lancaster	Lou Ross			
Evaluate information to determine potential for membership and participation	ALL	May board meeting		
Determine whether prudent to research library Presenters		July Board meeting		
Determine whether prudent to revisit OPRA/NPRA Presenters		July Board meeting		

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Objective 2 – Conduct a series of four regional meetings, hold one in each quadrant of the state.

Outcome – Additional member benefit to aid in retention and recruitment of members. Enhanced professional development as service to industry.

Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Please see separate sheet for regions, topics and hosts.				
Secure locations for March and April seminars	Lydia and Regional Host	Immediately	February 22	
Secure speakers for March and April seminars.	Lydia and Mem & Marketing	Immediately	February 22	
Secure Catering for March and April seminars	Regional Host	Immediately	February 22	
Begin Marketing for March and April Seminars				
Contacts via newsletter list	Lydia	Immediately	Ongoing	
Contact Heritage Ohio seminar past attendees	Mike M.	Immediately	Immediately	
Regional Arts Groups	Regional Hosts	Immediately	Immediately	
Personal Invitations by the board!	ALL	Immediately	Immediately; Ongoing	
Distribute First Timers list	Lydia	Immediately	Immediately	
Board accepts responsibility for calling First Timers	ALL	February 15	February 28	
Seek OAC support for all seminars - Museums?	Lydia & Stu	February 15	March 1	
Invite neighboring states to all seminars where appropriate	Lydia & Stu	February 15	March 1; ongoing	
Secure locations for June and August seminars	Lydia and Regional Host	March 15	April 1	
Secure speakers for June and August seminars	Lydia and Mem & Marketing	March 15	April 1	
Secure Catering for June and August seminars	Regional Host	March 15	April 1	
Begin Marketing for June and August Seminars				
Contacts via newsletter list	Lydia	Ongoing	Ongoing	
Contact Heritage Ohio seminar past attendees	Mike M.	March 15	April 1	

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Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	
Regional Arts Groups	Regional Hosts	March 15	April 1	
Personal Invitations by the board!	ALL	Immediately	Immediately; Ongoing	
Board calls First Timers	ALL	March 15	April 1	

**Objective 3 – Initiate discussions with neighboring service organizations related to collaboration and/or consolidation and/or shared services.
Outcome – Increased participation in showcase conference, stronger regional presence, services to members, and enhanced operational efficiencies.**

Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Make initial calls to determine interest level	Lydia	May 1	June 15	
Facilitate discussion among possible participants if interest level warrants	Lydia	May 1	June 15	
Explore shared services if interest level warrants	Stu	May 1	June 15	
Future tasks dependent upon outcomes to this point.				

Objective 4 – Meet with Ohio Arts Council to request:

- 1. Reinstatement of Network Advisory Service or similar program**
- 2. Request assistance in promoting regional professional development programs to traditional as well as alternative markets such as museums.**

Outcome – Additional member benefit to aid in retention and recruitment of members. Enhanced professional development as service to the industry.

Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Set meeting to discuss interest and ways OAC might support OAPN's efforts.	Lydia & Stu	July 1	July 15	
Future tasks dependent upon outcome of this discussion.				

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Objective 5 – Develop web-based, password-protected information sharing program for programming.

Outcome - Additional member benefit to aid in retention and recruitment of members. Aid to members in tracking appropriate artist fees, negotiating tool for lower fees, assist in tracking routing to get dates confirmed.

Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Appoint project committee	Lydia and Laurel	April 15	April 30	
Research other service organizations' methods and programs	Committee	May 15	June 1	
Determine format for OAPN's enhanced block booking program	Committee	June 15	July 1	
Determine steps to implementation	Committee	July 15	August 1	
Complete steps resulting in beta test	Committee	August 15	September 1	
Prepare for unveiling at Midwest Arts and OAPN conferences.	Committee	September 12	October 23	

Objective 6 – Implement a Peer-to-Peer support program.

Outcome - Additional member benefit to aid in retention and recruitment of members. Enhanced professional development as service to the industry.

Task	Person Responsible	Task Initiated by:	Task Completed by:	Cost
Apply for Project Support grant to support "NAS" for first year	Mem & Marketing Com	Immediately	April 1	
Implement NAS based on grant outcome	TBD			
Determine OAC level of interest (See Objective #4) in continued support of NAS	Lydia & Stu	July 1	July 15	
Take steps based on outcome of that meeting	TBD			
Initiate 15 minute 'Ask The Expert' sessions for showcase conference.	Conference Committee	July 1	August 1	