

**Association of Performing Arts Presenters  
Leadership Development Institute Co-Design Session  
May 4-5, 2009, Wolf Trap**

**Summary of Findings**

A group of fifteen members of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (Arts Presenters) met for two days in early May at Wolf Trap on a quest to define the future of leadership for our field and to co-design a Leadership Development Institute that will advance that vision. The group comprised mid-career professionals who are alumni of Arts Presenters' Emerging Leaders Institute, key leaders and staff from Arts Presenters, and two senior leaders in the field. There is a full list of participants included at the end of this summary document. The session was co-facilitated by Theresa Holden, a past Board member of Arts Presenters, and co-director of Holden & Arts Associates, and Bethany Godsoe, executive director of the Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA) at The Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University.

The two days were focused on answering to three questions:

- 1. What is the leadership we need to develop across APAP organizations to meet the challenges of our changing environment and advance the field of arts presenting?*
- 2. Given the leadership challenges and needs field-wide, what are the leadership competencies we need to be developing at the individual level, particularly among mid-career professionals?*
- 3. Based on the competencies we developed what would a progressive, comprehensive set of development offerings look like?*

Through an iterative and collaborative inquiry process, the group generated the following leadership characteristics as being central to their vision:

- Deep and Broad Knowledge of the Performing Arts
- Flexible and Adaptive
- Risk Taking
- Innovative
- A belief in shared leadership with staff and community
- Open to new ideas from staff and community
- Prioritizes and facilitates collaborations
- Prioritizes and facilitates knowledge building and professional development for all staff
- Deep and respectful knowledge of community
- Belief in power of knowledge building about the arts for the community

We then used this vision of leadership to develop competencies we need to be developing at the individual level and a set of corresponding proposed offerings as outlined in the table below.

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<i>Know the Arts</i>	Have a broad knowledge of diverse arts forms and genres and a deep understanding of the particular field(s) your organization specializes in. Be aware of the latest trends in relevant art forms. Prioritize and participate in continued knowledge building about the performing arts for all levels of the staff.	Having both broad and deep knowledge of the arts creates buy-in for your board and staff as well as your audience. A knowledgeable leader can be accountable to the mission and vision of the organization. Being knowledgeable about the diversity of the performing arts allows the leadership to make appropriate choices for their audiences and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operative inquiry: peer research learning more about the performing arts</li> <li>• Mandatory staff engagement in performances to facilitate learning about trends</li> <li>• Centralized facilitation of ticket trades among member organizations to support staff in getting exposure to the Arts, possibly including a 'Staff Season'</li> <li>• New employee materials with a guide to learning about the arts</li> <li>• Arts Presenters continuing education (ce) in the arts requirement</li> <li>• Survey course, planned in collaboration with artists, featuring a condensed history of the arts, including major events, genres, and a suggested reading list (note: reading list could also simply be made available online for those who want self-directed learning)</li> </ul>
<i>Build a Vision and Mission</i>	Knowledge of and skill in various methods and strategies to create a clear vision, mission and goals for the organization, and ability to	A clear and fully communicated vision, mission and goals make up an organization's map for how to proceed with programming, staffing, budgeting and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-year micro-grant to "reinvigorate your mission"</li> <li>• Collaborative inquiry within organizations and among leaders across peer organizations to guide the process while</li> </ul>

	communicate those ideas throughout the organization and the community.	connections.	<p>building knowledge for the leaders, their organizations, and the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online toolkit and learning portal to support the mission and vision building process and share learning from the collaborative inquiry</li> </ul>
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<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<i>Think Strategically</i>	The ability to assess a whole program or a task in relation to the mission and goals of the organization and then have the knowledge and skills in various methods and procedures to fully realize that program or task so that it successfully fulfills those goals and mission.	In the field of Performing arts presenting, every day calls for creative strategies that will help meet the goals of that specific task or program. There are always new challenges in this field, each new program, each performance, and knowing methods for finding creative and strategic solutions is imperative. Thinking strategically, especially in a collaborative field, can be shared and learned from our colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team-based course on systems thinking for organizations that are already working on strategy</li> <li>• Peer- to-peer knowledge exchange with corporate partners</li> <li>• Online resources, including tools and webinars to support leaders in using them, on strategy for non-profits that are grounded in research and emphasize both the strategy development process as well as tools for execution</li> </ul>
<i>Innovate</i>	Keep abreast of key trends, adapt to what is already there, and imagine what is not yet there.	In the Performing Arts presenting field, innovation is essential. While artists are, by and large, innovative, imaginative and creating what is new, this does not always translate to the practice of presenting. It is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R&amp;D group for arts presenting that tracks and pulls trends together to advance breakthrough ideas for the field that will yield long term results</li> <li>• Innovation fellowship for emerging-to-mid-level leaders to step out of their organization for one to two years and serve as an innovator within one</li> </ul>

		<p>especially important for the presenters of the performing arts to be equally innovative in their means of bringing the work to their communities. Innovations and creativity in how they communicate the new art forms, how they work in partnership with the artists and how they educate their community are all essential.</p>	<p>organization of a collection of regional organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro-grants program for local innovation retreats</li> <li>• Online resources produced by the R&amp;D group, the fellows, and others in the field to support innovation field wide</li> </ul>
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<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<i>Know and Connect with Community</i>	<p>Have broad knowledge and understanding of your community and your target market and identify and involve leading stakeholders. Being knowledgeable about methods to connect with your community.</p>	<p>Knowing and connecting with community will engage new audiences and help your audience be reflective of the community. Without a deep and respectful knowledge of your community, your organization can not meet its goals or succeed in its mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources on field research methodology of field research to recognize community gatekeepers and identify the networks they represent</li> <li>• Facilitation of connections among members</li> </ul>
<i>Communicate</i>	<p>Be clear about plans and expectations and intelligently convey your passion for and knowledge of the arts and related trends to a variety of audiences.</p>	<p>Clear communications builds trust, allowing a leader to effectively champion the arts while marketing the organization and its offerings, fundraising, and developing an audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think tank to track trends in the arts, provide training to member organizations, and host regional convenings</li> <li>• Workshops and seminars for media and other stakeholders outside the arts</li> <li>• Speakers bureau</li> </ul>

<p><i>Empower, Inspire, and Manage People</i></p>	<p>Foster an organizational environment in which staff members are stakeholders, quality of work life is prioritized and professional development is embedded in the culture of the organization. Be knowledgeable in skills and methods for respectful management of staff, in professional development opportunities and for creating a communicative work environment.</p>	<p>Promoting this type of environment supports a shared vision with work focused toward a common goal and allows for creativity and richer more varied organizations in which employees have “skin in the game” thereby increasing both productivity and effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework and resource guide for on-boarding and orienting new staff</li> <li>• Webinars and online resources for new managers focused on empowering staff to provide leadership</li> <li>• Semester-long weekend course on people management (note: this should be something more substantial than just a workshop or conference)</li> <li>• Rotational and stretch assignments to support leaders in moving outside their particular department and understanding how the entire organization works</li> </ul>
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<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<p><i>Collaborate</i></p>	<p>Build bridges with and among diverse stakeholders to advance a common agenda. Being knowledgeable about methods and strategies for building such bridges and for developing a strong common agenda.</p>	<p>Through effective collaboration, leaders can accomplish more, put themselves at the ‘center’ of the community, breed new artistic expression, broaden reach, and attract new funding streams. The very nature of the performing arts is collaborative; performing arts presenters’ work must continue that collaborative work and play a vital role in the collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-season process in which organizations are supported through webinars, conference calls, and mentoring arrangements to develop a strong collaboration (note: season one would involve planning and season two would involve execution against the plan)</li> </ul>

		between the art and the audience.	
<i>Know and Leverage Technology</i>	Understand emerging technologies and employ them as tools for advancing your organization and the field.	By leveraging the latest technological developments, a leader and the field as a whole can maximize both efficiency and impact while reaching new audiences in creative and compelling ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online self-assessment to determine competency level and appropriate learning opportunities</li> <li>• Arts tech feed that would gather resources and provide access through a single portal</li> <li>• Tech survey followed by learning circles to continue the work on-line, including a focus on better articulating needs in the field with IT professionals, offering tech boot camp for other managers, and creating a plan to service the interests of a particular organization or unit</li> </ul>

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<i>Manage your Board (or other governing body)</i>	Have a strong understanding of the purpose and work of a Board of Directors for a not-for-profit organization, including all of its duties and legal responsibilities and have the skill to communicate that knowledge to the Board, and be knowledgeable about the by-laws of the organization and	The leader of an organization must be fully knowledgeable about the work of the Board of Directors in order to work successfully with the Board toward the goals of the organization. They must be a team. The Board is the Executive Director's direct employer. Having full knowledge of how the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one consulting services, seminars at conferences, publications, online resources all focused on supporting strong staff-board working alliances</li> <li>• Board recruitment support from a centralized resource</li> <li>• National trustee council for board members to engage in peer-learning opportunities</li> </ul>

	how those effect the Board of Directors.	operates and what the organization expects of the Board and what the Board expects of the leadership will create open and clear communication and organizational stability.	
<i>Know the Money</i>	Have a strong grasp of financial planning and management tools and a strong grounding in diverse approaches to fundraising.	Understanding and being able to use fundraising and financial management approaches supports planning for the future, responding to crisis, and building a strong and sustainable organization that enables creative freedom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminars and workshops at multiple levels – i.e. budget 101, 102, etc</li> <li>• Structured mentorship program</li> <li>• Fundraising fish bowl sessions with experts (e.g. live consultations at the annual conference) and learning circles</li> </ul>

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Proposed Offerings</b>
<i>Give Back / Advocate</i>	Be aware of the critical needs and interests of the field as a whole and work effectively to advance those interests in one's own organization and beyond.	By giving back to the field and serving as an effective advocate, a leader can build a stronger organization and a stronger field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy basics session</li> <li>• Arts Presenters mentoring program to develop and certify mentors for staff and board leaders in the field</li> <li>• Mentoring learning circles</li> <li>• Searchable emerging leadership institute alumni database that newer leaders could access to connect with alumni who have particular knowledge or expertise to share</li> <li>• National student internship service for students and organizations to pair</li> </ul>

			<p>up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short-term sabbaticals and fellowships</li><li>• Residency exchange for arts managers</li></ul>
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