

Panel Overview

Finding qualified successors to aging baby boomers has become a critical concern for many arts organizations. At the 2006 Annual Convention, Americans for the Arts posed *Art in Changing Communities* as its theme, setting the stage for addressing the field's impending leadership transition. This concern is further complicated by U.S. census data that indicates a shrinking labor pool in the next 10 years, as more Americans than ever before hit retirement age. For many in this career stage, an executive director position is perceived as the only viable leadership pathway.

Process

Join this interactive session as we launch a dynamic dialogue that will explore strategies for attracting, engaging, developing, and retaining midcareer professionals.

Outcomes

Participants will identify key action items for personal development, organizational capacity building, advocacy in the field and the role of Americans for the Arts.

Presenters

Amy Kweskin Duncan, Principal, Arts Management Consulting, Facilitator

Shannon Daut, Associate Director, Programs, Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF)

Brechin Flournoy, Director of Public Relations, Quinn & Associates

Essence Newhoff, Director of Major Gifts, Folger Shakespeare Library

Eric Wallner, Cultural Affairs Supervisor, City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division

Format

Introduction

Career Lifecycle

Research Fellowship report – Midcareer Leadership Development

Developing your own leadership pipeline

Panel Discussion

Sharing of panelist career expectations, realities, risks and rewards

Small Group Discussions – hosted by panelists

How do these stories resonate with your own story?

What risks have you taken and have there been rewards?

Report Back

What strategies are people taking in developing their leadership capacity?

What role can we take collectively in developing the leadership pipeline?

What role do we recommend for Americans for the Arts?

What highlights of this discussion that should be shared with the field?

Next Steps – Leadership Peer Group meeting on Sunday

Americans for the Arts Research Fellowship - Report Summary

FOCUS ON MIDCAREER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Amy Kweskin Duncan, Research Fellow
August 19, 2006

Over the past several months I have had the opportunity to work with Americans for the Arts as a Fellow researching leadership development needs of midcareer arts managers. Inspiration for this work came out of my own questioning of what it means to be midcareer. The larger context for this research is the impending labor shift as pioneers of arts nonprofits, now on the brink of retirement, perceive a dearth of qualified successors. Those ready to take the helm are equally frustrated wondering if the field can foster their leadership aspirations. The concern is exacerbated by census statistics indicating a shrinking labor pool available to replace senior leaders in the next ten years.

The research methodology involved dozens of arts professionals from across the country who participated in roundtable discussions, peer groups, online surveys and one-on-one interviews. These candid discussions with arts managers, funders, educators, consultants, management service providers, and board members, as well as self-identified mid-career arts managers, have allowed me to paint a picture of midcareer leaders.

My conclusion is that the leadership pipeline is underdeveloped and midcareer is the point at which arts professionals seriously question their future in the field. No longer on the steep learning curve of establishing their footing, midcareer managers are experts in their area of focus ranging from mid-level and senior management to Executive Director. Despite their accomplishments a desire for developing management and team leadership skills is unmet. Career paths plateau because organizations lack the resources to offer professional development or career advancement opportunities. This has resulted in a vast migration of professionals moving between organizations in endless pursuit of advancement opportunities. For many it means crisscrossing the country every two to four years.

Most alarming is the belief that Executive Director is the only viable career aspiration for leading the field. Regardless of interest or expertise it was cited repeatedly by research participants as the only way to be involved in the strategic advancement of an organization and to earn a competitive salary. Further concern comes from the need to balance career expectations with life goals such as having the means to start a family and obtain property. When unable to reach these goals many wonder if their future is in the arts. For some the solution has been to career transition into other sectors of nonprofit management or to exit completely. As one interviewee

Session Worksheet

Sharing Leadership Development Stories – Risk and Reward

1. Memorable statements made by the panelists:

2. Which statements resonate with me and why?

3. What risks have I taken in my leadership development and what have been the rewards?

4. Strategies being used by others in developing their leadership potential:

5. What next steps can I take for developing my leadership potential?

(When you get to three ideas, push yourself to think of two more.)

6. What next steps can my organization take in developing leadership opportunities?

7. What role do I want Americans for the Arts to take?

8. What key points will I share with my organization when I return to the office?

Panellist Recommended Resources

Essence Newhoff's List

Some of these are more nuts-and-bolts than thought-provoking, but I find inspiration in the practical, too!

The Artful Manager <http://www.artsjournal.com/artfulmanager/> Andrew Taylor's blog on the business of arts and culture

Stanford Social Innovation Review <http://www.ssireview.org/>

Chronicle of Philanthropy

Philanthropy News Digest, Foundation Center publication <http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/>

Americans for the Arts listserv about/for emerging leaders

boardnetUSA, an online service that matches individuals seeking board positions with nonprofits seeking board members <http://www.boardnetusa.org/public/home.asp>

Brechin Flournoy's List

The theme of my suggestions are to "Connect Globally".

Sound

www.totallyradio.com - based in the U.K. this site hosts a number of different shows that are refreshed every week - listeners can choose shows dedicated to a wide variety of sound experiences - jazz, hip-hop, world music, pop music, esoteric, electronica, folk music, and more.

<http://www.classicalwebcast.dds.nl/index.html> provides entry to a catalogue of global classical stations. Right now, I'm fond of Australian Broadcast Corporation (ABC Classical FM) based in Sydney.

PR/Marketing resources, ideas, and discussion boards:

www.fuel4arts.com - Global arts marketing tools and ideas

www.prwatch.org - published by the Center for Media and Democracy

<http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/> - Live Art Development Agency

Reference article: Today's Arts Market: The Big Picture by Louis Stevens, Arts Market, Inc. www.durhamarts.org/pdf/arts_market_big_picture

Performances that (re)inspired my love of the theater:

Inbal Pinto Dance Company "Oyster"

SHUNT Theater Company "Tropicana"

Baz Lurhmann's "La Boheme"

Flavorpill Productions publishes weekly round-ups and sends them out in e-journals. Each one is a compendium of information and resources about a specific topic. This has been a great resource for news and the global beat.

www.activate.com - world news once a week
www.artkrush.com - art
www.boldtype.com - books
www.earplug.cc - music
www.icreport.com - fashion

Amy's Kweskin Duncan's List

Resources that I use to develop my leadership skills and to stay motivated!

Books

Leadership is an Art and Leadership Jazz by Max DePree – short and inspirational books on modelling leadership

The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization (Hardcover) by John C. Maxwell – Leadership at every level of the organisation

Creating Success: Develop Your NLP Skills by Andrew Bradbury – understanding how communication style impacts leadership techniques

The Tipping Point and *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell – essential foundation reading for understanding communications and decision making

Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity, Susan Kenny Stevens – inspirational model for organisational and professional development

Blogs

Taking the lead www.careergoals.blogspot.com my blog exploring leadership development as a nonprofit professional

Barry's Blog <http://www.westaf.org/blog/> Barry Hessenius convenes arts management thought leaders in his monthly online discussion forum called the Hessenius Group

Articles

Leverage Lost by John Kreidler <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/lost.html> - essential reading to understand the origins of American arts administration

Eric Wallner's List

"Generation X and Beyond" from Grantmakers in the Arts
http://www.qiarts.org/usr_doc/genx.pdf

NAAO did a pivotal series of regional convening on leadership development in the field several years back (around 1999).

This is an interesting dialogue on generational transfer from the Community Arts Network:

http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2006/05/a_response_to_t.php

And finally the recent Irvine Foundation report does extensive coverage on the supposed "leadership deficit". http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/arts/Critical_Issues_Arts.pdf

Career Coaching Methodology and Worksheet

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Much like strategic planning, setting out your career goals allows you to clarify your directives, recognize opportunities and measure incremental successes. The following is a basic outline to career coaching.

Set your goal - and it should be pretty clearly defined such as, "pursuing a creative endeavour in my spare time that allows me to express myself in ways that I can't do at work." It should be a goal that makes you smile, not one that makes you sweat with anxiety or feel so comfortable that you are still in your safety zone.

Goal:

Define success - How will you know you've reached the goal when you get there? What will success look like? How will it feel? Can it be quantified and/or qualified? What will success allow you to do that you aren't doing now?

Current situation - Where are you currently in relation to the goal? Are there any things in your life that you may already be doing that are moving you towards that goal – things that you didn't recognise before?

Action steps - What are specific actions you can take to get you towards your goal? Clearly identify them. How will you pursue them? What is a specific date/time that you will pursue each one? Once you think of a list add five more actions just to give yourself a good stretch in your thinking.