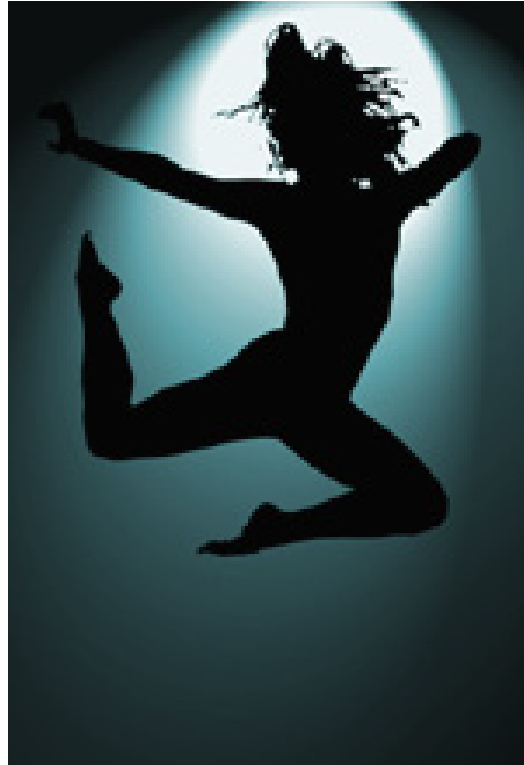


Outcome Management In the Arts

*...a pilot
project in
Contemporary
Dance*

Results Report
April 2006



*A collaboration of
Altria Group, Inc.,
and
The Rensselaerville Institute*



Center for Outcomes



Acknowledgements

The application of the outcomes based measurement model to the arts is a new and evolving undertaking for Altria Group and the participant dance companies. And we know it was not always easy. On behalf of all of us at Altria I would like to thank and applaud the 17 contemporary dance organizations for their involvement. This first step in the process would not have been possible without their tremendous commitment.

Of the three program areas in which we piloted the model, the arts seemed to be the most challenging. The efforts of the participants are especially appreciated given the steep learning curve and the short time frame within which they worked. What was accomplished here is just a small piece of the arts evaluation field, and we appreciate the willingness of all to try something new. The fact that these front line organizations embraced the challenges of applying an outcome mindset to their work is a testament to their commitment to achieving the best results possible for those they serve.

We thank our partners on this project: Bill Phillips, Maritza Guzman and Karen Phillips of The Rensselaerville Institute; Kelly Barsdate and Emily Ellis of The National Assembly of State Arts Organizations; Sam Miller of Leveraging Investments in Creativity and Andrea Snyder of Dance USA. I'd also like to thank the marvelous contributions team at Altria, especially Marilyn Donini, Michelle DiSabato, John Barnes, Muire Dougherty, and Marianne Pohle.

Jennifer P. Goodale
Vice President, Contributions
Altria Corporate Services, Inc.

Background

In 2005, The Altria Group, Inc. initiated the third in a three part series of programs testing the efficacy of an outcome management framework in its major grantmaking areas. This third area, and the subject of this case study, is the arts, specifically contemporary dance, and an area which has been a hallmark of Altria's corporate giving.¹

Altria's intention for the three related outcome projects has been:

- 1) To gain a better understanding of the beneficial impact of their investment on the lives of the people their funded projects serve.
- 2) To assist their grantees in applying tools and techniques helpful in achieving their missions.
- 3) To contribute to the broader field's efforts to understand and improve on their accomplishments.

In all of its major program areas, Altria collaborates with national partners with strong reputations for program knowledge. For this project in contemporary dance, Altria selected the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), a nonprofit association that provides grant making and evaluation assistance to public arts funders across all discipline areas, and Mr. Sam Miller, President of Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), and former Executive Director of the New England Foundation for the Arts and the National Dance Project.

The Rensselaerville Institute, a nonprofit group that specializes in outcome management for government and philanthropy, was the chief consultant, leading the design and implementation of the pilot project. DanceUSA, the national service organization for professional dance companies, was also an active project participant. By assembling this team, Altria brought a depth of expertise and a broad range of perspectives to the project, encouraging collaboration among partners who could foster long-term use of the results.

The Rensselaerville Institute's Outcome Management Framework

In 1991, the Rensselaerville Institute became one of the founding forces behind the outcomes movement with the publication of the first edition of Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking.² In outlining a different way of thinking about grantmaking in the public and philanthropic sectors, it contributed to the groundswell that evolved into the accent on results that is ubiquitous in the nonprofit world today. More recently, The Institute published Outcome Frameworks: An overview for Practitioners³ in an effort to contribute to a better understanding of the broad range of models and approaches to the use of an outcome mindset.

¹ Results of outcome projects in the two other areas, HIV/AIDS nutrition programs and domestic violence, are available from Altria Group, Inc (www.Altria.com) or from The Rensselaerville Institute's *Center for Outcomes* at <http://www.rinstitute.org/Center4Outcomes/WhatsNew.htm>

² Williams, H.S., A. Webb, and W. Phillips, Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking, (Rensselaerville, NY: The Rensselaerville Institute; 1991), Third Edition,

³ Penna, Robert M., and Phillips, William J. Outcome Frameworks: An overview for Practitioners, (Rensselaerville, NY: The Rensselaerville Institute; 2003)

The Institute's own outcome approach stresses several key shifts in thinking, by both those responsible for financially supporting public programs, and those who implement them. These include:

- A shift for grantmakers, from the perspective of a *funder*, whose interest is the distribution of money, to that of an *investor*, whose interest is a *return* on the investment. Under this new perspective, grantmakers are no longer merely making money available, but, rather, are positioning themselves to expect tangible results stemming from the expenditure of resources.
- A shift from a primary interest in delivering *services*, to the perspective that services only exist to bring about positive *change* in the behavior, attitude, condition, knowledge, or status of those being served.
- A shift by program implementers, from a focus on *their* activities toward one which is most concerned with the reactions of program participants, and ideally, the progress participants make in response to those activities.

The Institute's outcome management framework differs in one additional and important way from some other outcome orientations, in that it views the implementation of an outcome orientation as a tool of investor *and* implementer *management*, rather than something that is done merely in response to externally driven accountability requirements. It is based on the core premise that an approach that helps line managers achieve real success can also satisfy the demands of funders or other stakeholders.⁴

From this perspective, once the desired outcomes are established for a program or organization, all ancillary and/or support decisions can then be better made with an eye toward their contribution to the realization of those desired outcomes. Thus, decisions regarding budgeting, personnel, the allocation of resources such as space and equipment, and the undertaking (or not) of certain activities can all be viewed through the prism of whether or not they actually add to the group's or program's efforts to attain the desired outcomes. While this is not to say that other considerations never should or never do enter into management decisions, the concept of *outcome management* gives decision makers an additional yardstick by which to measure the desirability of certain options they may have.

The second management role to which the outcomes perspective is put within The Institute's framework is the utilization of its power as a *learning and course correction tool*. One of the foundational precepts of the framework is that accumulated information is of little value if it is not used for program, system and operational improvement. As stated above, the power of the outcomes framework goes far beyond merely meeting funders' reporting demands. Used correctly, the framework's measurement of and toward intermediate milestones gives decision makers a real time assessment of progress, performance, efficiency and, ultimately, effectiveness. The use of this information for both near-term course correction and long-term program improvement is one of the framework's most attractive and powerful characteristics. It was towards these ends the Altria pilot *and its participating* organizations that the pilot was undertaken.

Deleted: and its

Deleted: participating

⁴ For more information visit The Institute's web site at www.rinstitute.org

The Outcomes Management Dance Pilot

In January 2005 the project leadership team, composed of staff from Altria, NASAA, LINC, and The Institute's *Center for Outcomes*, designed a nine month pilot project for a select group of New York City dance companies and dance-presenter grantees. These organizations represent a portion of Altria's charitable investments in dance.

As with all Institute projects, this design began with a statement of expected results in the form of two related **Project Performance Targets**:

Target #1:

"Altria contributions will see the benefits of an outcome management framework in helping them understand the results of their investment in the performing arts area and, over time, in improving those results. Based on this prototype experience, Altria will continue to reinforce the importance of outcome thinking and management in all of their performing arts programs."

Target #2:

"All participating dance groups⁵ will use the outcome approach as a learning and management tool; 90% of these organizations will report clear benefits and will commit to the continued use of outcomes beyond the project."

These related targets reinforce the importance of ***both the investor and implementing groups gaining substantial value from using the outcome approach***. It is worth noting that far too often funded groups see little choice but to comply with a funder's request, whether or not they see a direct benefit for their program. This project made clear efforts to go beyond this "compliance mentality," and to deliver clearly defined benefits to both parties.

Beyond these statements of intended project success, a set of project ***milestones*** were established, which articulate the logical sequence of events the project would follow. Milestones differ from conventional workplans in that they are written in terms of the reactions and responses exhibited by the participating groups to The Institute's program design. This use of ***milestones*** served to illustrate for the participating groups how an outcome management approach differs from conventional work planning.

Outcome Management Project Milestones

The operative verbs and phrases are bolded to emphasize the actions critical to achievement of each milestone.⁶

⁵ 18 groups originally indicated an interest in participating, but one left before the program was complete. A list of the 17 participating organizations appears as Appendix 1 of this report

⁶ Please note: Specific dates were established for each of these milestones but have been omitted here for ease of reading.

- January:** The project design team of Altria, NASAA, LINC, and Rensselaerville Institute **agree upon** the project design and schedule.
- February:** Altria **invites** 18 dance organizations to consider being a part of the project. Small grants were provided to underwrite staff time and expenses.
- March:** Groups **participate** in a web conference conducted by The Institute to introduce the outcome framework.
- April:** Leadership team **conducts phone interviews** with participating groups to assess their experience with outcomes, determine issues of focus for training and tools needed, and answer any questions regarding the pilot project.
- Two-person teams from each of the participating groups **attend** the two day training program and develop “target outlines” to be used to manage their projects over the ensuing six months.
- May-October:** Pilot groups **implement** their target outlines.
- October:** All pilot groups **participate** in a *Results and Learning* session and **share** their experiences to date.
- November:** NASAA **conducts** independent exit interviews with pilot groups to secure qualitative feedback about the project and to solicit advice for funding similar efforts in the future. For more information, see www.rinstitute.org/Center4Outcomes/WhatsNew.htm.
- December:** All pilot groups participate in the final *Results and Learning* session to share evidence of their outcomes and discuss **how the project contributed to improved efficiency or effectiveness**.
- The Institute **conducts a final survey** to document pilot groups' accomplishments and intentions for applying pilot tools to future activities.

Program Applications

The most intense element of the pilot was the two day outcome management workshop held at the end of April. This interactive, hands-on session was designed to help both the participating groups and the Leadership Team explore and apply the outcome mindset to the challenges and interests of the contemporary dance field. As the relevant *milestone* above describes, the key result of these sessions was the development of an outcome focused project in an area of *their* interests. The particulars of these projects were left entirely to the participating teams, which were largely comprised of managing directors and marketing/development staff. Clearly the composition of the respective teams and their day-to-day responsibilities had an effect on the projects they selected for inclusion, which are summarized below.

Board Development and Fund Raising

This was by far the largest project category selected by participating organizations. Three groups developed targets and associated milestones in this area, and four others focused on other kinds of fund raising results. Targets included:

- Adding six new board members who meet their annual “give or get” requirement of \$15,000.
- Increasing board membership from 33 to 50 by June 2006.
- Increasing from 5 to 12 the number of Board members contributing at least \$2,500.
- Increasing the number of board members from 6 to 9 who actively serve on committees.
- Increasing the number of board members from 10 to 14 who identify at least one non-board friend or associate open to a donation solicitation.
- Finalizing and gaining formal Board approval for new governance policies and guidelines.

Other fund raising targets included:

- Building an individual donor base of 200 renewed and new constituents contributing an average of \$650 each to the FY 06 Annual Fund. This would be an increase of 160, as compared to the same period last year.
- Raising the remaining \$7,000 of a \$55,000 goal from individual donors, matching the \$55,000 commission from a recent dance piece.
- Raising a total of \$49,322, with \$14,322 coming from a targeted 35 responses to direct mail, and \$35,000 from 35 personal solicitations from Board members to their own contacts.

Community Engagement and New Audiences

Five organizations developed projects in these related areas. Target examples included:

- Increasing community engagement as evidenced by bringing 10 new constituents to from 3-5 main stage and related events over the 2005-2006 season.
- Testing an audience development program to extend the organization’s reach to new audience members, and to create a social atmosphere as part of the dance attendance experience.

- Increasing class participation by 3 new students per class among local students, for an average total enrollment of ten students per class.
- Creating a larger and more diverse audience base for resident dance companies by introducing 300 new audience members through a low cost subscription offer.

New Program Development and Program Enhancement

Five organizations developed *target outlines* to either facilitate the development of new programs, or the expansion of existing ones. Sample targets included:

- Launching a trapeze school by securing necessary insurance coverage, either independently or through a collaborative partnership.
- Securing internal approval from staff and Board for a new student ensemble.
- Increasing workshop offerings and attendance from an average of 10 to 12 participants each.
- Engaging 2 new national partners for a new dance performance.
- Securing much needed rehearsal space at an affordable price and within the neighborhood.

A broad range of selected projects was encouraged, to insure that the pilot project addressed work that was meaningful to participants. It was critical that the participating groups saw the potential benefit to their programs in achieving the defined targets. The other factor that influenced project selection was the time frame of the project overall. Due to some significant organizational changes scheduled to take place at Altria at the end of 2005, it was critical that the project be completed by the end of the year. Given that the workshop occurred in April, and project outlines finalized in mid- to late May, a limited time was available to actually implement any project selected. While this timing issue clearly affected some project choices, the defined time frame probably had the additional effect of focusing participant effort during this period.

Pilot Results and Participants Learnings

The final Results and Learning session was held in early December 2005 after six months of implementation by the pilot groups. The overall questions posed at that time were:

1. What were the individual and overall effects of the pilot on the participant and their organizations?
2. How did things change for the groups as a result of their participation?

3. How did this compare to the intended outcome articulated in the *project performance targets*?

To answer these questions, project staff gathered and examined two types of information.⁷

The primary vehicle used to answer these questions was a survey of participants at the completion of the project to assess how they had used the outcome approach during and *beyond* the specific project, and their assessment of its use in the future. In addition, we examined the final reports of the individual programmatic and management projects to understand the degree to which each of the “sub-projects” were implemented and what they accomplished.

Findings

As noted in the original *pilot performance target*, success was defined not only by the use of the framework, but also by the *perception* of the participants that it was useful to them. A program-end survey was designed which was intended to capture both aspects. A summary of the findings from the survey is presented below.

Use of Outcome Tools

The initial question asked was about the ways participants used the outcome tools and thinking techniques during the pilot period. We were pleased to find, as expected, a very high proportion (16/17 participating organizations) did use the tools to actively manage their selected project. In many ways this response verified that virtually all participants actively engaged in the project rather than simply “going along.”

Beyond this level of participation, many participants (13) surpassed this first level of engagement by using the outcome approach in other important ways. The fact that this occurred is strong evidence that the value of the outcome mindset was recognized, and was integrated into the management perspective of the participants.

Thirteen of the seventeen participating organizations used the outcome approach in at least two additional ways beyond direct pilot project management. The most frequently noted additional uses were in:

- ★ Collaborating with other groups (11)
- ★ Reporting to funders other than Altria (7)
- ★ Communicating with other stakeholders (7)

Sample Participant Comments:

⁷ In addition, a third data set was compiled by NASAA through a series of telephone exit interviews. A separate report on their finding is available from NASAA. http://www.rinstitute.org/Center4Outcomes/Dance_Exit_Interviews.pdf

“Outcome management is a very powerful strategic planning and thinking tool because it offers a method to help focus and clarify what you really want at the end of the day”.

“It is time saving because if you know what you actually want before starting a project, you’ll save time and trouble”.

“With an outcomes model in place it would make it easier for incoming staff to pick up on previous predecessor’s plans and intent”.

“The tool was helpful in organizing and focusing thinking and work habits in a positive way”.

Individual Project Accomplishments

While the actual individual project achievements were not the primary measure of overall project success, we recognized that this was of importance to the participants and, moreover, that the progress of these projects would probably influence participant perspectives. We were pleased to learn that the vast majority of the projects (15/17) achieved some or all of their targets. In addition, fifteen participating organizations stated that they felt that the use of the outcome mindset greatly or significantly contributed to their successes. This is an important finding, as the success serves to greatly reinforce the attractiveness of the framework for additional management tasks. The reported gains included the following:

- 1) Degree of Individual Project Achievement:
 - ★ We achieved all that had been projected. (4/17)
 - ★ We achieved some, but not all of what we had projected. (11/17)
- 2) Degree to which outcome management contributed to project accomplishments
 - ★ Contributed a great deal to our success (4/17)
 - ★ Significantly contributed to our accomplishments (11/17)

Sample Participant Comments:

“All of our Board Development and most of our Fundraising goals are on target.”

“While [we] fell well short of what [we] projected to achieve, I was excited about my results for reasons I hadn’t expected!”

As a Learning Experience

It was important to assess how the *team members* perceived the project in terms of their personal and professional learning. Two questions were posed to get at their personal, individual

perspectives. The high number of positive responses to each of these questions gives us confidence that participants found value in the program.

- ✓ Twelve of twenty individual responses described the project as an outstanding learning experience.
- ✓ Six other individual respondents said it was a good learning experience.
- ✓ Fourteen found the experience worth the time and effort.

Sample Participant Comments:

“It was a good experience – not just moderately good!”

“I found the process both useful and frustrating because of the difference in needs and mindsets within other larger organizations.

“What I missed was more case studies”

“It will have a positive effect on thinking (planning outcomes), but practice is still a question mark (time constraints)”.

“I’ll use more broadly in my management and planning.”

Implications for the Future

From the beginning of the project, the staying power of the outcome mindset and related tools for participants and their organizations was of paramount importance. Too often new approaches that “succeed” during a demonstration period are forgotten soon after its conclusion. We posed two questions to get at this issue. One question assessed the staying power for individuals; the second assessed the importance of an outcome perspective for the future.

- ✓ Nine of sixteen responding participants reported that the outcome management experience is likely to have a lasting positive effect on their management style.
- ✓ Nine of nineteen responding individuals described the use of outcome management as extremely important to their future work; and nine others saw it as moderately important for the future

As a further indication of the commitment of participants to continued use of the outcome approach, participants were asked about the kind of assistance they and their agency would need to expand the use of outcomes and their interest in obtaining this additional help.

- ✓ Thirteen participants answered in the affirmative regarding interest in further assistance
- ✓ Major areas for additional assistance include: Training for staff (10) and self (4) and consultation with agency leaders (4).

Sample Participant Comments:

“I would like to be a part of a network or kitchen cabinet of informed and understanding people at other organizations.”

“We could use some form of “tech support”—a coach/tutor that could be called upon for assistance and coaching.”

“I would like a professional mentor/consultant on a regular basis to keep outcome thinking on my desk.”

Other Feedback

The survey ended with an open opportunity for other comments. Here are samples of what was submitted.

-“I’d like all my staff to learn from you.”

-“It was a fascinating if somewhat baffling look at the world of measurement and research.”

-“The outcome methodology seems to be currently seen as an “option” due to the lack of resources and knowledge on behalf of nonprofit arts organizations. Outcomes measurement may be utilized more readily and more widely if it were a more of a directive from a funding institution. If a funding institution were to tie the use of outcomes measurement with general operating support and provide the resources needed to implement its usage, we would more than likely see a surge in interest and willingness to employ this strategy. In addition, while arts administrators see the immense value in applying this methodology to areas of the organization, artists seem to be more hesitant in embracing this tool for fear of impeding the “artistic process.” It may deem helpful to maintain a series of focus groups to best understand how to articulate the methodology and demonstrate that by utilizing this tool, it may lead to the longevity of the organization and may increase the bottom line.”

-“I would be interested in further discussion about articulating the process of art making and proving its value to the NYC community, so we do not lose working artists to a more livable environment.”

In addition to this initial survey, a follow-up survey was sent to participants in January of 2006; the questionnaire itself and a full presentation of participant responses included in Appendix 2 of this report.

The questions in the survey centered on:

1. ways in which the participating organizations used either the outcome framework itself, or its associated tools;
2. the respondents' experience in applying outcomes to their selected project, and the degree to which the framework contributed to their project's success;
3. their judgment on the value of continued use of outcomes in their work;
4. the degree to which the outcomes framework met their funders' reporting demands;
5. their perspective on the pilot project's value.

There was an 88% response rate among organizations that participated in the pilot. Fifteen of the seventeen organizations provided feedback.

1. Use of Outcome management Tools:

From Responses regarding how the outcome tools were used, it is apparent that most (86%) used the tools to manage their program. Additionally, 58% reported its subsequent use in expanding their program, while 43% used it or planned to use it to report to funders.

Six percent of the respondents state that they will use it to communicate their program to Board members, contributors and other Dance organizations; 29% said they will use the tools to apply for funding beyond Altria; 14% said they would use it to collaborate with other dance groups and use in other programs beyond the pilot such as Board Growth, audience development and revenue building.

Comments reflected outcome tool use:

- As an aid to better assess existing outreach programs; expand circle of presenting partners and to assess venues, touring practices and the necessary cultivation of relationships in the field.
- It was stated that "outcomes is a very powerful strategic planning and thinking tool" because it offers a method *"to help focus and clarify what you really want at the end of the day."* Additionally, respondents stated that the framework is a time saver because *"if you know what you actually want before starting a project, you'll save time and trouble"*.
- The observation was made that with an outcomes model in place it would make it easier for incoming staff *"to pick up on previous predecessors plan"* and intent.
- Perceptions regarding the tool were summarized in the statement that it is *"helpful in organizing and focusing thinking and work habits in a positive way."*

2. Descriptions which best described the application of outcomes to selected project:

While one person reported sustaining their projected result for the 6 months pilot period, most achieved some but not all of what they planned. Only one person commented falling well short of their target.

Comments reflected:

- That *“all our Board Development and most of our Fundraising goals are on target.”*
- That it was not possible to assess all the results until after the end of fall season.
- That due to organizational adjustments, their timeline expanded placing them still in implementing phase.
- That while they had fallen well short of what they hoped to achieve, *“I was excited about my results for reasons I hadn’t expected.”*

3. The degree to which outcome framework contributed to pilot project accomplishments:

Most of those who responded to this question, 45% indicated that outcomes made a significant contribution to the success of organization’s project, 36% believed that outcomes helped greatly and that they may not have been able to achieve without implementing the tool. While no one responded that the tool didn’t help at all, 18% indicated that the tool helped minimally.

No comments offered.

4. Best describes the individuals learning experience as a pilot participant:

Most responded that the learning experience was outstanding. Some indicated that it was a moderately good experience. No one indicated that no learning had taken place.

One comment described:

- *“It was a good experience –not just “moderately good”!*

5. The importance of continued use of outcomes in your work in the future:

Most responded that the continued implementation of outcomes was extremely important to their work. The remainder of responses indicated that continued use was moderately important.

No comments offered.

6. In keeping the outcome management approach alive in your organization what would be the most useful kind of assistance?:

Most respondents indicated that training workshops for staff would be most helpful. Following in order of preference were consultation with the organization’s leaders, and training workshops for individuals. Four people indicated that no further assistance was needed.

Comments indicated:

- That “a network, or “kitchen cabinet” of informed and understanding people at other organizations” would be helpful.
- “Some form of “tech support”—a coach/tutor that could be called upon for assistance and coaching.”
- “A professional mentor/consultant on a regular basis to keep outcome thinking on my desk.”

7. Does the outcome framework fit with reporting requirements of other funders?

Most respondents indicated that they “did not know.” Some believed it could work but would need to be adjusted per specific funder requirements. Two respondents believed that it fit well.

No comments offered.

8. What statement best reflects your best overall experience using outcome management?

Most indicated the experience was worth the time and effort and would have a lasting positive effect on the way they manage. Three responded that the experience was “challenging”. While one person felt it positions us well for competition for resources and community support”, two indicated that their organization would need to expand in order to justify resources for implementing outcomes. Three would strongly recommend the approach to others.

Comments:

- “I found the process both useful and frustrating” because of the difference in needs and mindsets within other larger organizations. What “*I missed was more case studies.*”
- “*It will have a positive effect on thinking (planning outcomes), but practice is still a question mark (time constraints).*”
- “*I’ll use more broadly in my management and planning.*”

9. Are you interested in follow-up outcome programs or further assistance?

All respondents answered “Yes.”

10. What else?

- “*I’d like all my staff to learn from you.*”
- “*It was a fascinating if somewhat baffling look at the world of measurement and research.*”
- “*The outcome methodology seems to be currently seen as an “option” due to the lack of resources and knowledge on behalf of nonprofit arts organizations. Outcomes measurement may be utilized more readily and more widely if it were a more of a directive from a funding institution. If a funding institution were to tie the use of outcomes measurement with general operating support and provide the resources*

needed to implement its usage, we would more than likely see a surge in interest and willingness to employ this strategy.

In addition, while arts administrators see the immense value in applying this methodology to areas of the organization, artists seem to be more hesitant in embracing this tool for fear of impeding the “artistic process.” It may deem helpful to maintain a series of focus groups to best understand how to articulate the methodology and demonstrate that by utilizing this tool, it may lead to the longevity of the organization and may increase the bottom line.”

- *“I would be interested in further discussion about articulating the process of art making and proving its value to the NYC community, so we do not lose working artists to a more livable environment.”*

Summary

As the reader will recall, *performance targets* for Outcome Management in the Arts Program were established at the inauguration of the effort. Based on the degree to which these expectations were met, the project was clearly successful for the participating groups:

- ✓ Involved staff of the participating dance organizations contributed to their own success by using the outcome mindset to guide their self-selected projects.
- ✓ In addition, many found the outcome framework useful in other management functions, such as collaborating with others, and communicating with investors and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Given the positive personal impact of the project on most of those involved, and their stated commitment to use of the outcome framework in the future, the prognosis for the staying power of the outcomes orientation beyond the project is “hopeful,”

These organizations, like those in the previous two Altria projects in the fields of HIV/AIDS nutrition and domestic violence, and the literally thousands of other nonprofit and governmental organizations who have used The Institute’s outcome management framework over the past 15 years, found an outcome mindset a valuable *management* tool. For such typical functions such as fund raising, board development, marketing and program development the model is proven. As Mr. John Munger, Director of Research and Information of Dance/USA has additionally noted in a recent article, many nonprofits find that the outcomes process brings usefully embedded timelines and evaluations to the planning stage, and that concrete visualization of future success beyond simply accomplishing something within budget was a catalyzing shift of mindset.⁸

⁸ Munger, John. “Planning For Clear Outcomes.” Dance/USA Journal. Vol. 22, No. 1. Spring 2006

It has also been the experience of the authors that a result focus is arguably most useful in organizations where efficiency is essential due to limited staff resources. Given the traditionally under-resourced nature of arts organizations overall, and dance groups in particular, the results of the Outcome Management in the Arts Program suggest that this sector could greatly benefit from such an orientation.

There is one area, however, where the “jury is out” with regard to the applicability of outcomes in dance performing and presenting groups, and this is in the area of artistic program design and creation.

A good deal of discussion took place during the pilot project about how or whether a results focus would be applicable to the way choreographers create, and to the creative process itself.

Perceptions of project participants varied between two quite different viewpoints. At one end was the view that choreography, like essentially *all* of art, is an organic process which evolves and emerges as it proceeds. The muse, in other words, cannot be forced, and to do so resembles manufacturing, rather than creativity. At the other end of the spectrum were those who know of artists who do, in fact, begin with the end in mind with a clear vision of what they intend to create, of audience reactions or both. Clearly, in the case of a commissioned work, where the audience, the intention, the setting and the commissioner’s desire(s) are acknowledged as the process begins, this facet comes into play. In the visual and commercial arts, and even in the musical arts and dance, considerations of intended ends *can* have an impact that all but mandates a birthing process that can be distinguished from spontaneous creativity.

Thus, while opinions varied, in general the consensus was that the applicability of a focus on results depends on the particular approach taken to the creative endeavor by choreographers, dancers and artistic directors. Discussions and debates on this fascinating issue continued throughout the project, and the issue was never completely resolved. The fact that the overwhelming majority of those participating in the project were on the management side of the organizations rather than responsible for creating the dance work itself, probably influenced this discussion to a significant degree.

Clearly this project did not address this question. We would hope that those who participated in the project might help answer it in the years to come, and that the participating groups and individuals will help the field determine when or if this way of thinking might go beyond the clear applicability to management, and gain purchase with those responsible for the organizations’ artistic side as well.

The Outcome Management the Arts Project was undertaken due to the foresight of Altria, and the willingness of NASAA, LINC, and the participating organizations to explore new ways of thinking about their work and new ways of measuring success. The introduction of the outcomes approach to the arts, and to cultural programs, museums and libraries, is one of the two or three emerging and fascinating challenges to the movement. For even as the concept and use of outcome frameworks has spread and taken root in the human-, social-, and governmental-

services parts of the overall nonprofit world, it has been both natural and logical to ask ***What's next?*** For all its current popularity, is the “movement” actually near the end of its natural lifecycle, and poised to join the history of other once-popular ideas that struck the public sector, flared and then fizzled out? Or is there a different future ahead?

We see in the embrace of the outcomes by Altria and its grantees and partners in the field of contemporary dance at least one answer to this question; we see that the underlying concepts of outcome management ***can*** be transplanted into new areas unforeseen by the movement's founders. We see that its essential strengths are not limited or lessened by the uses to which it was initially and traditionally put; and we see that the vision and daring of people like Altria's staff and its partners in the dance community can and will give the movement new life, to the benefit, we predict, of not only their programs and organizations, but of their audiences, practitioners and the communities they serve.

The National Endowment for the Arts states that “A great nation deserves great art;” and we could not agree more. But great art also requires that great arts organizations exist to support it, nurture it and make it available to as wide an audience as possible. We are both proud and pleased that the Outcome Management Arts Project has demonstrated that an outcomes orientation can and will have a part to play in sustaining such great programs and organizations, and for the opportunity to have been part of such an effort, we thank Altria and its partners.

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

ALTRIA DANCE PILOT PROJECT

December 8, 2005

Final Feedback

1. The areas listed below are those most frequently cited as ways outcome tools are used. Please check the ways you have used outcomes thinking or the Target Outline and Milestones tools during the pilot project.

- _____ To orient or train staff
- _____ To manage your program (i.e. track results, modify approach etc)
- _____ To report to funders or contributors other than Altria
- _____ To communicate the program to others (Board member, contributors, other Dance groups)
- _____ To apply for funding outside of Altria
- _____ To collaborate with other groups
- _____ To expand an existing program
- _____ For use in other programs or projects beyond the pilot; please list:

Other Uses

2. In thinking about the application of outcomes to the project you selected for the pilot, which of the following statements best describes your experience? (Choose all that apply.)

(Please note: We will be contacting you for your six month Milestone Report.)

- _____ We achieved all that we had projected for the 6months of the pilot period.

_____ We achieved some of what we had hoped but not all.

_____ We fell well short of what we had hoped to achieve.

_____ In retrospect we should have chosen a different project.

_____ Something else, please describe:

3. To what degree did the outcome framework contribute to your pilot project accomplishments?

_____ Outcomes helped a great deal; we probably would not have done nearly as well without it.

_____ Outcomes made a significant contribution to our success

_____ Outcomes helped minimally

_____ Outcomes didn't help at all

4. Which of the following statements best describes your learning experience as part of the pilot?

_____ It was an outstanding learning experience

_____ It was a moderately good experience, I have had better ones.

_____ Minimal learning

_____ Virtually no learning

_____ Other, Please describe:

5. As you look ahead, how important is the continued use of outcomes to your work?

_____ Extremely important

_____ Moderately important

_____ Not very important

6. What kind of assistance would be of most use to you in keeping the outcome management approach alive in your organization?

_____ Training workshops for me

_____ Training workshops for staff in my organization

_____ Consultation with my organization's leaders

_____ No assistance is needed

_____ Other help, please describe:

7. Please describe how the outcome framework fits with the reporting demands of other funders.

_____ It fits well, and has allowed us to respond to these other funders' requests

_____ It needs to be adjusted to respond to other funders' but it can work

_____ It doesn't fit well, and requires us to keep outcomes in multiple categories and formats

_____ Don't know

_____ Other, please specify:

8. In thinking about your experience using outcome management overall, which statements best reflects your perspective (note as many as are relevant):

_____ It was a challenging experience

_____ It was worth the time and effort

_____ It takes too much away from program delivery

_____ It will have a lasting positive effect on how I manage

_____ It positions us well for the future for competing for resources and community support.

_____ It will require us to expand to justify the time and resources needed to track outcomes

_____ It has the potential to rejuvenate our staff and board and recommitted us to our mission

_____ I would strongly recommend this approach to other dance and arts groups

_____ Other, please describe:

9. Are you interested in learning about possible follow up outcome programs or assistance?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. Anything else?

Optional identifying information

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____