

Quarterly

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Becoming an Effective Leader

An interview with Thomas P. Ference, Professor of Management, School of Public Health, Graduate School of Business, Columbia University

by Emily Franzosa

Professor Ference served as Master Teacher in the Arts & Business Council's first Arts Leadership Institute (ALI). He is former Director of the Columbia Business School Executive MBA Program, and founder and past Director of the Columbia Business School Institute for Not-for-Profit Management. Professor Ference is also the founder and head of The Riverside Group, a management consulting and executive development firm.

Is an arts leader essentially the same as a business leader?

Between a small dance company and say, IBM, is leadership the same? The answer is absolutely not. IBM is over a hundred years old, it's got 300,000 employees, and it has a history. There is no way that could be the same as a first generation dance company. The distinctions that matter are size and organizational age. Now, a small manufacturer, a restaurant owner, will have many of the same problems as an arts organization the same size.

Let me ask that question another way. What are the skills needed to be an effective leader?

There are three broad sets of skills. One set is professional skills (engineering, acting, or dancing). That is your training, the ability to

do the actual work. Organizations of any size exist for professionals to do the work. Management skill sets have to do with things like allocating scarce resources against need.

Management is about efficiency, using the resources we have to their fullest, and about effectiveness, using resources for the purposes for which they are intended, whether that is presenting brilliant dance or building computers that work. There is

inherent tension between the professional drive for perfection, and the management recognition that perfection is constrained by economic scarcity. That is where a lot of the tension is in arts organizations.

Not on leadership, but on the trade-offs between perfection and resources.

Leadership skills have more to do with purpose, with ideas. It is the ability to see a future that is more desirable than the present, and to convince others that this future is worth the use of their talents. If you talk about an effective organization, you can't talk about it without those three ideas, professional substance; managerial or systems skills; and leadership, the visionary skill. The effective organization is one where the skills of professionals are directed by managers to implement the vision of leaders. Can the same person do all three of those things? Yes.

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The Arts Leadership Institute charter class

Photo: Sari Pessah

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Through a series of workshops, a competitive Advanced Audience Development Training & Granting program, and the web site www.ArtsMarketing.org, the National Arts Marketing Project (NAMP) trains nonprofit arts groups in twelve cities and around the country to more effectively market their organizations.

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Marketing Your Organization in Tough Times

By Susan Koblin Shear, President, ArtsIn, LLC.

Effectively marketing your organization during these tough times may seem more of a desire than a possibility. On November 14, 2002 American Express hosted a NAMP Roundtable at its headquarters in New York City, facilitated by ArtsIn.

Although the participants shared many of the same needs, thoughts and feelings regarding the current challenges and external environment, they represented many of you reading this article.

Good news! Many of the recommendations shared in response to today's challenges and concerns are simple to implement. Depending upon your organization, you may choose to utilize some or all listed; they can be implemented in a timely manner within your organization; they are realistic, can be designed to be measured, outcome based and require minimal resources:

Continue to develop and cultivate relationships with current funders. Allocate resources to develop new relationships.

Communicate to the audience at the opening of a performance that you request their presence afterwards to participate in a focus group or market research. Gift and thank them with a t-shirt, mug, or other promotional incentive.

Target your audience. You may choose to target specific organizations or specific age ranges for selected events.

Value your members. Send thank-you notes, holiday cards, and passes to

events, openings and performances.

Develop your organization's brand to its fullest. Your organization is defined by its identity and how it is positioned in the marketplace. It can be argued that brand value goes beyond and involves the relationship between the organization and the customer on an emotional level. It is the sum total of the customer's experience and is broader than the actual product benefits and features. It is not just making the good or service distinct, but attaching an emotional value to it as well.

Open House-"Press Days". Send out invitations inviting the Press to a special open house.

Maximize email usage. Develop a database by requesting email addresses from your audience, members, subscribers, patrons, etc. Use email for performance reminders or to provide information about a current show or new shows.

Initiate and cultivate the development of a young supporters' group. One participant's organization has begun targeting adults from their mid twenties to early thirties. The organization has been holding gatherings to introduce their work and educate the attendees about the art form; these specifically targeted events may include cocktail parties at a "hip scene" or an exciting fundraising event that is planned by the young supporter participants in the group exclusively for their peers.

Develop an educational outreach program to cultivate young audiences and "plant the seed of youth". Topics may include the history of an artist or choreographer, costume design techniques, or the architecture of a building.

Collaborate with other organizations to share advertising, develop new audiences, garner new stakeholders, or

share resources. (Many funders are now very interested in collaborative work.) Collaborations may be cross discipline.

Become a participating organization in a consortium (e.g. theatres). As a member of a consortium you may receive benefits including reduced or bundled costs for advertising, sharing and buying of office materials, special incentives and offerings, reduced fees on professional assistance, or opportunities for sharing and exchanging information.

Work with college and university graduate programs. They may choose to work with your organization on a collaborative project.

Become a leading organization within your community. Welcome the many stakeholders within your community to your organization for an open house. Stakeholders may include other arts organizations, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, social service organizations, government and community leaders, businesses and corporations, service, retail establishments, restaurants and hotels.

Many of the challenges cited are the continuous hurdles faced by most nonprofits, be it in difficult times or not-so-difficult times.

In challenging times with public and private budgets being cut, uncertainty can pervade an organization's management structure causing decisions to be made based on fear rather than reality. Overcome the impulse to manage timidly due to looming budget cuts that may never occur, and continue to identify proactive marketing strategies.

Business Arts

Volunteers for the

Since 1975, thousands of business professionals have helped thousands more nonprofit arts organizations by sharing their business expertise and talents on a wide range of consulting projects through the Business Volunteers for the Arts program. To learn more about BVA in your community, visit www.bvausa.org.

Cincinnati Affiliate Awarded 2003 Governor's Award

Arts & Business Council Inc. affiliate the Fine Arts Fund Arts Services Office of Cincinnati has been selected to receive the Irma Lazarus Award at the March 12 Governor's Awards for the Arts in Ohio. The award honors the memory of Irma Lazarus, who made countless contributions as an arts patron, advocate and leader in the development of state funding for the arts in Ohio. The award goes to organizations or individuals who have helped shape public support for the arts through their work, and have brought statewide, national and international recognition to Ohio through sustained dedication to artistic excellence.

The Fine Arts Fund Arts Services Office (ASO) was founded in 1996 as a means to strengthen the operations of smaller and mid-sized arts organizations through resources, programs and people.

Since ASO's inception, Cincinnati has seen more collaboration among arts organizations, an increasingly diverse group of volunteers working for the arts, and more involvement by the business community with smaller and mid-size arts organizations. The ASO annually offers a number of regionally and nationally recognized programs to more than 300 tri-state arts groups. Their constituency represents an eight county area, a very diverse spectrum of arts disciplines and a wide range of populations.

In addition to administering the Fine Arts Fund Grants program, the ASO also operates both the Business Volunteers for the Arts program and the American Express National Arts

Marketing Project (NAMP) in Cincinnati.

"I can think of very few people so ideally suited to their job - not to mention to a constituency - than the ASO's director, Heather Hallenberg," says Lisa Mullins, Executive Director of Cincinnati's Enjoy the Arts. Enjoy the Arts (ETA) has benefited from a range of the ASO's services, including the Business Volunteers for the Arts program, and NAMP.

The organization's most recent volunteer oversaw the launch of a twenty day-and-night long arts celebration to commemorate ETA's 20th Anniversary. Dubbed "20/20," the celebration featured sixty events staged in thirteen communities. \$125,000 was secured in sponsorship, and another \$700,000 of in-kind media support. Most importantly, ETA's profile was elevated by what is expected to become an annual event. ETA also recently received a \$15,000 implementation grant through the NAMP program.

In its first five years, BVA/Cincinnati put one hundred and sixty individuals to work with eighty arts organizations on more than two hundred projects. These individuals contributed more than 15,000 hours and more than \$300,000 in cash or materials and services to these organizations.

"We are tremendously proud of the ASO for this recognition of their extraordinary work," says Gary Steuer, President and CEO of the Arts & Business Council. "Heather's energy and enthusiasm have helped to build a strong organization that benefits the entire Cincinnati arts community."

10 Ways to Appreciate Your BVA Volunteer

Cincinnati's Arts Services Office offers the following suggestions for arts groups to recognize BVAs - or any volunteers.

1. Assemble a welcome packet for your volunteer, including mission statement, historical background, brochures, staff and board lists, and programs.
2. Arrange a tour of your work/performance site for the volunteer. Invite your board president and key staff or volunteers.
3. Invite the volunteer to a staff or board meeting, or performance/exhibition.
4. Recognize your volunteer and BVA project in your next newsletter. Make sure your BVA is on your mailing list!
5. Celebrate small successes. Say thank you on occasion with a note, email, or impromptu card.
6. Demonstrate to your BVA ways in which progress is being made as you work through the project. Let them know they are making an impact.
7. Write a letter to the BVA's employer expressing your appreciation for your volunteers professional expertise.
8. Respect the time commitment your volunteer is willing to make. Be flexible in planning meeting times and locations.
9. Offer a remembrance gift to your BVA when the project is completed - a t-shirt, autographed program, or even a used pair of toe shoes.
10. Enjoy the relationship! Many BVAs stay with an organization beyond the initial project.

Corporate Funder Profile

Target Corporation

by Roxanne Greenstein, Director of Development



Laysha Ward

Target Corporation is among the strongest corporate supporters of the arts nationwide. The company has retail stores under three different brands: Target Stores, Marshall Field's and Mervyn's, and although each brand has different philanthropic priorities, the arts are a strong theme for each one. The company views the arts as having a critical impact on children, families and communities. Target Corporation's philanthropy focuses on the arts, social services, and education, all of which can be seen through the lens of strengthening families, according to Laysha Ward, Director of Community Relations for Target Corporation.

Target Corporation has a strong tradition of giving back to the communities where they do business. In 1946, the company became a founding member of the Five Percent Club that encourages U.S. corporations to contribute five percent of federally taxable income to support community nonprofits. In 2003, Target Corporation will give \$2 million every week to the areas it serves.

One unusual aspect of Target Corporation's contributions policy is to give each store control over local giving. In addition to cash grants, the stores organize retirees and employees to volunteer and to serve as board members of local nonprofits. Last year alone, Target, Marshall Field's and Mervyn's team members donated more than 320,000 hours to more than 8,000 such projects across the country.

Another part of Target Store's philanthropy is orchestrated nationally from their corporate headquarters in Minneapolis. In a joint program with the Tiger Woods Foundation, for example, Target sponsors the "Start Something" initiative, which helps children ages 8 to 17 identify and pursue their dreams - even kids who don't know that they have dreams! More than 500,000 children nationwide are enrolled in this program.

As part of their commitment to education, Target Corporation has launched a

new reading initiative, with programs called "Ready! Sit! Read!" at Target, "Go Places. Read" at Mervyn's and "Field's Go Read" at Marshall Field's. Field's Go Read has made the connection between early childhood reading and the arts by creating an innovative program in Chicago, Minneapolis and Detroit, called "School Field Trips". Working with district reading specialists, teachers and arts organizations, they have developed a program to enhance reading skills. Students will participate in reading activities at art museums, symphonies and libraries. Pre and/or post field trip activities reinforce the program, including visits to the public library, library card drives and writing about their cultural trips in a keepsake book.

In California, Mervyn's takes a unique approach to linking art and school learning. As part of their curriculum, every fourth grader needs to learn about the

Last year alone, Target team members donated more than 320,000 hours to more than 8,000 projects across the country.

Spanish missions. Mervyn's created a mobile classroom/exhibition on wheels that helps children understand the artistic and cultural significance of the Spanish missions throughout their state.

Target Corporation does not view their community relations program as a vehicle to drive traffic to their stores or to their online retail outlets. Rather, by focusing on meaningful projects that help their communities, Target has developed an exceptionally positive image with consumers. Since Target does not measure the success of their philanthropy in terms of outright sales, they use strategic evaluation and look at the effect of their programs on their major markets. To ensure the success of their programs, Community Relations works closely with other departments, including internal communications, media relations, community relations, marketing, events and publicity.

In the New York City metropolitan area, which is a major growing market with twenty-four Target Stores, their philantrophy

has encompassed numerous community-based cultural programs. In fact, one of these initiatives won an Arts & Business Partnership Award at last year's Encore Awards. "Target Presents 2001: An Arts Odyssey Festival," done in collaboration with High 5 Tickets to the Arts, brought more than 5,000 teens to 35 participating New York City museums over a three-day period.

Target also sponsors First Saturdays at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, with free admission, family activities, music, and films for the whole community. In partnership with the Harlem Commonwealth Council, Target supported the publication of a limited edition book, "Harlem: Precious Memories... Great Expectations," highlighting the contributions of distinguished past and present residents of Harlem. In Manhattan's Madison Square Park, Target has contributed substantially to the City Parks Foundation to sponsor a three-year outdoor public art exhibition, "Target Art in the Park."

Target Corporation is a company that prides itself on its creative approach to

retailing, marketing and advertising. Recognizing that their own employees need opportunities to refuel in order to do their best work, Laysha Ward reports that once a month, the company sends employees from their Minneapolis headquarters to the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts for artistic inspiration.

This partnership called "Art Speaks: Friday Lunches at the MIA" works well for the museum, whose audio tours are sponsored by Target, and also for the Target employees who have the opportunity to experience "a day spa for the mind." These visits introduce a new audience to the museum and help employees understand the company's philanthropic commitment to the arts.

In light of its view that art can positively impact society for the good, Target has made a commitment to tip the balance towards greater corporate support of the arts. More information about Target Corporation's philanthropy can be found on their web site, <http://target.com>.

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See www.artsmarketingconference.org for more information.

To receive the special conference hotel rate, you must make your hotel reservation by March 20, 2003.



Register Now for Upcoming NAMP Workshops

To register for the following workshops, contact Kelly Burdick at 212.279.5910 x29, or email kburdick@artsandbusiness.org. Workshop fees are \$30 for Arts & Business Council members, nonmembers pay on a sliding scale of \$35 -\$50 based on organizational budget size.

Unlocking the Puzzle: Creating an Effective Marketing Plan

February 13, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Linda Boff, Women & Co., a member of Citigroup

This workshop will provide you with the tools to craft an effective and efficient marketing plan. From the step-by-step planning process, to the use of market research techniques, to crafting a powerful brand identity, participants will leave the workshop with a greater understanding of how to connect the artists they present with larger audiences that appreciate the art. *Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Basic*

All About E-mail Marketing

February 27, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Eugene Carr, Patron Technology; Betsy Jacks, The Whitney Museum of American Art

In this workshop you will learn how and why arts consumers use e-mail, drawing from recent marketing research studies of arts patrons. Then you will take a look at several case histories, focusing on campaigns from organizations such as The Whitney Museum, the Mann Center for the Arts and others. The workshop will also cover the basics of effective online e-mail marketing - "what works and what doesn't." *Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Basic*

Creating and Building Small Business Partnerships

March 13, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Moderator: Helene Blieberg, Helene Blieberg Associates; Panelists TBA

As arts organizations develop and grow, so do small businesses. Forming partnerships with them now could yield results for years to come. This often-overlooked sector has a lot to offer and might be a better fit for your organization than a large corporation would be. A panel of funders and grant recipients will put the spotlight on small business - how they are defined, where to find them and how to engage them in your work and form strong partnerships. *Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Basic*

All About Your Web Site

March 27, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Eugene Carr, Patron Technology; Janice Chaikelson, The New 42nd Street

If you're looking to making the most from your web site, this session is for you. It will cover basic industry trends and benchmarks, so you can compare your results with others. You will then take a careful look at good site design, how to go about improving your site, how to set goals for your site. You will hear a case history about the development process of creating a new site, and the results of an innovative online marketing effort by the New Victory Theater. *Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Basic*

Marketing Planning Master Class Part I

April 24, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Claudia Chouinard, Principal, Results Group International Inc.; Laura Miller, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Donna Walker-Kuhne, Walker International Communications Group

Geared to mid-level marketers, this workshop features three senior experts working intensively in a hands-on small group setting. Strengthen and fine tune goals, strategies and programs to meet an upcoming marketing challenge. Participants must submit an existing

or draft marketing plan **6 weeks prior** to the first session.

Prerequisite: Marketing Planning class or 2 years relevant professional experience. Note: This is a two-part class. You must register for and attend both sessions. Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Intermediate

All About Online Marketing: Case Histories from the Real World

May 15, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Eugene Carr, Patron Technology; Panelists TBA

This session is all about the real word of marketing online. We'll start with a quick overview of online marketing trends and also look at emerging technologies and how they may affect your marketing efforts. We'll also talk about how to integrate your online marketing efforts with your overall marketing plan. *Skill level needed to get the most benefit from this workshop: Basic*

Marketing Planning Master Class, Part II

May 22nd, 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
Facilitated by Claudia Chouinard; Laura Miller; Donna Walker-Kuhne

Geared to mid-level marketers, this workshop features three senior experts working intensively in a hands-on small group setting. Strengthen and fine tune goals, strategies and programs to meet an upcoming marketing challenge. Gain insights on ways to present budgets and back-up data to strengthen your case for investment in marketing. *Prerequisite: Marketing Planning master class Part I.*

New Markets = New Dollars: How Marketing 'Accessibility' Increases Funding Possibilities

June 12, 9:30 am - 11:30 am
(Breakfast Roundtable)
Discussion Leader: Susan Koblin Schear, ArtIsIn LLC

Join your colleagues for a breakfast roundtable discussion of accessibility marketing highlights from the NAMP conference, "CollaborACTION! Arts Marketing and Sponsorship Partnerships that Work," scheduled April 12-15 in Manhattan. Topics will include: tapping into a market of over two million people with disabilities in New York, plus an aging generation of Baby Boomers.

BusinessArts

Volunteers for the
New York

Recent BVA Placements

Marie Terry, a strategic marketing executive, is working with Youth Speaks NY. During the school year the organization offers free creative writing workshops for New York City teens. The workshops are uncensored and student-focused, allowing participants to experiment with self-expression through poetry in all its forms – free verse, rap, spoken word and more. The organization also offers ongoing performance opportunities for NYC teens, including the Bringing the Noise open mic series, and the annual Youth Speaks NY Teen Poetry Slam. Marie is helping the organization to build relationships in the media, and address issues of branding and visibility.

Tom Creacy, President of Creacy Marketing Services has been placed on a marketing project with Trinity Concerts. Since 1968, the organization has presented the "Noonday Concerts" series at two landmark locations in lower Manhattan, Trinity Church at Broadway & Wall and St. Paul's Chapel, located at Broadway and Fulton. Audience members are asked to make a suggested contribution of \$2 per concert to help defray expenses. With his expertise in research and planning, sales development and communications, Tom is helping the organization to explore marketing and promotion opportunities in an effort to increase visibility and earned income. He initially became involved with the BVA program in 1994.

Dawn Frisby Byers, an entertainment and media marketing executive, is working with Downtown Community Television (DCTV). Dawn has held senior level positions with Bravo Cable Network, WNET/Thirteen, and Grey Entertainment. DCTV's mission is to

mission to teach people, particularly members of low-income and minority communities, to produce insightful and artistic television. Annually, the organization presents over 150 free or low-cost video training workshops for more than 2,000 students a year, provides access to video equipment for approximately 300 community-based videographers, and conducts workshops and other programs that facilitate the work of community video producers and artists. Dawn is working with the organization to explore corporate sponsorship opportunities to support ConnectTV, a new three-year program initiative serving people with disabilities.

Dan Kaslow, President and founder of MarketFocus Marketing Consultants has been placed with Movin' Spirits Dance Theater. The company's primary focus is to expand the boundaries of dance-theater to include interdisciplinary performance, theater and film. The company's newest work "Brown Butterfly" will have its world premiere at Aaron Davis Hall in March 2003. The work is a fusion of music, dance, multimedia and theatre that celebrates the style, spirit and times of Muhammad Ali. Dan is working with the organization on strategic planning and marketing.

Michael Fabrikant, a retired strategic planning and finance executive from IBM is working with High Tide Dance. The company was established in 1985 and under the direction of artistic director Risa Jaroslow, uses dance-making to forge connections between people, including individuals of different ages, backgrounds and skills in the dance-making process. Michael is working with the organization on establishing financial accounting systems and budgeting. The BVA program has enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with Michael since the early-1990s. His placement with Primary Stages, an Off-Broadway theatre company, has led to his current position as treasurer of the organization's board of directors.

Welcome and Congratulations to our New Volunteers!

An enthusiastic group of new volunteers participated in an orientation program in November: **Mary Allen**, Certified Public Accountant

Carol Blum, Associate Director, Bear Stearns

Elizabeth Crosson, Senior Associate, Robinson Lerer & Montgomery

Fran Davies, Director, Strategic Branding, Applied MedInsights

Kevin Holton,

Telecommunications Professional
Yorky Pichardo, (former) Analyst, Consumer and Market Insight
Unilever - Home & Personal Care USA

Marie Terry, (former) VP, Director of Marketing Services, McGraw-Hill

Tifphani White, International Tax Services, Deloitte & Touche LLP

The session gave an overview of the local nonprofit arts community and outlined some of the management challenges organizations face. The program featured presentations by leaders in the field including:

Richard Caples, Executive Director, Lar Lubovitch Dance Company

Tiffany Ellis, Director, PR & Marketing, Aaron Davis Hall

Patricia Taylor, Financial Services, Women's Project & Productions.

The Business Volunteers for the Arts® Program is generously supported by:

Citigroup Foundation

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New York State Council on the Arts

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Host a Summer Intern!



The Con Edison Multicultural Art Management Internship Program of the Arts & Business Council is designed to introduce undergraduate students from culturally diverse backgrounds to career and volunteer leadership opportunities with New York City nonprofit arts organizations. Participants are granted a full-time, ten-week paid summer internship experience. Interns gain insight into the field by assuming responsibility for a project under the guidance of experienced arts managers, and by involvement in a wide range of other activities. A unique component of the program matches a Con Ed management employee to each intern as a mentor throughout the summer.

Arts & Business Council members are eligible to host a summer intern and have some of that much needed work done by a highly motivated college student interested in the arts management industry. This summer the program will run from June 16- August 22, 2003.

"Our intern managed to increase the distribution of Film Comment's new marketing program by about 70%, increasing the overall reach of the magazine to a market that we very much want to target, university film students, says Susan Fou of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, a 2001 and 2002 site.

Daniel Shapiro of The Americas Society had a similarly positive experience with the program in 2002.

"Not only did we get a talented intern, but also had the opportunity to network with other non-profit arts organizations at the events. This networking has already yielded plans for collaboration with another participating host organization."

To download an application, visit www.artsandbusiness.org. Host applications due February 28, 2003; Intern applications due March 7, 2003.

Arts & Business Council Inc. Gala 2002

Nearly 400 guests enjoyed the Arts & Business Council's Annual Gala Dinner on November 26, 2002 at The Plaza Hotel. The Co-Chairmen of the event were David A. Coulter, Vice Chairman of J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., and Ronald J. Doerfler, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the Hearst Corporation. The Council honored American Express Company and its Chairman & CEO, Kenneth I. Chenault, with the Arts & Business Council Corporate Leadership Award.

Legendary actor Ossie Davis joined acclaimed newsman Bill Moyers in hosting the presentation of awards for outstanding contributions to the arts. Beverly Sills, Chairman of the Metropolitan Opera, choreographer Merce Cunningham, and architect James Stewart Polshek each accepted Kitty Carlisle Hart Awards for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. The evening's festivities featured the Chinese Folk Dance Company and The Grammercy Brass ensemble.



Council President Gary Steuer with Kenneth Chenault and Mary Beth Salerno of American Express Company



Master of Ceremonies Bill Moyers presents the Visual Arts Award to James Stewart Polshek



Beverly Sills accepts Special Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award from Kitty Carlisle Hart and Tony Randall



Council Board Chair Kathleen Pavlick with Performing Arts honoree Merce Cunningham and Trevor Carlson of the Cunningham Dance Foundation

Photo: David Gordon

Photo: David Gordon

Photo: David Gordon

Photo: David Gordon

The Benefits of Benefits

By Gary P. Steuer, President & CEO,
Arts & Business Council Inc.

The benefit dinner. Everybody hates them but we all do them. Some readers may recall that a number of years ago the Rohatyns, a very generous philanthropic family, very publicly criticized New York's gala dinner whirl, wishing that all that money could instead go directly to worthy programs.

This feeling of frustration and exhaustion about dinners is especially acute in New York City. Extraordinary, well-attended events are taking place not just every night, but several times a night, almost throughout the year, in a variety of venues from hip to traditional. New York City is undeniably the benefit dinner capital of the world, and an industry of banquet spaces, caterers, florists and consultants are supported by it. Other communities around the country face similar issues. Contributors everywhere are becoming increasingly overextended by the sheer volume of events they are expected to support.

People on both sides of the gala dinner world - those who put them on and those who support them - have been vocal about the negatives. How much staff time and expense goes into creating them? What a challenge it is to respond to the stream of invitations, determining how many you can possibly support, and how many you can possibly attend. Corporations struggle to balance dinner commitments with other philanthropic commitments, not to mention the challenge of actually populating their corporate tables with warm, appropriately dressed bodies.

In these challenging times, this negative chorus of voices seems to be louder. Well, let me be heretical. I think these benefit dinners - and I am perhaps self-interested because the Arts & Business Council Inc. mounts its own benefit dinner - serve an essential function in our community.

First, these events are one of the last remaining sources of unrestricted support for nonprofits. Somehow we

have to pay our staff, our rent, our electric bill, and we need to develop new programs for which dedicated funding is not yet in place. The revenue from benefit dinners is essential to this work. Second, in this fast-paced world where technology has become such a dominant force in our communication, we need events like these to bring the community together. I think they have become a sort of civic secular ritual. When an event comes off successfully - the right mix of guests and honorees, moving and relevant remarks, memorable entertainment - it can be a powerful experience for all concerned.

Third, benefit events provide the opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments and set standards of excellence. If care has been taken in selecting the honorees - worthy of being recognized and relevant to the organization honoring them, it can provide much needed gratitude for their good work, as well as also offer extraordinary role models to colleagues and peers. People and companies need to know about the good work others are doing and be inspired to emulate them, to set their own bar perhaps a bit higher.

Finally, benefit events provide an organized way to introduce your work and your organization to a new group of potential supporters and champions. At every event, there are many attendees who are there not because they know about or even care about the organization that benefits from the event, but because the right person asked them, or someone important to them personally or professionally is being honored. And at every one of these events, all over the City, *some* of these people are experiencing the proverbial light bulb over the head - "Hmm, I didn't know that. Maybe I/we should be more involved. Wow, they do great work. Gotta make sure to come to this next year. That upcoming show/exhibit sounds interesting."

Gala events for arts groups are also a unique situation. We are, after all, *about* live interaction between audiences, performers, works of art and appreciators of art, about the value of communal experience. What better

way to tell our story, to celebrate our accomplishments - and yes, to raise the funds we need to do our work - than to put on a show!

So here is my message: To corporate leaders grappling with whether or not to eliminate or reduce table purchasing in your budget, please reconsider. This is not in competition with the rest of your philanthropic and sponsorship investments, but an additional critical means of supporting your community and building your business at the same time.

To arts groups fed up with the challenge of mounting a successful Gala, stop thinking of it as just a fundraising event. Yes, there are more efficient ways to raise money, but think of your event's programmatic and marketing functions as well. Use your event to it's fullest. Tell the story of what you do and why it is important, and tell it in a compelling way that shows attendees just why your company is invaluable. Entertain and educate your guests in such a way that next time an invitation comes across their desk, they'll give it a second look.

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(Effective Leadership, continued from page 1 . . .)

But they're different skills.

Can you give me an example of an individual with all of those skills?

The first business example that pops into my head is GE during most of Jack Welch's era. Before his era, GE was a world-class organization, a successful entity. Jack Welch came in and was first of all, himself, a competent engineer. He had demonstrated managerial skills running a production division, and he had a different vision of what the company should be. He said, "we are going to transform this company, because my vision of the future is that technical product knowledge is going to become a commodity." Then he had to go out and sell that vision over and over to people who said, "Life is good as it is. Let me go make another light bulb." That is leadership. Welch created an image of a Chief Executive that was much different than what had gone before.

During his lifetime, Joe Papp was that individual as well. Joe Papp was a hard-nosed businessperson, he had the professional background and skills, and he had an extraordinary vision, and the ability to sell that vision.

Now, were Papp and Welch different from each other in their skills sets? In their professional skill sets, absolutely. In their managerial skills, probably not so much. And in their leadership skill sets, they were probably very similar. However, both of them raise the interesting question of whether they did the necessary work to have their own work survive beyond them.

And is that the ultimate quality of effective leadership?

It is one of the ultimate qualities of effective management. If my ideas and thoughts and visions are worthy, then I want a legacy. That is a leadership aspiration. I want to, say, change the face of dance. To do that, I need students and disciples to carry out my vision. If I can't transfer that vision to people who can carry the idea forward, I fail as a leader. I've failed as a manager if I'm not willing to build an organization that can function when I leave.

What happens often in small busi-

nesses and many arts organizations is that the leader or founder finds disciples, but withholds all decision-making. The smaller and younger the organization, the greater the influence of the individual. Organizations that survive are process-centered, not person-centered. If you're a leader who cares about the future, you need to put in processes that replace you. You have to be willing to put together a board composed of independent thinkers who may fire you, for example.

It's an interesting point, that the effective leader is dispensable, rather than indispensable.

The job of a good manager is to make himself or herself dispensable so that not only can the institution survive, it can prosper and function in the way it was intended beyond them. And for creative leaders, and founding leaders, that is often the hardest part.

"The job of a good manager is to make himself or herself dispensable so that not only can the institution survive, it can prosper and function in the way it was intended beyond them."

So, how does one go about learning to be a leader?

The skills of leadership are learned through development and coaching, giving people the opportunity to lead and afterward talking about it with them. You can be taught to be a professional, you can be developed as a manager, but you can only learn to lead if you are coached.

Most of what we call leadership development programs are actually management development programs. They help people work within a system. The way to teach leadership is by putting people in leadership positions that are safe and protected and allow the opportunity for experimentation followed by coaching. Yes, there are natural born professionals, leaders, managers - but that is irrelevant to the rest of us who have to learn it.

Some time ago, we learned that leaders are always a little bit taller, a little bit brighter, a little bit better looking than others. We started to look at why that was, and we looked at early childhood.

In my generation when you were in grammar school, at recess time a teacher

would say "Tom, get in line, Jane, get behind him, etc, and then Tom will lead us to recess." Now, that wouldn't be so bad, but every day, that teacher tended to discriminatorily give safe leadership experiences to some children and not others. They gave them to the brighter, the more precocious, and the cutest. Well, that was wonderful for Tom, because he came to see himself as a leader. The bad thing is that it taught Jane she's a follower. So, now with early education, you absolutely rotate all those roles. You give safe leadership roles to as many as possible.

How do you do that in an organization?

Well, the common thing in organizations is to give the task to the best person, and always to that person. If you want to develop leaders, you put different people in leadership positions. You give them little tasks, little projects and if they don't do

well, you coach them through it. You look for those who want to learn and those who don't. It can be done, and it is not limited to the young. So, that's a way of being an effective leader - allowing others to grow.

The idea of allowing people to fail and then coaching them, sounds great, but what if that task has to be done right the first time because of time or resources?

Professionally, if there is absolutely no margin of error, then don't use it as a learning lab. Psychologically, delegation is an irrational behavior. That is why people say they can't delegate. Delegating things that matter means giving somebody else the authority and the responsibility for something that you can't change, even if they do it differently than you would. If you could, you wouldn't truly be delegating. But, if you say, "I really want to leave a legacy", "I want to go on vacation", "I want my ideas to survive", if you want to pre-

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pare the organization to exist beyond you, then you must relinquish control. You actually gain control by relinquishing it.

What if you aspire to leadership? Then how do you learn those skills? Is it as simple as asking to take on projects?

Well, do you want to be a leader, or do you simply want to be in charge? They are separate things. To learn leadership skills, volunteer. Go talk to people who you see and respect as leaders, and ask how they approach things. Look at the base skills, like communication and clarity. You can take courses in communication; you can take courses in creative writing and thinking to help open up your mind. Do improv. You can learn a skill set, but in the end, whether you will be an effective leader lies in your ability to make connections to others, and to use those connections to achieve something.

What are the top three skills one must learn to be an effective leader?

The first is to learn to be clear and articulate and detailed about your ideas, and not assume that because you've reached a conclusion everyone will accept that conclusion. Recognize that people don't just need to know what to do; they need to know why you're doing it. Effective leadership is about establishing and reinforcing purpose, it is about the why. The second most important thing is to practice listening. Shut up and listen. Recognize that your ideas can be improved. Recognize that your values can be challenged. The third is, in the jargon of the business world, walk the talk. It's not do as I say, it's do as I do. Demonstrate in everything that you do the same values, the same ideas, and the same commitments that you are asking of others. There are no regulatory commissions for leaders; nothing enforces that quality relationship other than your integrity.

The Arts Leadership Institute is a collaborative program of Arts & Business Council Inc. and Research Center for Arts & Culture, Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Make the Most of What You Have: Building Partnerships that Work

By Tamika Simmons, Account Executive, Generation X Technology

Every role and task within an organization becomes amplified when assets are scarce. The current climate has caused some of our more reliable recourses to become limited or overdrawn. Now is not the time to avoid rectifying problems with communications, network infrastructure, staff performance, marketing and outreach. Local businesses, foundations, organizations, venues and consumers should all be viewed as potential partners. When your board, staff, and volunteers are already working at capacity, you may need to look at outsourcing. But what if you can't afford to pay market price for an outside vendor?

Initiating partnerships with small businesses to remedy your current situation is an increasingly attractive option.

Potential Partnering Opportunities

If your organization can no longer manage its postal mail campaigns, consider outsourcing design and fulfillment.

If your new media venue cannot support its technical environment, partner with a company who can provide network design and maintenance. The scenarios are endless - the opportunities are infinite.

If your administrative staff is working on an antiquated network with no or limited Internet access; partner with a company that can coordinate and provide equipment, software and telecommunication services to improve everyday operations.

How can your Organization Initiate a Partnership?

First, identify what services your organization needs but cannot purchase at market value. Secondly, locate vendors who can provide those services and fulfill future needs. Ideally, your vendors should be one that has established relationships with not for profits. If the vendor already works with not-for-profits, they will most likely be more willing to offer flexible pay-

ment terms via payments over time or reduced rates per project. The last step is contacting the vendor with a mutually beneficial proposal letter, opening up the table for negotiations. Each partnership or service agreement should be bound by a contract, which states the specific terms of the agreement.

Finding a Reputable Partner

Finding a company that meets these criteria may take some time. Try these methods to locate and evaluate the ideal partner:

Start by finding out what companies similar arts organizations are using for their technology solutions. This way you can efficiently locate a vendor and get a first hand account on their level of service and capabilities. This first step can be handled by any Board member, staff or volunteer with the organization. This first step is as simple as picking up the phone and finding the contact information for a potential vendor.

Search online for a vendor through any of the major search engines or not-for-profit resources like www.techsoup.org (There is a table listing of Vendors that you can sort by Name, Region and Rating or Search by Zip Code); or www.nptimes.com. (go to the Resource Directory, where there is a categorized list of vendors). You can also use basic search engines such as www.google.com or www.msn.com.

Evaluate the following:

- a. One Stop Shopping - can they satisfy more than one of your organization's needs?
- b. Do they offer rates for 501c3s?
- c. Inquire about payment options. Make sure the vendor is flexible with payment methods or installments.
- d. Open a discussion about the services or exposure your organization can offer the vendor to offset costs.

The not for profit sector, just the same as profit businesses have been affected by our current economic situation. Developing partnerships with growth potential can alleviate the operational and financial strains for both partners today and provide continued services in the future.



TAP Newsletter Brings Cultural Tourism Resources to Professionals

The Arts & Business Council Inc is proud to partner with *Museums* magazine, a division of The Art Knowledge Corporation, to present *The Travel Arts Partnership Newsletter* (TAP), a new periodical focusing on cultural tourism. Available both online and in print beginning February 2003, this publication will be a service to both the travel and arts industries.

This newsletter, published five times a year, is designed to spur productive partnerships between cultural/heritage organizations and travel professionals. Reporting on trends and developments, TAP will feature case histories of successful cooperative projects as well as on-target tips for developing and marketing new relationships.

A national network of city/regional magazines published since 1993, *Museums* magazines are devoted to everything that's happening at museums, offering in-depth coverage of museums in major metro-markets across the country. The company's custom publishing division produces special destination guides – often for convention & visitors bureaus – aimed at promoting cultural tourism. Alvin H. Reiss, who has been reporting on the arts field since 1962, has been named editor of TAP. Mr. Reiss, who is the author of seven books and hundreds of magazine articles on the arts, also edits America's oldest continuing periodical for cultural administrators, *Arts Management*.

TAP is available through on-line registration at info@travelartspartner-ship.com or by contacting The Art Knowledge Corporation at 212.604.0877.

New Round of Cultural Tourism Grants!

**FY 03 grant deadline:
February 17, 2003**

**For details and application,
visit**

**www.artsandbusiness.org
or call Lisa Potter at
212.279.5910x 26.**

This program is made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts



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Keeping the Arts in Business Since 1965

The Arts & Business Council Inc. promotes the mutuality of arts and business partnerships, strengthening the two sectors through programs that serve the fullest diversity of individuals, organizations and communities.

For more information on the Arts & Business Council Inc. call 212.279.5910 or visit www.artsandbusiness.org

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