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Fine Art Appraisal

Realizing Your Dreams Through Art!

A Dynamic Balance

By Arts Action Research / Nello McDaniel and George Thorn

Taken from the booklet ARTS PLANNING: A Dynamic Balance

The key is moving forward in a stable and confident way by maintaining dynamic balance. Stability through dynamic balance allows an organization to create opportunities it needs and wants, take advantage of opportunities presented, and effectively address the artistic and operating challenges that endlessly crop up.

In today's environment, what does it mean to be a stable organization?

In the real world, each arts entity must define what stability means to it alone. No outside person, program or agency can possibly know enough about any single arts organization to define stability for it.

Stability is qualitatively connected to dynamic balance. In this regard, balance is not the same as equilibrium. By definition, equilibrium is a condition which all acting influences are canceled by each other, resulting in a stationary system. Today, a static, stationary condition for any art entity is deadly. A more suitable metaphor for dynamic balance is a tightrope artist; always aware of her/his elements of balance—center of gravity, focus, weight and counter-weight, and controlled movement--- and uses these elements to move and perform. As long as the artist is moving and balanced, stability and confidence is maintained.

Arts organizations, must maintain stability through dynamic balance.

Elements which frame and define dynamic balance for each arts entity:

- *Leadership* – For each organization, leadership must clearly and unquestionably be in place and leading. The first responsibility of leadership is to define and describe reality. Leadership is uniquely positioned to see and understand the entire reality of the organization.
 - Describing reality through a fragment of the whole can be misleading, often distorting. Today, organizations must view their environment and their

409 S. Western AVE. LAMPASAS, TX 76550 PHONE 512.556.6997 www.NancyGrayArtConsulting.com



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conditions in cold, hard, truthful terms – there is no place for self-deception or romanticized notion of the organization’s reality.

- Activities must contribute 100% to the health and progress of the work and the organization.
- *Vision* – The second and most important job of leadership is to provide a vision for how this reality is going to be changed, altered or addressed.
 - Is there a clearly articulated, communicated, understood and agreed-upon mission, vision, and direction of the work and the organization?
 - Is the work and the organization’s direction being shaped by clearly articulated values and beliefs?
 - If not, the change can be reactionary or purely reactive, detached and even delusional.
- *The Equation* – for each organization, there is an equation that defines the balance between:
 - What the organization needs, hope or wants to do artistically and pragmatically, and
 - The available human and financial resources.
 - The equation has to be defined and balanced over and over again – certainly for each operational year, possibly every six months or even less.
- *Correcting Balance* – The effectiveness of a short-term planning process is the best test for long-term application. An organization cannot do anything creative or significant if it is seriously overextended, in debt, or in crisis. It’s axiomatic – if left alone, out-of-balance, organizations tend to grow increasingly dysfunctional.
 - An out-of-balance situation must be acted upon and corrected immediately to stop the hemorrhaging. It’s imperative not only to prevent long-term damage, but to help the organization regain a sense of health and energy.
 - To reclaim balance, leadership must take an honest look at reality.
 - Clearly outlined, immediate intervention or short-term actions may be needed to “stanch the bleeding” and bring the organization into balance.
 - Long-range planning can’t solve short-term needs and problems
 - Avoid using long-range planning as a way to avoid current realities and divert attention from day-to-day problems.



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- In the short term, the planning process can and must be employed to reestablish dynamic balance.
- *Re-conceptualizing the Equation* – No planning process can reconcile an organization to an incorrect equation. When the equation is wrong it must be changed. For many, the organizational equation cannot be balance by traditional means (selling more tickets or raising more money). In such instances the leadership must create a new organizational equation with variable that responds to reality.
 - Re-conceptualizing means fundamental change, a total redesign and restructuring from the inside out.
 - A dance company attempting to operate on a \$1 million budget finds that it may end the year with a \$200,000 deficit. Rather than asking how do we do \$1million of activity with \$800,00 re-conceptualizing asks what kind of dance and dance company can we create for \$800,00?
 - Re-conceptualizing does not mean that growth will not be possible later. But an important part of the planning process is to redefine growth.
 - Are there qualitative aspects of growth that need to receive greater attention and focus, such as deepening the relationship with existing audiences?
 - In some cases, by re-conceptualizing, the planning process may reveal some areas of quantitative growth not possible before.
- *Process* – The organization must have a process – a means to achieve and maintain stability and dynamic balance on an ongoing basis.
 - Is there a way to take calculated steps and actions to alter conditions, solve problems, or achieve needed and desired results?
 - If so, no matter what internal or external challenges confront the organization, the process can guide leadership toward making the best responses. The process can be used to chart another course whenever necessary.
 - The planning process, like the creative process, must be an effective confluence of conceptual, collaborative, problem-solving, decision-making, and performance elements.
 - If the frame of reference for planning is the creative process, how is a vision for a work or program conceptualized and articulated?



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- How are conditions, opportunities, and problems framed and identified?
- Who are the collaborators who shape the vision, work or program?
- How do decisions get made, who makes them, and how are they implemented?
- The planning process must be constantly informed by the creative process for focus, guidance, perspective, and method.
- Whenever we encounter a problem in a planning process or in an organization's life, we ask the leadership how they would deal with the problem if it were in rehearsal.
- Or, if it is a really big problem, we ask how they would make a "work" about it.
- By mirroring the artistic process, planning becomes as organic, logical and effective as the most effecting they do (making art), and therefore repeatable and replenishable.