

MANAGEMENT AND THE ARTS

Chapter 7

Human Resources and the Arts

Chapter 7 Overview

We have seen how planning and setting up an effective organizational structure can assist an arts manager with meeting the mission and goals. However, at the center of any arts are the people who embody the mission and goals through their effort. This chapter will look at the human resource function of arts organizations.

Starting with the staff processes, we will examine how the overall integration of all the staff positions supports the type of programming being presented by the arts organization. We will look at unions in the arts and the important roles played by volunteers and boards of directors in the governance of arts organizations.

Board governance methods and policies, staff management and procedures, and the volunteers support system all need to work together to help an organization stay on a course that supports the mission.

Human Resource Management: Staffing Process

1. Job Analysis

- * Need for position established
- * Major function of job defined
- * Specific duties listed
- * Task analysis of duties
 - Work activities
 - Work tools
 - Job context
 - Standards
 - Qualifications
- * Approved by management

2. Job Description & Posting

- * Supervised by and reports to
- * Function
- * Duties
- * Job Requirements
- * Required experience
- * Compensation
- * Benefits package
- * Application method and deadline

3. Recruitment and Selection

- * Internal or External
- * Advertise
- * Networking and referrals
- * Screen applications
- * Rank top candidates
- * Interview/Audition
- * Reference check
- * Offer & Acceptance

4. Orientation and Training

- * Review details of job function and duties
- * Probationary period
- * Training options
 - OJT
 - Rotation
 - Coaching
 - Modeling
 - Apprenticeship
- * Evaluation and Feedback

The four main parts of the staffing process make up the bulk of what would be considered as the Human Resources or HR functions within an arts organization.

Arts organizations employ full and part-time staff, contract or contingent workers, as well as volunteers and interns. Managing all these people requires expertise and sensitivity.

1. Job Analysis

Step 1 in the HR process entails analyzing what each job required within the organization. What will the person be doing, what tools will they need, what will be standards for performance and what the kind of qualifications and skills needed to fulfill the job functions. This job analysis extends to all types of people in an arts organization – from performers to the chair of the board.

2. Job Description and Posting

Once the need for the position has been established, and assuming the funding for the salary and benefits or the money to cover the contracted person is available, a position description or summary of the contractual obligations is created. A sample staff level job posting is shown on pages 228 and 229 in the text. Links to examples of jobs that are covered on contractual arrangements on the companion website for the book.

3. Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment process will vary depending on the type of position you are trying to fill. Performers or designers may be hired under a contract based on previous work with a director or artistic director. Auditions may be held in different locations depending on the contracts that are in force for various unions.

Online job postings may be used on an organization's website along with email directly to people who have already expressed an interest in working at the organization. Positions may be hired from within and are not made public at all. Director and senior level positions may be recruited through the use of a hiring consultant or firm. The board, for example, may contract the services of recruitment firm to intensively recruit specific people for leadership roles.

Whatever the context for the recruitment, this activity typically carried on within the framework of laws enacted at the state and national level.

4. Orientation and Training

Assuming the hiring process goes as planned, then the process of integrating a new staff member to the organization starts. In small arts organizations many of the orientation and training activities are carried out in a fairly informal manner. Larger organizations may have a whole range of policies and procedures in place to acclimate a new person to the organization. During the early weeks after hiring a series of orientations and training activities may take place to help the new person effectively fulfill their job duties. Regardless of size, most organizations hire someone with the understanding they are on a three to six month probationary period.

Once past the probationary period, future training and skills development opportunities may be offered to the staff person. Annual performance evaluations are a common function in organizations. Again, these can vary from very informal to highly structured processes.

Unions and the Arts

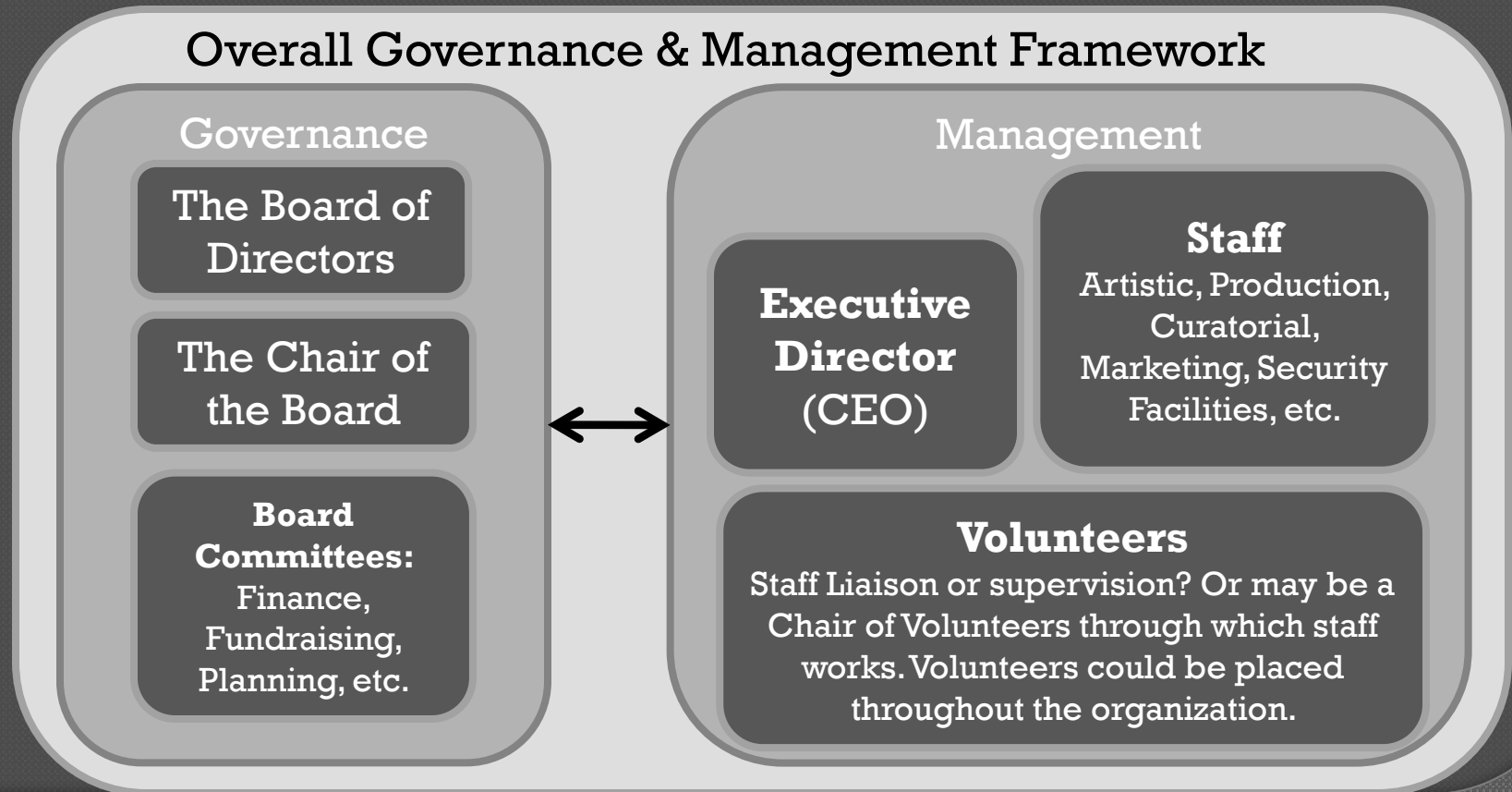
The union's primary responsibility is to ensure its members derive designated benefits from the working relationship with the employer. Key areas in most agreements include: compensation, job specifications, grievance procedures, work rules, seniority rules, and working conditions.

Sampling of unions in the arts:

- **Actors' Equity Association (AEA)** for actors and stage managers – founded in 1913
- **American Federation of Musicians (AFM)** – founded in 1896
- **American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA)** members include vocal performers in opera, choral and dancers – founded in 1936
- **American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA)** – founded in 1939
- **Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA)** for performers – SAG was founded in 1933 and AFTRA in 1937
- **United Scenic Artists Local 829 (USA)** for scenery, costume, and lighting designers – founded in 1918
- **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)**, and Motion Picture Machine Operators of the United States and Canada representing stagehands. Founded in 1893.

Balancing the Dynamic of HR in the Arts

Arts organizations operate in an overall framework that creates a separation of the governance and management functions. The board chair and CEO are key to successfully balancing this dynamic by working collaboratively to serve the mission.



Volunteers in the Arts

Arts organizations often have dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents to help further the mission. Well trained and engaged volunteers can save an arts organization thousands of dollars every year. However, there are costs and risk factors associate with volunteers that need to be calculated by an arts manager. Contracts outlining the scope of the volunteers' responsibilities can be a helpful management tool.

Benefits

- Can leverage and multiple the effectiveness of a small staff
- Volunteers can be excellent ambassadors for the organization in a community
- Volunteers can bring community perspectives to an organization

Costs

- Staff time must be allocated to training and supervising volunteers
- There are risks inherent in using volunteers. Errors can be made due to lack of familiarity with procedures and personnel in the organization.
- Could misrepresent the organization in the community

Boards of Directors

The arts in America include another group of volunteers often simply called “the board.” The board of directors, trustees, or governors, (the title of the governing body varies) are tasked with representing the public’s interest through their service on a nonprofit organization board. The oversight role is often included in the incorporation laws in many states. The duties and responsibilities generally include:

- *Hire, evaluate, and replace, if necessary, the executive leader*
- *Provide strategic planning and oversight of the organization and work with the staff developing, implementing and monitoring the long term and capital plans*
- *Approve the annual budget and ensure the overall financial resources of the organization support the programming and mission*
- *Accept and approve the annual financial report*
- *In most cases, help directly support the organization with donations and/or in-kind gifts and help secure additional funds to support the organization*
- *Set and monitor policies that provide guidance to the board and staff on how the organization will operate*

Source: *The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance* (BoardSource©, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA. 2010), p 31-34.

Boards of Directors

The board's overall governance responsibilities includes functioning in support of the organization's mission. In carrying out its responsibilities, board members are expected to governing using the "3Ds" – Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, and Duty of Obedience.

Duty of Care – Board members are expected to actively participate in decision making, preparing for meetings, use their good judgment, and make sure the organization is following its policies and by laws.

Duty of Loyalty – Board members follow conflict of interest policy, avoid personal gain through their service, and be loyal to the organization they serve.

Duty of Obedience – Board members follow all laws pertaining to the incorporated purpose of the organization, and ensure compliance with existing policies.

Boards of Directors

The executive director for an arts organization (or CEO, or whatever titled is used) has the unique challenge of reporting to the board while also keeping the board focused on the top strategic and fundraising initiatives needed to sustain and grow the “business.”

It is also not unusual to have community members serving on the board who have little detailed knowledge of how an arts organization operates. The very nature of programming events or a season of shows or exhibitions carries with it inherent risks. Programming decisions made months or years in advance may not be well received by the public. Therefore, board members tend to be more risk adverse than the leadership and staff.

Training, educating, and engaging an arts board becomes a critical set of activities that falls within the scope of managing the human resources of an organization. Balancing and aligning the staff and the board can strain the often resource-starved arts organization. Time spent on extensive communication up and down the organization is time well spent.