

FY 24 - FY 27 Strategic Plan





To our strategic planning partners, supporters & sages:



To the major supporters of this vital initiative, with our profound appreciation for their belief in our potential:



Alhadeff Family Charitable Fund

THANK YOU



To our strategic planning steering committee who committed so much valuable time and provided such invaluable thought and input:

- Elisbeth Challener
- Kwofe Coleman
- Donna Lynn Hilton
- Eric Keen-Louie
- Jeff Loeb
- Michael G. Murphy

To everyone on our Board and throughout our membership and beyond who contributed to this process.

PROCESS OVERVIEW



Summer, 2022 – Fall, 2023

I. Current Conditions

- Background Review
- Key Informant Interviews
- Kick-Off Meeting
- Membership & Alumni Survey
- Current Conditions & Success Workshop
- Environmental Scan

II. Defining the Future

- Assets and Opportunities
- Purpose Workshop

III. Developing the Plan

- Goals
- Objectives & Strategies
- Financial Implications
- Recommendations and Implications
- Strategic Framework





Overview

OVERVIEW



Informed by analysis of NAMT data from recent years, 10+ interviews, a survey of members & Festival alumni and workshops with the steering committee, Board and staff, we developed our purpose statement to reflect NAMT's role (both current and aspirational) across the entire musical theatre landscape. The work also confirmed the alignment of—and reinforced our commitment to—our Mission and Core Values.

PURPOSE

Strengthen the evolving ecosystem of musical theatre.

MISSION

To be a catalyst for nurturing musical theatre development, production, innovation and collaboration.

CORE VALUES

To achieve this mission, NAMT commits to:

- Evolve and advance the musical theatre art form
- Create and connect a welcoming musical theatre community for all
- Inspire and excite the field to include the broadest possible range of voices

NAMT is committed to a musical theatre field that includes and embraces people of all backgrounds, identities and abilities. We strive every day to nurture a musical theatre canon that reflects and celebrates the rich diversity of our nation and the world.

GOAL EVOLUTION



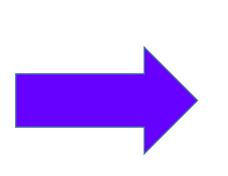
The strategic plan goals for the next several years that emerged from this in-depth process are clearly grounded in the previous plan, and then evolved for the current and future environment, opportunities and challenges.

FY17 – FY 21 Strategic Plan Goals

PIPELINE: Expand the musical theatre network by both broadening and lengthening the pipeline

DIVERSIFY: Diversify membership, Board and artist participation in NAMT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Advocate for and facilitate community engagement and educational initiatives across the NAMT membership



FY24 – FY 27 Strategic Plan Goals

CULTURE OF BELONGING: Commit to the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) in every facet of NAMT—people and programs—and use that lens to drive action at every opportunity

PATHWAYS: Expand and extend the pathways for musical theatre development

COMMUNITY: Amplify NAMT's role as a year-round resource and home for its members and for the musical theatre community

CAPACITY: Build NAMT's capacity (financial, human resources and technology) to increase resilience and capability, and to provide resources for expanded reach and impact across the field

OBJECTIVES



Objectives will guide and drive strategies and, ultimately, tactics, for effectively pursuing the articulated goals.

CULTURE OF BELONGING

- Model behavior
- Invite/incite change across the membership and the field
- Underpin objectives in all areas

PATHWAYS

- Increase accessibility of content endorsed/developed by NAMT (via festivals, digital resources, etc.)
- Increase visibility of the art form
- Introduce more writers/works to the field for development
- Provide opportunities without gates/gate-keepers
- Define pathways broadly, holistically: not just writers, but all involved.

COMMUNITY

- Build on culture/tone of friendliness and inclusiveness
- Establish year-round marketing/social media presence
- Get out more; tell our story better
- Develop compelling case for being in NAMT membership
- Convey even stronger sense of NAMT as educational resource

CAPACITY

- Expand base of supporters
- Diversify funding base
- Build staff to meet programmatic needs
- Update technology in office and for all events to improve accessibility and efficiency

A LIVING DOCUMENT



- We view the ratification of this strategic plan as the beginning of the road.
- We will keep coming back to this document for both grounding and inspiration. And we will revise it as conditions—whether external or internal—evolve.
- This plan is grounded in pragmatic optimism. Pursuit of the goals will be accelerated of decelerated to balance with available capacity. We want NAMT members to be enthusiastic about and invested in the potential benefit to them and the field, not daunted by the ambition.
- Next steps will be to develop detailed tactics, a metrics "dashboard" and *pro forma* budgets for the next few years. We need to constantly assess what success looks like and also continuously evaluate how well we're doing in pursuit of our articulated goals.



The Plan

PURPOSE, MISSION & CORE VALUES



PURPOSE

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MISSION

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CORE VALUES

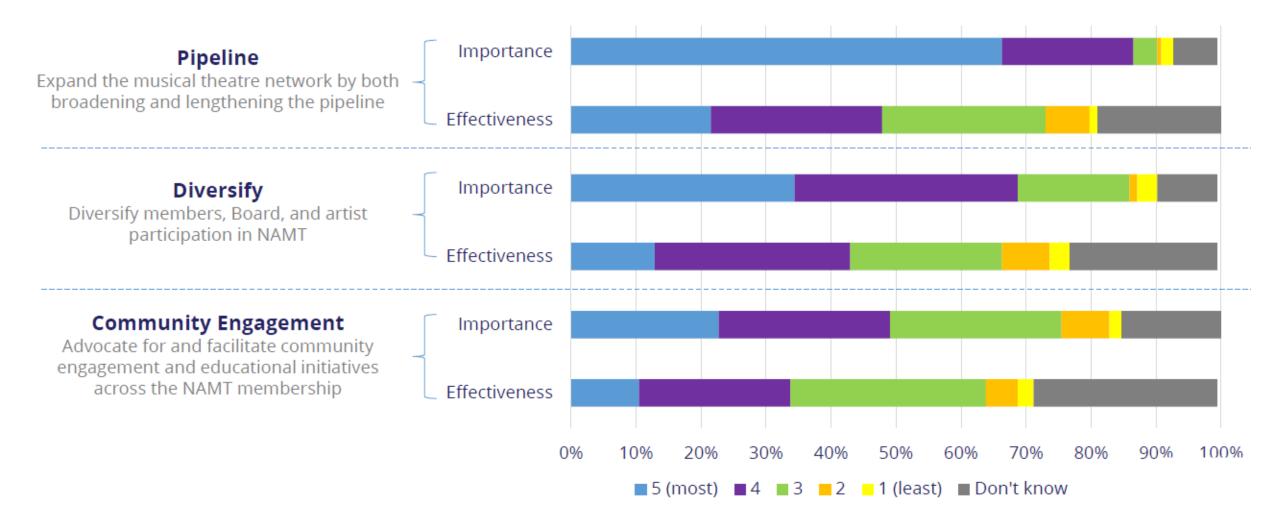
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A survey conducted among NAMT members and Festival alumni writers indicated that the goals outlined in the 2016 strategic plan have enduring relevance, with notable agreement between alums and members.

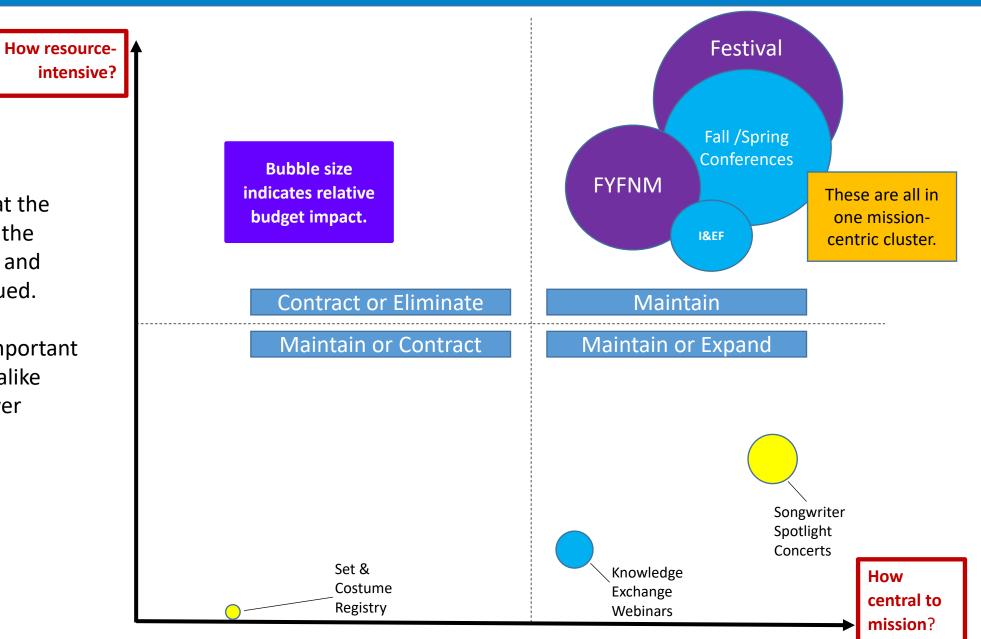


SURVEY RESULTS SHOW STRONG ALIGNMENT



The survey reinforced that the programs that command the most resources (financial and human) are the most valued.

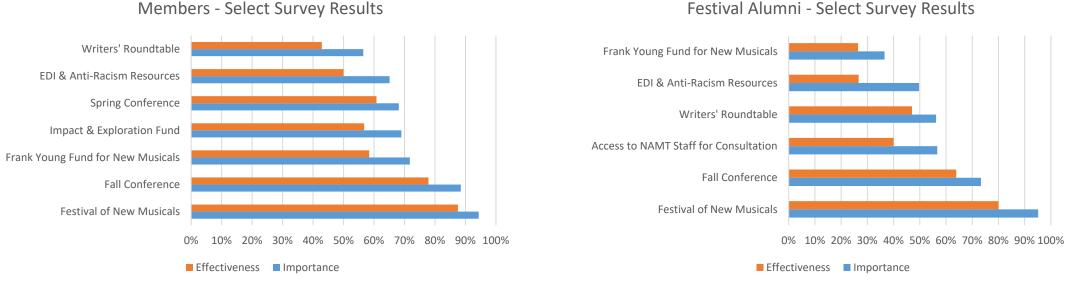
Programs deemed less important by members and alumni alike also tend to be much lower consumers of resources.



ROOM TO FOCUS, ROOM TO GROW



We have an opportunity to increase our impact by focusing on areas where scores assessing programmatic "Importance" exceeded scores for "Effectiveness."



Members - Select Survey Results

Some observations, based on survey results combined with "color commentary" from interviews:

- Importance/Effectiveness gap in EDI & Anti-Racism Resources speaks to the imperative of fully integrating principles into organizational culture and all programs
- Alumni demand for "access to NAMT Staff for Consultation" is higher than expected and needs further examination; similarly (and probably related), we need to understand more about what alumni perceive would make the Festival more effective
- Lower-than-expected ratings for the Frank Young Fund for New Musicals by alumni is likely due more to a lack of awareness of what's funded than to a lack of appreciation for the program

PURPOSE, MISSION & CORE VALUES



Combination of survey, interviews and environmental scan provided key input for development of PURPOSE statement, intended to state succinctly WHY and FOR WHOM we exist.

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Grounded in the feedback from the survey and interviews, and set against the landscape explored in the environmental scan, NAMT's goals have evolved to reflect where we are today and where we need to go.

FY17 – FY 21 Strategic Plan Goals

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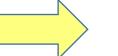
THE EVOLUTION OF GOALS



Evolution of goal language both parallels and reflects changes in the world and in our approach.

FOR EXAMPLE:





CULTURE OF BELONGING

The field's (and NAMT's) vocabulary around inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility has not only matured since we drafted our last plan in 2016, but has also taken on more specificity and urgency.



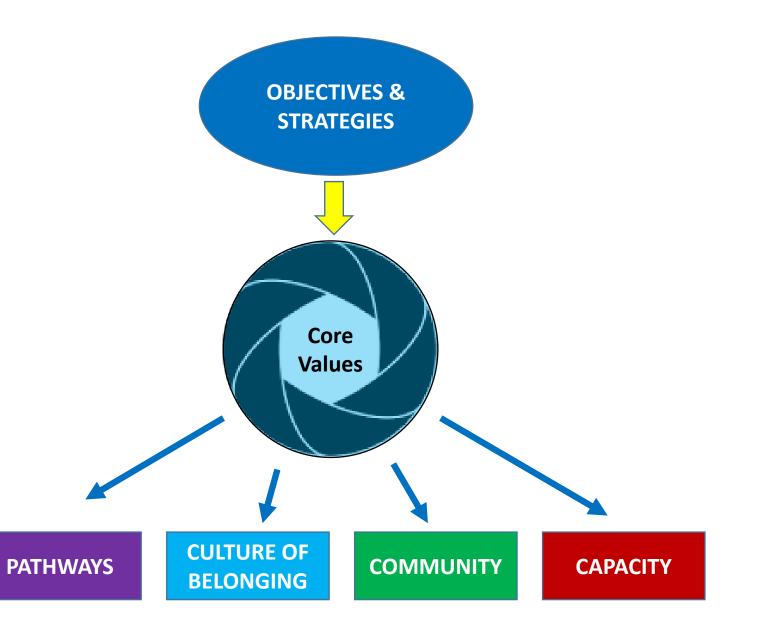
A "pipeline" suggests something linear. We have always acknowledged that every writer and every project needs a customized development approach. This language evolution more clearly articulates that belief, which is especially important as we intentionally invite the broadest possible range of voices and perspectives.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES



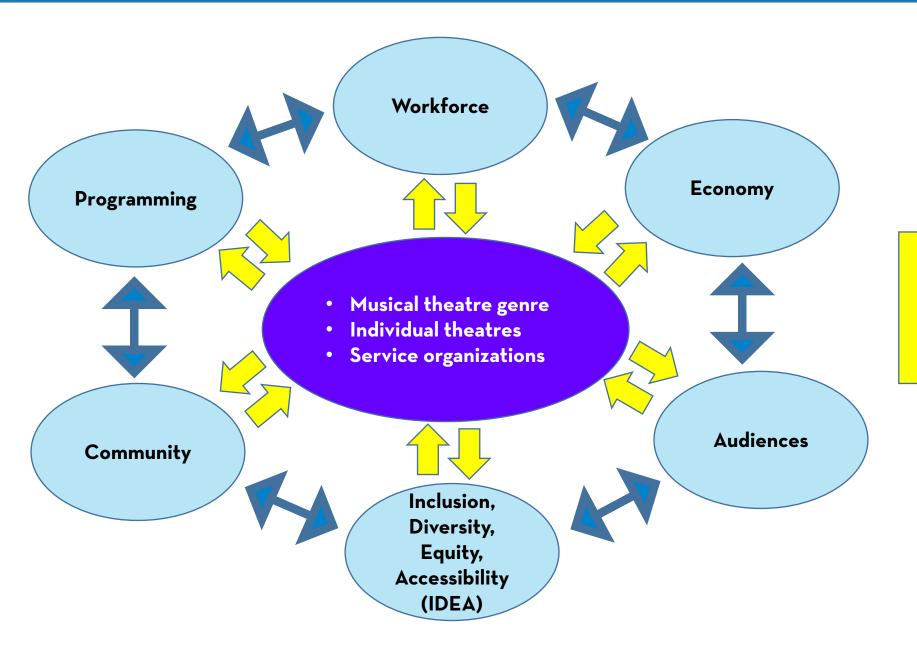
NAMT's approach to developing objectives and strategies took several criteria into account, all viewed and evaluated through the lens of our "core values." We considered:

- **The Landscape:** what the membership and field needs now and into the future (grounded in the environmental scan)
- NAMT Core Skills & Strengths: what is NAMT best positioned to deliver? Where can we play a unique role in moving the field forward?
- NAMT Challenges: where/how can we bolster our capabilities to expand the "success" bubble at the intersection of value, capacity and support



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN





How individual theatres and service organizations set priorities and make decisions across these inter-connected areas will determine the field's future landscape.

See Appendix for detail

INTROSPECTION



Strengths

Culture

- Warm/friendly
- Strong customer service
- Consistency of tone
- Integrity
- Enthusiastic/don't take ourselves too seriously
- Cooperation/collaboration/respect within and outward
- Clarity of purpose
- Resourceful/nimble/scrappy/responsive

Programs

- Unique conference content/culture
- Creates true web-like membership network rather than hub/spoke
- Producing expertise
- Tech upkeep/data management

Opportunities

Human Capacity

- Staff stretched too thin
- HR challenges
 - Recruitment
 - Staffing \$
 - Retention
- Skill cross-training
- Event season burn-out

Programs

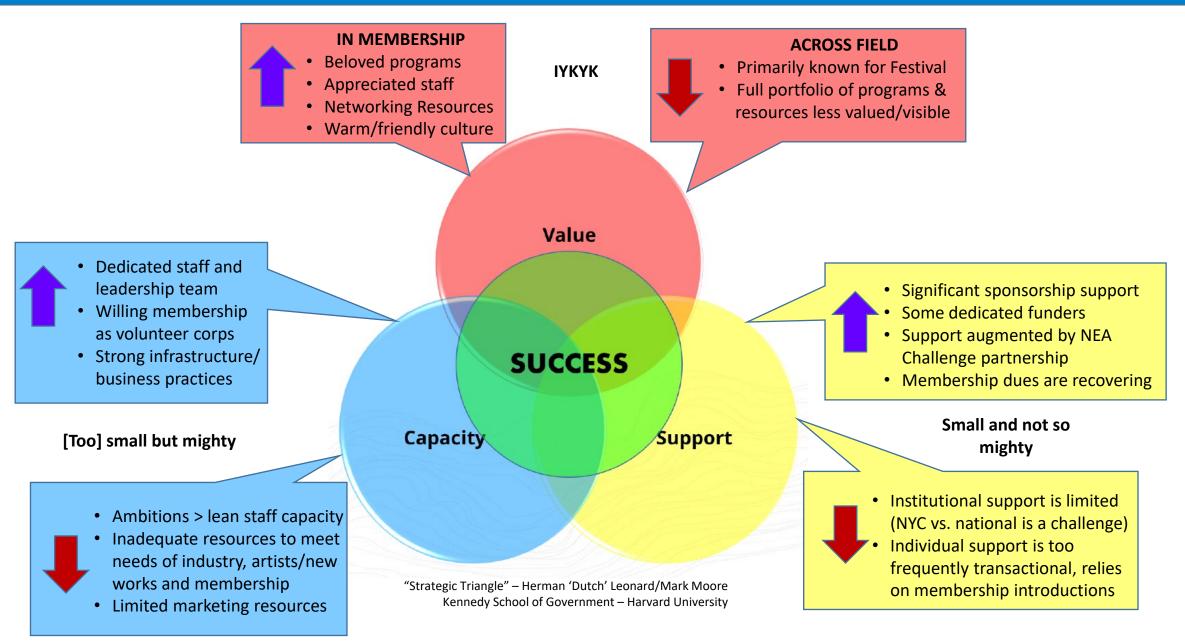
- Members not producing our shows enough
- Too Festival-centric
- Challenging to accommodate wide and often conflicting member perspectives
- Limited tech capacity (especially re: hybrid program delivery)

Resource Development: Fundraising & Marketing

- National vs. NY we're neither, really, which is a fundraising challenge
- Individual donor cultivation
 - Transactional vs. relationship-based
- Need to get out more, tell our story better
 - Lack of press/marketing

ROOM TO FOCUS, ROOM TO GROW





OBJECTIVES



CULTURE OF BELONGING

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PATHWAYS

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COMMUNITY

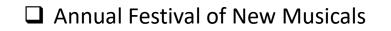
- Build on culture/tone of friendliness and inclusiveness
- Establish year-round marketing/social media presence
- Get out more; tell our story better
- Develop compelling case for being in NAMT membership
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CAPACITY

- Expand base of supporters
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- Build staff to meet programmatic needs
- Update technology in office and for all events to improve accessibility and efficiency



Given survey results, these programs' centrality to our mission and their continued relevance to the field and to NAMT's newly articulated goals, we plan to continue delivering the following core programs:



□ Fall Conference

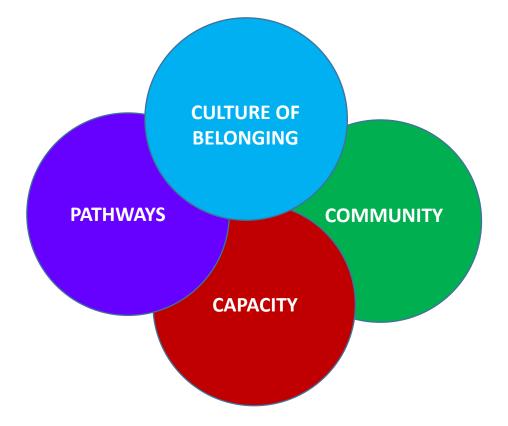
□ Spring Conference

□ Granting programs

- Frank Young Fund for New Musicals
- Impact & Exploration Fund

STRATEGIES SERVE MULTIPLE GOALS & OBJECTIVES





- The four goals are inextricably interconnected, and every strategy intentionally supports more than one goal and often more than one objective within each goal.
- For simplicity/clarity, we'll explore each strategy within its "lead" goal.



OBJECTIVES

- Model behavior
- Invite/incite change across the membership and the field
- Underpin and reinforce objectives and strategies for all goals

STRATEGIES

- Build NAMT membership to include more BIPOC-led and/or culturally specific organizations
- Ensure recruitment and hiring for all NAMT roles actively invites and welcomes applicants from all backgrounds
- Expand Impact & Exploration Fund
 - Additional funds to support specific project types (e.g. Accessibility initiatives)
- Develop more inclusive and representative Board and committees
- Eliminate barriers to entry (real and perceived) to participant access

- Increase in # of theatres of color and culturally specific institutions engaged with NAMT as members and stakeholders
- Festival application pool as well as selected writers/creative teams/artistic staffs increasingly reflective of the rich diversity of the world
- Increase in Board/committee/staff inclusivity and representation



OBJECTIVES

- Increase accessibility of content endorsed/developed by NAMT (via festivals, digital resources, etc.)
- Increase visibility of the art form
- Introduce more writers/works representing more experiences and perspectives to the field for development
- Provide opportunities without (or with intentionally very limited) gates/gate-keepers
- Define pathways broadly, holistically: not just writers, but all involved.
- Broaden youth/access involvement in musical theatre writing

STRATEGIES

- Explore expansion of Festival of New Musicals regionally and/or digitally while maintaining flagship annual event
- Investigate/negotiate for opportunity to capture video for archival & grants use and, ultimately, to share Festival online
- Expand Frank Young Fund for New Musicals
 - Additional funds to support specific project types (e.g. Festival shows)
 - Additional funds to support co-productions/other creative collaborations
- Introduce/expand The Table Read monthly newsletter focused on new works
- Extend Director Observership program to provide longer-term support; connect alumni
- Introduce Producer Observerships
- Cultivate a broader professional development focus for all Festival artists
- Explore additional ways to promote development/production of Festival shows at Member theatres
- Partner with National Endowment for the Arts on Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge for High School Students

- Increase in # of shows/writers with extended involvement
- More member theatres developing new works
 - Increase in applications for FYFNM at all levels
 - Increase in # of co-productions across NAMT membership
- Festival application pool as well as selected writers/creative teams/artistic staffs increasingly reflective of the rich diversity of the world



OBJECTIVES

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STRATEGIES

- Redesign/reorganize website
- Produce public-facing concerts
- Encourage enthusiastic NAMT members to serve as vocal ambassadors
- Launch program of 1:1 events between NAMT staff members and member organization staff/Board
- Implement full year press/marketing schedule highlighting full portfolio of programs and impact (vs. Festival only)
- Enrich relationships with complementary membership organizations to build stronger mutual understanding and extend reach

- Improved ratio of members gained/members lost (# and dues \$)
- More member org staff at all levels are involved in NAMT activities
- Increased website traffic, especially outside of Fall events registration season
- Expanded/enhanced social media engagement



OBJECTIVES

- Expand base of supporters
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- Build staff to meet programmatic needs
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STRATEGIES

- Launch resilience/strategic initiative campaign
- Secure large, multi-year grants
- Rebuild/expand Players program
- Establish cultivation/stewardship path for Festival-only donors to become more mission-driven, consistent donors
- Budget for technology improvements (and depreciation) annually
- Build multi-year pro-forma budget to test staff expansion feasibility

- Return to break-even/small surplus budgets
- # new funders, especially outside the NAMT membership
- Improved ratio of \$ raised/\$ spent on development
- Enhanced individual donor "loyalty" [proxy: \$ given attached to Festival vs. to org generally

CONCLUSION



□ First, last and always, we are committed to our core values and, especially, to creating a true Culture of Belonging in our office, for our membership and across the field.

□ Implementation is already underway!

- For example:
 - Launched Musical Theater Challenge for High School Students, in partnership with the NEA
 - Expanded educational/networking components to provide richer experience for Director Observers
 - Introduced *Table Read* newsletter to raise visibility of new musical development
 - Re-designing website to improve clarity, especially for those less familiar with NAMT

□ We acknowledge that the landscape changes every day and seems to be even more volatile in our post-pandemic, economically fraught, politically charged world.

- Vital to keep our proverbial "ear to the ground"
- This plan is a guide, not a contract; we will adapt/evolve as needed

□ Transparency is key

- Equally important to celebrate wins and admit when we've been less than successful
- Learn from errors and successes alike
- Build a strong body of best practices that will inform decisions every day

NEXT STEPS



ALREADY UNDERWAY

- Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge for High School Students
- Expanded networking for Observerships
- The Table Read newsletter
- Website redesign

COMING NEXT!

- Multi-year financial forecast
- Implementation Plan
- Success Indicators dashboard

APPENDIX



- Environmental Scan
- Member& Alumni Survey Results

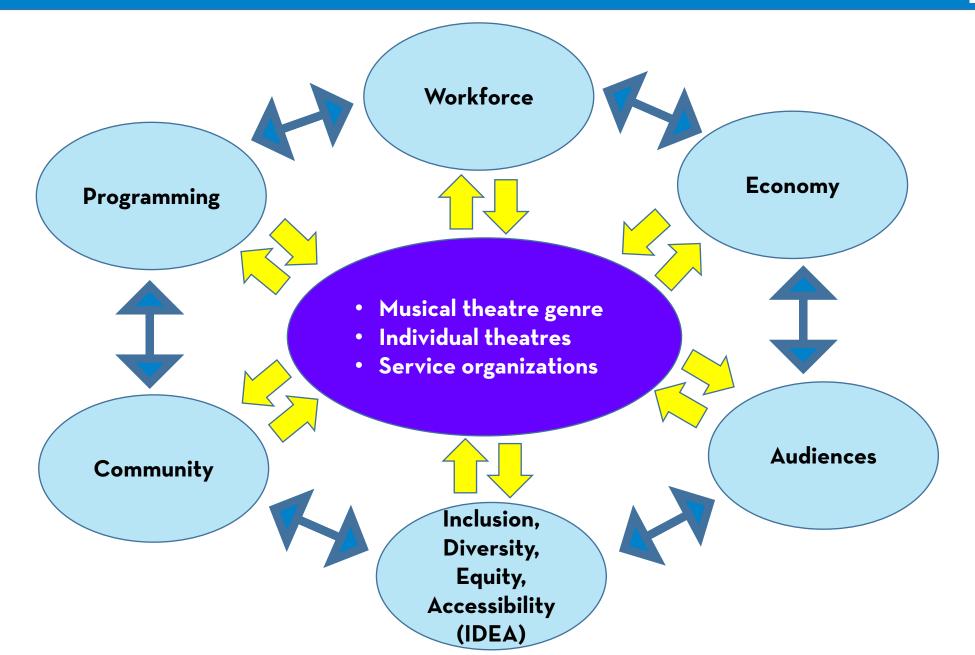


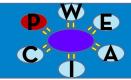
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

(COMPLETED 1/23)







PROGRAMMING



Musical Theatre Genre

- Divergent trends (over-simplified):
 - Jukebox musicals on the one hand
 - Musicals that work to grapple with current events, societal challenges, on the other
- Theatres that traditionally didn't program musicals are discovering/embracing their economic worth
 - But also risky because they're more expensive to produce, require some different core skills
- Many "classic" shows are increasingly viewed as problematic to the point of unproduceability

Individual Theatres

- Many questions of balance
 - How much risk?
 - Big shows or small?
 - Familiar or new?
- In challenging economic environment, who/what drives programming decisions
 - Mission vs. marketing
- Programming fully integrated with community and responsive to input from community increasingly seen as vital

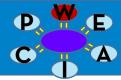




Service Organizations

- Drive to make membership more diverse and more representative also means diversity of opinion on programmatic value.
 - Tension between wanting everyone in the tent and needing to narrow programmatic offerings
 - Makes it even harder to answer the "what can we stop doing" question
- Membership of service organizations tending toward "what have you done for me lately" mentality
 - Desire across performing arts service org field to shift from culture of immediate gratification to stronger relationship basis.

For NAMT, the first of these factors is the more important. Membership tends to grow through the addition of smaller members, whose programmatic interests sometimes diverge from the larger institutions who contribute a higher percentage of dues.



WORKFORCE



Several forces/factors have changed workforce dynamics across the field.

Supply & Demand

Changes in Priorities

- Many (~30%) have left performing arts workforce
- BIPOC workers most likely to leave field
- Demand for staff is high as theatres fully reopen
- Dramatically increased effort to hire BIPOC staff
- More people receiving offers are negotiating salaries

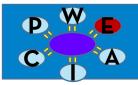
- With time, albeit involuntary, to consider, many performing arts workers have reevaluated priorities.
- Of those staying in the field, salary and work-life balance take precedence over other considerations
- For BIPOC workers, wellbeing is also vitally important

Attitudinal Shifts

- The sudden disruption of assumptions and what had been behavioral norms have resulted in significant changes in workplace attitudes
- More vocal demands for work-life balance
- Significantly lower thresholds of tolerance for bad (perceived or actual) behavior in supervisors or co-workers
- Significant carry-over from mental health challenges of shut-down

Sources: <u>Return to the Stage</u> "Finding Balance in a Post-Pandemic Workplace," Knowledge at Wharton

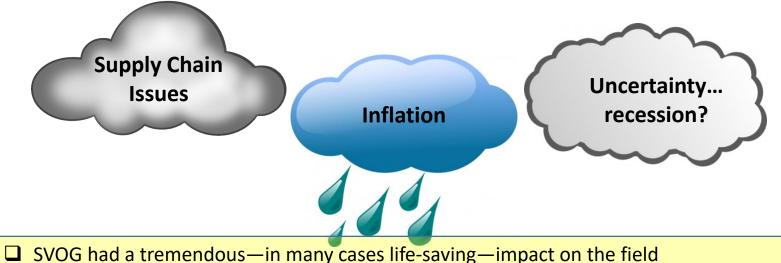
Significantly higher investment of both time and money across all areas of human resource management.



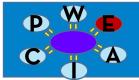
ECONOMY



Economic issues are exacerbating and complicating many other factors.



- But a downside was that the SVOG windfall obscured some long-term, structural
 - challenges that are now being laid bare by the rocky economy
- □ Fixed and variable costs have all increased, in many cases dramatically
 - Supply chain issues have increased cost of materials as well as shipping
 - Personnel costs have increased through
- Downward pressure on revenue as
 - Audiences slow to return due to Covid (et al)
 - With audience return a priority, ticket price increases are not as viable for revenue boost
 - Dynamic pricing models don't kick in with light advance sale
 - On contributed income side, many foundations are shifting funding priorities to BIPOCfocused initiatives



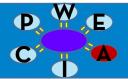


Service organizations feel these economic effects acutely.

- In many ways NAMT, along with other service organizations, have an even greater revenue challenge
 - Weren't eligible for SVOG
 - Membership dues grounded in member budgets will be very slow to recover
 - With dues based on members' prior-year musical theatre box office, NAMT will feel the effects for several years
 - Contributed revenue at particular risk as service orgs are rarely donors' first-tier funding priority

□ On the expense side, service organizations' budgets tend to be fixed-cost-heavy.

- As for everyone, expenses in all areas are increasing
- There are limited variable-expense "levers" to pull to cut costs without significantly reducing value delivered to members

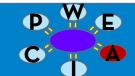




Multiple factors — including COVID, the economy and the political climate — are affecting audience attendance and attitudes.

Recent (and Continuing...) Data & Trends

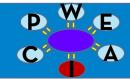
- □ The percent of people ready to attend live performing arts events has plateaued and is being negatively affected by the "tridemic."
- Budget/inflation concerns are affecting the selectivity of nearly half of patrons, and this factor is even more prominent among younger patrons, and especially younger, non-white patrons.
- □ Lack of interest in available programming continues to be a significant barrier to attendance, especially for patrons under age 64.
- Decline in professional arts-reviewing journalism limits reliable information sources.
- Inertia is real. After months of adapting to life at home, many people have gotten out of the habit of going out.
- Subscription-purchasing habits were already trending downwards before COVID. That trend has continued/accelerated.
- Many theatres report an increase in last-minute decision-making. These sales are more expensive to acquire and much less predictable than renewal-based, longerterm business.





Geographic differences are likely to have a continued impact on attendance and attitudes.

- WHETHER & HOW MUCH to attend have been affected by how long specific states/regions were shutdown by COVID and to what degree. For example, anecdotal info indicates that audiences are coming back more rapidly in Florida (natural disasters aside) than in the Northeast.
- WHAT to attend also appears to be influenced—even more than in years past—by political differences, with more conservative areas gravitating toward more traditional work and away from work that is perceived to have hallmarks of "political correctness."
- WHEN and WHERE to attend continue to be affected by masking policies. Some theatres are finding success with a hybrid policy, including select mask-required performances. Sensitivity to policies will likely continue to vary by season/infection rate.





The shared goal of making our theatres and our field more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible remains largely aspirational rather than realized.

Most Rapid Change

- **Casting practices**
- 10 out of 12s are phasing out
- □ Staff recruitment practices
 - Job descriptions
 - more transparent
 - less focused on (e.g.) educational requirements
 - Expanded outreach

Areas that are more taskoriented/mechanical

Moderate Change

- Active engagement of Board and staff in discussion and management of change
- Articulation of goals, what needs to/should change
- Experimentation with different pricing models for greater accessibility

Slower Change

- □ Culture of inclusiveness
- Programming decisionmaking criteria
- Integration of IDEA principles into fabric of all activities

Areas requiring more pervasive, cultural change

IDEA



NAMT is trying both to model behavior and to invite/incite change across the membership and field.

Key Areas of Focus

- Hiring Practices changes not yet yielding perceptible results
- Gatekeeping eliminated fees, endorsement...what's next?
- Membership expansion of representation, not just #
- Leadership of NAMT, in the field
- Mentorship Role in developing tomorrow's leaders
- Environment Creating a truly inclusive, anti-racist culture
- Education For staff, for membership, for field
- Field Forums Town Halls and...



Sometimes a supporting player in the past, Community has now taken on a leading role.

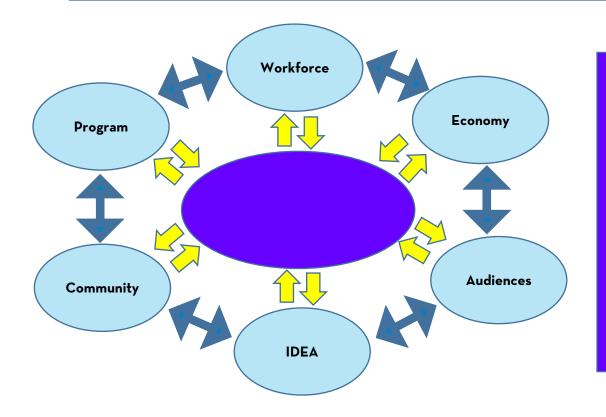
- Every theatre is (or should be) grappling with questions of how to move beyond the transactional to build meaningful, ongoing relationships in their community
- The integration of what goes on stage and what happens in education and community programs is increasingly important
- □ More active, genuine community participation may effect change in theatre norms
 - What's on stage
 - Who's on stage
 - Where does theatre take place
 - What is "acceptable theatre behavior"

How do we measure success when it's now even more about so much more than ticket sales?

MOVING FORWARD



While analysis of each component is valuable, all of these areas interact in numerous, important and sometimes conflicting ways.



For example:

- Workforce challenges cannot be separated from the economy and IDEA priorities
- Programmatic choices are inextricably related to—and sometimes in tension with—all other areas.

How individual theatres and service organizations set priorities and make decisions across these inter-connected areas will determine the field's future landscape.



MEMBER & ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS



<u>Members</u> elevate programs that connect them to each other/new works and benefit their orgs

Program	Importance	Effectiveness	SPREAD
Festival of New Musicals	94%	88%	7%
Fall Conference	88%	78%	11%
Online Directories	74%	66%	8%
Spring Conference	68%	61%	7%
News & Notes monthly newsletter	65%	60%	5%
Frank Young Fund for New Musicals	72%	58%	13%
Innovation & Exploration Fund granting program	69%	57%	12%
Online Town Halls	55%	52%	2%
EDI and Anti-Racism Resources	65%	50%	15%
Concerts (Sonwriter Spotlight) & Special Events	59%	48%	12%
Knowledge Exchange Webinars	56%	47%	9%
New Works Roundtable	56%	44%	11%
Writers' Roundtable	56%	43%	14%
Set & Costume Registry	48%	40%	8%
Discounts & Partnerships	50%	38%	11%
Nuts & Bolts Guide to Producing New Musicals	53%	38%	16%
Innovation & Exploration Guide online resource	42%	36%	6%
Management Roundtable	42%	36%	6%
New Musicals Map	35%	31%	4%
Slack Channel	33%	25%	8%

<u>Festival alums</u> elevate programs that advance their work and keep them connected to NAMT

Program	Importance	Effectiveness	SPREAD
Festival of New Musicals	95%	80%	15%
News & Notes monthly newsletter	68%	68%	0%
Fall Conference	73%	64%	9%
Online Directories	64%	47%	17%
Writers' Roundtable	56%	47%	9%
Access to NAMT Staff for Consultation	57%	40%	17%
Concerts (Songwriter Spotlight) & Special Events	52%	39%	13%
New Works Roundtable	42%	35%	7%
Slack Channels	34%	28%	6%
EDI and Anti-Racism Resources	50%	27%	23%
Frank Young Fund for New Musicals granting program	37%	26%	10%
Alumni Advisory Committee	39%	26%	13%
New Musicals Map	23%	20%	3%
Knowledge Exchange Webinars	27%	19%	7%
Nuts & Bolts Guide to Producing New Musicals	30%	14%	16%