



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS ON YOUR OWN

A PRIMER FOR CULTIVATING CREATIVE  
ARTS AND BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS.

**If you've decided you want to build relationships with  
business, you've come to the right place!**

**Welcome to The pARTnership Movement**, a program of Americans for the Arts designed to build capacity of the arts to cultivate and sustain mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses; and to make the case to businesses as to why partnering with the arts builds their competitive edge. The pARTnership Movement demonstrates how arts and business partnerships address common business challenges related to amplifying creativity among employees and teams, expands branding and market share, and advances their core values and objectives.



## **The arts create vibrant and thriving business communities. We can prove it.**

Bolstered with information from the [Business Contributions to the Arts: 2018 Edition](#), [Creative Industries](#) reports, our [Public Opinion Poll](#) and [Ready to Innovate](#), we found that businesses constantly look for ways to advance their corporate objectives. Partnering with the arts is an answer to that searching. Let us show you how.

## **When arts and business partner, everybody profits. Here's how you can get started.**

- ▶ **MAKING THE CASE: 8 BEST REASONS FOR BUSINESSES AND THE ARTS TO PARTNER**
- ▶ **HOW TO ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH A BUSINESS**
- ▶ **WHAT THE ARTS BRING TO THE ARTS AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP**
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# MAKING THE CASE: 8 REASONS FOR BUSINESS AND THE ARTS TO PARTNER

**There are many reasons for arts and business to partner. We've identified the best 8.**

## **Amplify Skills**

The arts reveal and enhance the breadth of talent and creativity among employees and teams by cultivating the creative thinking skills your business needs. 59 percent of businesses said the arts increased employee creativity and growth. Bringing art and artists into the workplace can boost critical thinking, problem solving, and distilling information that illustrates insights and opportunities.

## **Drive Innovation**

The arts foster inspiration, empathy, and leadership—all which establish a platform to innovate in an ever-evolving economy. The arts challenge employees to be their best. Whether it's showing off their own creative talent in a company art show or battle of the bands, volunteering, or serving on a board of directors; the arts let your employees use their skills to develop new ones. Fostering the soft skills that the arts bring through their intrinsic value lays the groundwork to move a company forward in a competitive business environment.



## **Show Gratitude**

The arts offer meaningful, enjoyable experiences and valuable benefits to your employees and their families. More than 62 percent of employees at the top quartile companies said they had benefits not typically available at other organizations. Providing tickets to events, museum memberships and other arts experiences is the perfect way to inspire employees and show them you value them.



## **Set Your Business Apart**

Leveraging a partnership with an artist/arts organization will help you communicate your company's story by engaging customers and clients, conveying your unique values. The arts enhance your brand and provide unconventional ways to reach new and existing customers. 90 percent of the population feels that cultural institutions add value to their community. Partnering with said institutions allows businesses to reach multiple stakeholders quickly and effectively—and there's usually fun and inspiration involved. 45 percent of companies agree that the arts increase name recognition, networking opportunities, and offer the potential to build market share.



## **Enliven the Workplace**

The arts stimulate positive company culture and conversation, foster employee well-being, and inspire a healthier work environment through unique and meaningful experiences for human connection. The arts create an environment that blends backgrounds, cultures, and broad individual experiences. Bringing the arts into the workplace—through arts-based training, events, shows, or interactive projects—gets people out of themselves in a way that inspires innovative thinking and a creative culture. It brings people closer together and allows employees to bring their whole selves to work.



## **Enrich Community Life**

The arts are essential to the development of a vibrant and diverse community in which the best employees want to live, work, shop, create, and contribute. In fact, 71 percent of the population agree “the arts have a social impact, improving the quality and livability of my community.” Business partnerships help make the community more attractive to current and future employees, and improve community vitality as a whole.



## **Advance Civic & Social Priorities**

Partnering with the arts fuels the economy; promotes health, wellness and safety; creates social cohesion and connectivity; and fosters civic engagement. When you partner with the arts, you partner with the whole city. The arts enhance community development, create jobs, spur urban renewal, attract new businesses, draw tourism, and create a safer, more connected and vibrant community—all ingredients for a successful business environment.



## **Cultivate Diversity & Empathy**

Partnering with the arts allows your employees, company, and community to gain better understanding of diverse cultures and ideas and helps build an inclusive workforce. The arts provide opportunities for employees to grapple with workplace concerns and become more familiar with their coworkers in the next cubicle or around the world. Businesses can bring artists and/or arts organizations into the workplace to help facilitate conversation, activities, training, and planning in creative ways that build meaningful relationships across perceived differences.

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For examples of companies who are already taking advantage of the benefits the arts have to offer, read through our [collection of success stories](#).

Now it's time to combine these *8 Best Reasons for Businesses and the Arts to Partner*, and put them into practice.



# HOW TO ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH A LOCAL BUSINESS

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## **Starting the conversation:**

Creating a business/arts partnership is about finding common ground and mutual benefit. What is each party trying to achieve? Does the business have a challenge that the arts can uniquely address? A truly successful and creative partnership rests at the sweet spot of asset exchange, return on investment, and inspiration.

## When contacting a local business, consider these simple steps:



### Assess your connections.

Consider businesses in your network and how you can advance each other's goals. Things to think about are:

- Do any of your board members have business connections?
- Does the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club have meetings or events where you can meet and interact with local business owners?
- Are there local businesses that have partnered with other arts organizations?
- Which local businesses can benefit from what your organization has to offer?
- Look beyond Fortune 500 companies when considering potential business partners. Most businesses are small or midsize. They include the shop you drop by each morning for coffee, the bakery, gas station, printer, graphic designer, jeweler, restaurant, and so many others.



### Do your homework.

Understand the company you are talking to and their interests. Before approaching a company, try to learn as much about their goals and intentions as you can:

- What is its mission?
- What are the company's core strengths?
- What are its biggest challenges?



### Get to know your local network.

Partnership work is relationship work. Attend business association meetings, become a member of your local chamber of commerce, offer to speak at their meetings, and participate in business networking events. You will likely need to spend money to ensure that local businesses are hearing your voice and that you are knowledgeable about their concerns and issues. Some organizations you should consider are:

- Local chamber of commerce
- Rotary club
- Economic development association



### Ask questions first.

Then sit back and listen to the company's needs. Ask them what they want, what they value and how you can help. Use the 8 Reasons as a guide. What are their corporate objectives? Employee needs? Market share and branding concerns? Creating community impact or cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace?



### Turn the tables.

Don't go into a meeting thinking it's about how

the business can help you; think about how you can help them; and how you can help each other. There must be mutual benefit. Think logically and strategically about how your organization, programs, products, and/or services can help meet key business needs. How can you help the company achieve its mission and/or address its challenges?

**Before conversing with business leaders, remember this checklist:**

- **Eliminate a scarcity mindset.** Businesses want to be aligned with all things cool. Arts organizations inherently embrace the edge businesses want. Don't forget to embrace it as an asset.
- **Differentiate your group** from other philanthropic groups. What can you provide that will be advantageous to the company? How does your organization stand out from others and what are the benefits of choosing to partner with your organization?
- **Engage employees.** Businesses want to partner with organizations where their employees are invested. Consider ways to engage employees by offering free or discounted behind the scenes tours, tickets to events, performances at the workspace, volunteer opportunities, board service and more.


 **Compose terms of the partnership.**

Once your organization and a business have decided to partner, clarify what each party wants to achieve. Determine how success will

be measured and who will do what.

 **Follow through.**


Launch the partnership by following and reporting back with agreed upon measurements. For your partnership to be successful, you should stay in regular contact with your business partner. Keep them updated on what your organization is working on or invite business leaders to your performances and events. Ask for their progress as well. A partnership is about having a continual conversation and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship. Both parties should be investing time and resources.

 **Evaluate your success.**

Together, were you able to achieve the desired outcomes? What was unexpected? What did you learn? What could you improve on?

 **Continue the conversation.**

Can you continue the partnership? Are there opportunities for the company's employees to be further engaged? Did opportunities arise to partner on a different program or in a new way? Are there opportunities to broaden your network through this partner?

 **Share your story.**

Submit a [success story](#) on our website to promote the great partnerships in your community.



# WHAT THE ARTS BRING TO THE ARTS AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

## FOR EMPLOYEES

**Employees want to live and work in a vibrant community.** For businesses looking to recruit and retain top employees, a vibrant arts scene is a necessity. Make sure local businesses know about the creative and cultural assets in your community.

### For example:

- **Talk** with human resource departments to be sure they know about the arts organizations in the community and are using these assets in their recruitment.

Use our [Creatives@Work](#) online tool as fun way for companies to welcome new hires. Can your organization or community engage new recruits in arts experiences?

**Creativity is among the top applied skills sought by employers.** Music, creative writing, drawing and dance provide valuable skills. The arts are about critical thinking, and solving and reframing problems in ways that reveal insights and opportunities. In fact 59 percent of companies that give to the arts said that the arts increased employee creativity and growth. Here's what your organization can do to amplify employee creativity.

### For example:



- **Encourage** businesses to partner on arts education programs. These programs help build the skills necessary for the next generation workforce.
- **Collaborate** with a company to bring artists and/or art programs into the workplace to encourage employees to think differently.

**The arts are a great way for businesses to show gratitude for their employees.** Providing free or discounted tickets, museum memberships and other arts experiences is a great benefit and the perfect way to inspire employees and say “thanks.”

**For example:**

- **Offer** free or discounted performance tickets or memberships to employees to boost morale, increase retention and instill a sense of community. If employees are encouraged to participate in and attend events in their community, they are more likely to feel a sense of satisfaction in their jobs and feel connected to the community.

**The arts foster innovation and conversation.** Bringing the arts into the workplace gets employees out of their daily routines and allows them to think more broadly. Teams build more cohesiveness and individuals find opportunities for leadership. 60 percent of Americans believe that the more creative and innovative they are at their job, the more successful they are at work.

Provide business employees with leadership, professional development, and career advancement opportunities through pro bono projects for the arts. Skills-based volunteering gives workers an opportunity to test their skills in a setting outside of

their job by assuming leadership roles and challenging themselves in new and interesting ways.

**For Example:**

**Employee volunteers can:**

- **Assist** with fundraising events, phonathons, auctions, dinners, press briefings, and other events.
- **Design**, write ,and print brochures, invitations, programs, posters, and press materials for performances, exhibitions, and events.
- **Undertake** the leadership of a special fundraising project, such as a capital campaign or an endowment fund.
- **Serve** on the boards of arts organizations.
- **Provide** input into strategic planning.

Links:

- [Employee Engagement Workbooks & Tools](#)

**FOR THE COMPANY**

**The arts help businesses set themselves apart, enhance their brand, and reach new customers.**

Celebrating the arts allows companies to build a powerful presence and engage with multiple stakeholders.

**What can you do?**

- **Invite** businesses to arts events for networking and entertaining clients. Hosting a business event at an arts venue creates a memorable and unique experience for clients and business affiliates to enjoy.



- **Talk** to businesses about incorporating artists, arts organizations, and works of art as graphic elements and themes in advertising campaigns.
- **Partner** with a business to underwrite the cost of printing an arts organization's tickets for a season and place the company's name on the back of each ticket.
- **Develop** an on-site promotion such as special shopping hours during which the arts and other community organizations are showcased. Designate a percentage of sales to donate to an arts organization.
- **Encourage** the use of tickets to performances and arts events as premiums to promote products and services.
- **Host** an event for companies to gain an opportunity to network with other businesses while learning about the value of the arts. Consider collaborating with the chamber of commerce or other business associations to:
  - *Present a panel discussion featuring business owners and executives discussing how and why their businesses became involved with the arts.*
  - *Host a behind the scenes tour or rehearsal.*

**The arts build a more cohesive work environment.** Through exhibitions, performances and workshops, the arts help employees become more familiar with their coworkers in the next cubicle or around the world.

#### For Example:

- **Host** employee art shows and a battle of the bands provide opportunities for employees to show off their own creative talent, encourage teamwork, and break down silos.
- **Facilitate** arts-based corporate training to spur creativity and innovation. Arts-based

training lends the creative spirit of the arts to the corporate world to make brainstorming sessions and meetings more fruitful.

- **Work** with human resources to use the arts to inform employees about company policies, new products, and other initiatives.
- **Organize** employee art shows and band challenges to create a positive, lively work environment for the businesses in your community. Have businesses across the community compete in a juried art exhibition or a corporate band challenge or organize events for a single business.

See how some organizations are already involved:

- [Health Alliance for Austin Musicians Corporate Band Challenge](#)
- [CincySings](#)

Kelly Pollock of COCABiz, an **arts-based business training program** run by the Center of Creative Arts (COCA), offers these suggestions when considering starting a new program:

- Make sure the program makes sense for the organization (aligns with the mission, core values, and core assets).
- Plan thoroughly, being realistic about the idea, its costs, and how it might impact the organization (positively or negatively).
- Make sure there is sufficient community interest in the idea and identify board and community members to engage in the development process.
- Consider budgeting a small portion of staff and financial resources for new programs



and product development.

- Develop and resource the idea, and engage the community in planning. It was a three-year process for COCABiz.
- A new program provides an opportunity to talk to new and different businesses, investors and potential funders.

Want to learn more? Here are some organizations and people already involved in arts-based learning:

- [Jazz Impact](#)
- [Second City](#)
- [Creative Sprint](#)
- [McColl Center](#)
- [COCA](#)
- [Creativity at Work](#)

## FOR THE COMMUNITY

**The arts are a creative tool to advance corporate strategies.** The arts can educate the public about core business issues such as product safety or financial literacy. The arts provide an opportunity for storytelling and illustration that leaves a lasting impression.

**For example:**

- **Coordinate** with different business divisions including the marketing department to incorporate arts into community-based projects.
  - *A theater group can perform plays that educate customers about a company's product or messaging.*
  - *Visual artists can illustrate important business messages to a community where English is not the first language.*

**When businesses partner with the arts, they partner with the whole city.** The arts are essential to the health and vitality of neighborhoods, cities, states, and our nation. They enhance community development; create jobs; improve safety, health and wellness; spur urban renewal; attract new businesses; and draw tourism dollars. Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.3 billion in economic activity every year—\$63.8 billion in spending by organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related spending by their audiences.

**For example:**






- **Use** the [Americans for the Arts Social Impact Explorer](#) to see how the arts intersect with many aspects of the community.
- **Consider** programs that you operate that can be used to solve solving community-wide challenges alongside your business partners.





# TOOLS FOR BUILDING SUCCESSFUL ARTS & BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

## **Make sure you have everything at hand to succeed.**

-  Create a sample script of a conversation with your local business person.
-  Use the pARTnership Movement ads or our [Creatives@Work](#) web feature.
-  Promote successful partnerships in your local business journal or share with business associations.
-  Prepare a list of artists and arts organizations that provide arts-based training in your community.
-  Compile a list of business leaders who can advocate for the arts. Work with them to place op-eds and communicate with other businesses.

# HELPFUL LINKS & ARTICLES

## Research & Resources

The arts are good for business and we can prove it. These resources will provide you with valuable data to help you prove your case to businesses.

### **2018 Business Contributions to the Arts Survey**

[Executive Summary](#)

[Full Report \(Americans for the Arts members\)](#)

The Business Contributions to the Arts (BCA) Survey tracks the trends and levels of business support to the arts in the United States. The 2018 Edition was published by The Conference Board and Americans for the Arts. It garnered 132 responses from small, midsize, and large U.S. businesses. The data suggests that arts organizations are considered important partners in the public and private sectors, as they target both business and social outcomes.

### **Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?**

[Key Findings](#)

[Full Report](#)

Americans for the Arts and The Conference Board, in partnership with the School Superintendents Association surveyed public school superintendents and American business executives to identify and compare their views on creativity and innovation.

- Superintendents (99 percent) and employers



(97 percent) agreed that creativity is of increasing importance in the workplace.

- For both employers (56 percent) and superintendents (79 percent), a degree in the arts was the most significant indicator of creativity.

### Profile of Local Arts Agencies

In 2018, Americans for the Arts commenced the Profile of Local Arts Agencies, a new annual survey designed to illuminate the ever-adapting role of local arts agencies (LAAs). The Profile tracks and examines trends in the programs, budgets, and operations of the LAA field.

- The fiscal year 2018 findings are based on 537 survey responses that were collected from participating Local Arts Agencies (LAAs) during May through August of 2018 (the salary survey was conducted separately and is based on 1,117 responses that were collected during September and October of 2018).
- 63 percent of LAAs provide services directly to businesses. LAAs manage a broad scope of programs—such as workplace giving to encourage employees to give to the arts, artwork loan initiatives that place art in corporate spaces, and training programs that utilize artistic and creative practices to increase employee engagement such as corporate Battle of the Bands competitions.
- According to LAA leaders, the three most effective arguments to advocate for the arts within the business community are: (1) economic impact, (2) benefits to business,

and (3) arts and community development.

[Key Findings](#)

[Full Report](#)

### Arts & Economic Prosperity V

Arts & Economic Prosperity V is Americans for the Arts' fifth study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry's impact on the economy. It documents the economic contributions of the arts in 341 diverse communities and regions across the country, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

[Key Findings](#)

[Full Report](#)

### Americans Speak Out About the Arts

A national sample of 3,023 adults were polled online by Ipsos in May 2018 on topics such as the importance of arts education, support for government arts funding, personal engagement in the arts, and personal and community benefits that come from engaging in the arts. The last public opinion poll by Americans for the Arts was conducted in 2015.

[Key Findings](#)

[Full Report](#)



## Localized Business Contributions to the Arts Studies

Americans for the Arts staff, in partnership with The Conference Board now offers the opportunity to survey businesses in your local community to understand trends related to business giving to the arts. You'll receive a summary report of the findings, as well as the raw data tables.

Americans for the Arts is available to come to your community and present on the findings as well. Contact [privatesector@artsusa.org](mailto:privatesector@artsusa.org) to learn more.

## pARTnership Movement Case-Making Tools

### 8 Reasons Briefing Papers

These one-page fact sheets are designed to provide quick information and examples of successful partnerships. We encourage you to take them with you to meetings with business leaders to support your case.

## Toolkits

The pARTnership Movement offers many additional toolkits to help navigate business/arts partnerships, including *Using the pARTnership Movement Ads*, *Work with Small and Mid-sized Businesses*, and *Partner with Businesses to Enact Social Change*, and more. Visit the [pARTnershipMovement.org](http://pARTnershipMovement.org) to explore them.

## pARTnership Movement Workshops

Americans for the Arts offers in-person educational workshops on an on-demand basis. Our 1- and 3-hour workshops are customizable depending on the audience and its interests, covering a range of topics including arts and business 101, relationship building, employee engagement, and program building. Contact us at [privatesector@artsusa.org](mailto:privatesector@artsusa.org) to learn more.

## Need more information?

Americans for the Arts conducts extensive research on all aspects of the arts and culture industry. Visit the [Research](#) section of our site to explore our resources.

The Americans for the Arts website contains other information and resources the broader scope of our work at the intersection of arts and business. [Visit us to learn more.](#)

Still can't find what you need, email [privatesector@artsusa.org](mailto:privatesector@artsusa.org) or call 212-223-2787.

**We are here to help.**

