

The NSN Producers & Organizers SIG Pre-Conference Workshop: July 2007

Workbook for Theater and Storytelling Collaborations

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As a preparation for Theater and Storytelling collaborations, here is a set of questions and considerations that are worth asking before undertaking a collaboration.

What is the project?

- Single event (1-2 performances)
- Limited run (3-?? Performances)
- Series (repeated events)
- Tour

Who/what is on stage? Describe the experience in as much detail as you can imagine.

Who would you (want to) work with?

- What is your self-interest – what do you hope to gain from this partnership?
- What is their self-interest – what would they stand to gain from this partnership?

What was the **stated purpose** of the partnership? This is probably different from self-interest in that it is the public/PR/funding statement of benefit. What would each say about the collaboration?

- For the theater:

- For the storyteller(s) or organization:

How was this project **different from other programs** offered by the theater, the partnered storytelling organization and/or the individual storyteller(s)?

What are the respective **roles of each partner**? Who does:

- Artist selection
- Promotion/marketing
 - Ads (i.e., radio, TV, newspapers, theater programs)
 - Mailers
 - Web-site/blogs
 - Articles/interviews
 - Previews/promotions
 - Sponsorships/discounts
- Box office (i.e., reservations, ticket sales)
- Rehearsal time/space
- Tech and stage management including sound and lighting design
- Accounting/reporting/paying the performer(s)

Is there a **Director**? Who selects/pays for the Director?

Who speaks for the project? Not only for PR, the press, but funders as well?

When does it take place? Be specific about the number of days, time of year, etc.

Where?

- Type of performing space. Why this venue? What does it offer? What are the limitations or challenges to storytelling?
 - Proscenium stage
 - Thrust stage
 - In the round
 - Black box
 - Cabaret stage
 - Outdoor/amphitheater
 - Other

- Number of seats

- Amount and kind of tech

- Facility amenities
 - Box office?

- Restrooms
- Dressing rooms
- Beer/wine/full bar
- Food

- Location – including bars, restaurants, or other cultural attractions? Parking?

Attendance (Projections and targets)

- Number(s)
- As % of venue capacity
- **Demographics**
 - Age
 - Income
 - Cultural diversity
 - Cross-over (storytelling audience that came to the theater)
 - New audience (First time audience to a storytelling event)

Is there a **marketing plan in place for each demographic** segment? What is it? How much does it cost? Who does it? How will you measure effectiveness?

Income projections – budgeting for success

- Tickets
 - Single ticket price(s)
 - Series ticket structure and price(s)
 - Discount structure

- Grants/underwriting/sponsorships

- In-kind contributions

- Earned income (sales of performer product, beer/wine, etc.)

Expense projections – success minus the cost of the same

- Cost of production

- Cost of promotion

- Income to performer(s)

- Income to theater tech/box office/other workers

- Overhead (all partners)

- Other financial considerations

How are **income and expenses allocated** between the partners? What financial risks does each take? What financial (profit) rewards does each receive for that risk?

What is "**success**" for each partner?

Other considerations:

After the partnership has collaborated on an event...it is valuable to go back through this worksheet and see how the reality of what happened compares to what was planned. This is obvious for budget/expenses, attendance and those kind measures – but it is also important to assess the outcomes for the more intangible elements.

Here are some additional questions for the after assessment:

Was it "**successful**" for each partner?

What **challenges** were met?

What **lessons** were learned?

What did each **actually** get out of the partnership? How does it compare to the original stated purpose of the collaboration?

- For the theater:

- For the storyteller(s) or organization: