



League of Historic American Theatres, Inc.

Strategic Plan

2010-12

(Adopted 7/15/09)

We believe that historic theatres are irreplaceable social, economic, historic and cultural resources for their communities. As iconic, creative places of public assembly, they build community loyalty, reinforce community identity and heritage, stimulate downtown revitalization, promote pride of place and anchor creative economies.

The League of Historic American Theatres envisions these unique showcases for human creativity, arts and culture as vital assets in livable communities throughout North America.

I. Executive Summary

Purpose of Strategic Plan

Since 2005, the League has been making a transition from an organization best known for a membership which helps save historic theatres to a membership increasingly concerned with the tools, techniques and technologies for sustaining historic theatres at the center of their communities. We want to insure that historic theatres, ones that have been restored or rehabilitated through extraordinary community efforts and at considerable expense during the past several decades, can be sustained for the benefit of future generations. By shifting focus to sustainability of operating theatres, the League can better sustain the field and assist emerging theatres.

Our three-year strategic planning process included focus groups, surveys of our diverse membership, as well as critical self examination by board and staff. Through members' active participation in this process, the League has learned a great deal about them, our field and our association. We have long known that historic American theatres are successful survivors. But through this process, we learned that their longevity is due to managements who constantly adapt their programming, operations and facilities to remain relevant, and to communities who embrace historic theatres at their very heart. We have learned that the League is a national network of experienced theatre practitioners and resources for improving theatres, their businesses and their communities.

Through research, experience and peer exchanges, League members have developed distinct competencies in capital project planning and management, facility growth, integration of new technologies and theatre as real estate. League members represent a full spectrum of operating models from producing to presenting, renting and complex combinations. They integrate program, market and facility planning. They develop creative spaces. They leverage the historic nature of their venues to add value to programming, marketing, fundraising, and community engagement. They are important features of downtown revitalization, reinforce community identity, stimulate pride of place, build community loyalty, and anchor creative economies.

With the future profoundly less certain than at any time in recent memory, League members are confronting difficult challenges. Challenging times require new strategies, renewed energy and resolve. The collective knowledge of the League's network of historic theatres can help members leverage diminishing resources to greater advantage, think strategically and improve their capacity to adapt to quickly changing circumstances.

The League of Historic American Theatres Strategic Plan 2010-12 describes how the association can complete its transition and increase its value as a resource of knowledge, experience and wisdom for sustaining historic theatres for the benefit of their communities and future generations.

Plan Structure

The introductory sections of this plan provide background information on the association's founding, membership trends and recent transition (Section II). A description of the League's 2006-09 planning process (Section III) details what the organization learned from its members and others about the needs of historic theatres and their distinct competencies (Section IV).

Acknowledging a broad range of potential activities, the plan focuses the organization's resources to address its clarified mission, vision and goals (Section V) related to sustaining operating historic theatres, thereby better sustaining the field and emerging historic theatres. It includes a plan of actions and measurements for annually assessing progress (Section VI). The plan assumes that the League's management staff will annually develop operational plans and operating budgets to reflect the plan's priorities and targeted outcomes. Also, following a review of 2012 outcomes, the League can reset objectives, actions, or measurements based on an assessment of progress and results from the previous three years and thereby integrate planning into ongoing organizational development efforts.

II. Background

Founded in 1976 by 42 charter theatre members to create a booking circuit, the League of Historic American Theatres has grown into a network of more than 250 operating historic theatres throughout the United States and Canada. Past and current League members have driven the rescue and rehabilitation of hundreds of historic American theatres for more than three decades.

Valued as a niche organization and beloved by many members, the League's membership reached a plateau in the 1990s. Although membership had not been segmented or tracked consistently over 30 years, in 2006 membership trends revealed that 350 theatre members had lapsed during the previous ten years.

Although overall membership has remained relatively static in recent years, the percentage of theatre members has been growing. 31% of member theatres have annual budgets under \$500,000; 38% have budgets of \$500K to \$1.49 million; 31% have budgets of more than \$1.5 million. 67% of member theatres serve market populations of 300,000 or less, while 64% of members' primary theatres have seating capacities of 1,200 or less.

Since 2005, the League has been making a strategic transition from an organization best known for a membership which helps save historic theatres to a membership increasingly concerned with the tools, techniques and technologies of sustaining historic theatres at the heart of their communities. Shifting its focus to sustainability of operating theatres, the League can better sustain the field, assist emerging theatres and secure resources necessary to serve its members.

III. 2006-09 Strategic Planning Process

Facilitated by Janis A. Barlow, Janis A. Barlow & Associates, Toronto, the League of Historic American theatres undertook a three-year strategic planning process to answer the following questions:

1. Where are we? (Context)
2. Where do we want to go? (Vision/Goals)
3. How do we get there? (Strategies)
4. Who will get us there? (Leadership)
5. When will we arrive? (Schedule)
6. How much will it cost? (Budget)

Initiated as a member-driven process, the League's planning process included focus groups, surveys of our diverse membership and key leadership of America's most famous or distinguished operating historic theatres, as well as critical self examination by board and staff.

2006 Member Research: Brainstorm vision, mission, values

From Strategic Workshop Session on July 21, 2006 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

The League was in the last year of a four-year strategic plan devised by the board. During the new executive director's first year, she approached Janis A. Barlow & Associates to assist with a new cycle of planning. A review of previous plans reveals a critical gap in the League's planning processes: a general consensus of the membership on the organization's mission, vision and values. As a result, Janis Barlow designed a planning workshop as part of the 2006 annual conference in Los Angeles to:

- Invite a "live and in person" membership dialogue on the League;
- Assist the League's new executive director in understanding member perspectives on the League;
- Articulate perspectives and ideas to inform the design of a membership-wide survey.

Over 27% of the League's members participated in the conference workshop and identified professional development as the most valuable aspect of the League. During group brainstorming, workshop participants described the League's stated vision, mission and values as being outdated and generally unsatisfactory. In discussing the League's vision, participants expressed ideas related to social fabric/community relationships, heritage/identity, knowledge/understanding, arts and culture and economic benefits. Members expressed a preference for having the League serve members' needs in order to strengthen the field rather than strengthening the case for historic theatres in order to serve the needs of the membership.

2007 Member Survey

From Strategic Planning Interim Summary Report, July 2007 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

In February 2007, the League conducted an on-line survey of members and potential members in order to enhance its understanding of the membership. Designed by Janis Barlow & Associates to solicit the views of individuals working in the field of historic theatres, the survey was the second step in LHAT's member-driven strategic planning process.

The goals of the survey were to: better understand the profile of the League members; understand the awareness and satisfaction levels of League services compared to 2003; and to understand perceptions of the League's mission and values. A similar survey was conducted by Shugoll Research in 2003, created specifically for members of the League, and some of the questions in the 2007 survey were transferred from that survey in order to draw comparison. While the 2007 survey solicited members and non-members, including theatre practitioners, service providers and individuals with a general interest in the field of historic theatres, the 2003 Shugoll survey focused on members, only.

29% of the League's members responded to the survey, a slight increase from 27% in 2003. 64% of member respondents have attended at least one regional or national LHAT conference. Nearly 60% of member respondents are working in an operating historic theatre, a shift upward of 6% since 2003. Fewer service providers (approximately 17%) responded to the 2007 survey than in 2003 (21%).

Respondent Profile

- Theatre seating capacity – 59% of member respondents have over 800-seat theatres; 32% of non-member respondents have over 800-seat theatres.
- Annual budgets over \$1M – 29% of member respondents; 15% of non-member respondents
- Currently operating – 87% of member respondents; 61% of non-member respondents
- Emerging theatres – 13% of member respondents; 39% of non-member respondents
- Attend LHAT conferences – 66% of member respondents; 32% of non-member respondents

Member/Non-member Comparison

- Compared to non-member survey respondents, more League member respondents have larger theatre venues, have annual budgets over \$1M, are operating and have attended League conferences.
- Non-members who responded to the survey tend to be associated with much smaller, emerging operations. However, many significant organizations, who are not League members, including founding members, did not respond to the survey.
- At least 44% of operating historic theatres are planning rehabilitations and/or expansions.

LHAT Service Use Rate

The number of LHAT products/services has almost double since 2003. Responses reveal that awareness and use of services has increased, too. Respondents report much higher use of educational seminars, broadcast faxes/emails and Colleagues than in 2003. The most popular new program is the LHAT-CHAT.

Member Satisfaction

Respondents revealed a high level of satisfaction with the League:

- 71% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction as very or extremely high.
- 71% of respondents rated helpfulness of LHAT staff as very or extremely high.
- 70% of respondents rated usefulness to their organization as very or extremely high.
- 69% of respondents rated the uniqueness of LHAT as very or extremely high.
- 68% of respondents rated quality of products and programs as very or extremely high.

What Members Value

Responses revealed that members most highly value the following opportunities:

- Exchanging practical information, knowledge and wisdom from the field (72%)
- Experiencing other historic theatres – case studies and success stories (57%)
- Collaborating on collective problem-solving with experienced colleagues (44%)
- Sharing and exploring innovative and relevant research and ideas (41%)

- Learning about developments unique to the field of historic theatres (38%)

Mission/Vision

64% of respondents believe that LHAT is an “association of members working to preserve and use historic theatres in their communities.” Respondents had a variety of aspirations for historic theatres:

- Community gathering places that reinforce the social fabric of communities;
- Economic revitalization of communities;
- Preservation of our relationship to our past and our sense of identity;
- Unique showcases for human creativity, arts and culture; and
- Beauty, balance and understanding in our lives.

Summary of Findings

The 2007 online survey revealed that LHAT members are diverse with diverse needs. Operating theatre members' needs appear to be on the increase with second and third waves of rehabilitation. Member and non-member respondents differ more in capacity than in value or vision. 85% of member respondents think that the League meets their needs. However, what members value and what the League does well are not totally in alignment. Also, responses reveal confusion about the mission.

2007 Strategic Direction

From Strategic Planning Interim Summary Report, July 2007 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

During the League's summer board meeting on July 25, 2007 in Boston, MA, planning consultant Janis Barlow presented an interim summary report on the League's year-long strategic planning process and engaged board members in a discussion of the organization's mission, vision and strategic direction.

Janis explained that the League's current mission indicates what the League does (“serves the historic theatres industry by promoting the rescue, rehabilitation and sustainable use of historic theatres”), but does not state the League's mission in terms of needs fulfillment, nor does it identify a vision. She recommended the following responses to mission questions.

- *Whom do you exist to serve?* – **Historic American Theatres**
- *Which of their needs do you fulfill?* – **The need to be supported by a community of professional practice**
- *How do you do it? (values and techniques)* – **A network of shared experience**
- *Why do you do it? (beliefs and vision)* – **Historic theatres are irreplaceable social, economic, historic and cultural resources.**

In providing a premise for a new strategic direction for the League, Janis presented clarifying key definitions and assumptions:

- **Historic Theatres** are 50 years old or more **or** have specific historic, architectural, social or cultural significance.
- Operating historic theatres are the core of the membership – their numbers attract all other categories of members.
- Past and current League members have driven the rescue and rehabilitation of hundreds of historic American theatres in the past 30 years.
- An extensive network of successfully operating historic theatres is **both** the vision and the key to realizing the League's mission.

- The rehabilitation and ongoing stewardship of historic theatres have unique demands best served by a niche, specialty organization.
- The historic theatre field is ever expanding.
- Rehabilitation is never ending.
- “Rehabilitation” is proactive.
- “Sustainability” is interactive and visionary.

In July 2007, the League’s membership approved the following strategic direction for 2007-2012:

Over the next five years, the League of Historic American Theatres will place new emphasis on programs that serve to sustain operating historic theatres.

2007-08 Operating Theatre Managers Interviews

From Strategic Planning Report, October, 2007 and Planning Progress Report, March, 2009 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

Following an Annual Membership Meeting presentation on LHAT strategic planning work undertaken during 2006-07, over 100 members participated in a planning session facilitated by Janis Barlow on July 28th during the League’s 31st Annual Conference in Boston, MA. This session confirmed that members believe that operating historic theatres have unique challenges and issues and that the League is in a position to help sustain the operation of historic theatres.

Additionally, Janis recommended canvassing key leadership of America’s most famous or distinguished historic theatres for their advice, including a number of founders who are no longer members. The focus group session during the League’s conference and interviews with operating theatre managers helped identify potential League program and service ideas for testing with the operating historic theatre segment of the League. Almost without reservation, those who were interviewed applauded the League’s shift to help sustain historic theatres.

Most of the non-members who were interviewed indicated that they thought of the League as an organization that assisted with the start-up (or, rather, re-start-up) of historic theatres and was of little value to them. Several said that they had referred amateur groups and preservationists to the League, but they were not likely to turn to the League themselves, unless their theatres were undergoing another restoration. Ironically, most of the non-member interviewees said that they were facing issues of program relevance, financial sustainability and facility growth, adaptation and deferred maintenance.

Several interviews were undertaken with operating theatre managers who have stabilized their historic theatres and have attended a League conference in search of ideas to better leverage their advantages in the marketplace. However, they were unable to access a group of peers for having discussions relevant to their historic theatres. Also, they stated that they don’t want the same thing they can get at another conference; they want it to be applied to historic theatres.

These interviews clearly revealed that the terms “rehabilitation,” “restoring,” “preserving,” “saving,” and “rescuing” historic theatres have, in some minds, cast League members as activists rather than theatre professionals.

Overall, these interviews revealed that the League is a potential resource to non-participants, but that it will have to offer a new vocabulary, some minor program adjustments and serious re-positioning to attract new operating theatre participants.

2008 Business Planning

President Jim Boese appointed an ad hoc business planning committee to participate in a strategy meeting on Monday, December 8, 2008, facilitated by Steve Lane, Founder and President of Vertical Leap Consulting, LLC.

Discussion revealed challenges associated with the League's membership structure, a hybrid of professional society and trade association. Professional societies provide individual members industry credentials through continuing education programs, while trade associations work primarily to advance the common business interests of their organization members, often through lobbying activities.

Discussion also clarified the League's core business: knowledge management -- not simply education -- facilitating relationships, sharing information and creating solutions. Unlike many of its members, the League is not in the business of event management; but it uses events, such as its annual conference and historic theatre forums, as the means of developing relationships among members and helping them solve common problems associated with rehabilitating and successfully operating historic theatres. The League of Historic American Theatres is a national network with resources for improving historic theatres, their businesses, and their communities.

Creating a Sustainable Business Model

Growing membership and non-dues revenue are critical factors in developing a sustainable future for the League of Historic American Theatres.

Considerations for membership growth include:

- Acknowledging that our niche is operating historic theatres
- Communicating LHAT's focus to members and potential members
- Engaging multiple individuals from member theatres
- Increasing communication with larger field
- Considering unit cost of recruitment marketing dollar
- Improving follow-up
- Identifying new technologies for serving members

Options for growing non-dues revenue include:

- Peer group services (member segmentation)
- Registration fees - expanded trade show targeted to theatre suppliers and service providers
- Registration fees – conference (targeted to multiple positions within member theatres)
- Registration fees - workshops/seminars/forums, including webinars (targeted to facility managers)
- Auction – donations (reach beyond LHAT membership)
- Referral fees
- Sponsored email blasts and other sponsorships
- Advertising
- Membership enhancement (plaques)
- Tourism – merchandize theatre tours targeted to members' audiences
- Brand sales (historicity)
- Joint programming with other associations and national organizations that responds specifically to unique challenges of historic theatres

Marketing Position

The League's distinct competitive advantage and its ability to impact customer needs that are not effectively being met elsewhere must fit our passion and core competencies, as well as our business model. Members are attracted to the League's friendly network of passionate, professional people with diverse skills and knowledge of theatres. They seek access to information and knowledge from a broad base of historic theatres that have been catalysts for revitalizing communities and neighborhoods. They

seek knowledge integration through peer interaction that will provide solutions for adapting to change and improve their communities, their business and their theatre facilities. The League is most successful when it engages members, providing a nurturing environment for leaders and entrepreneurs.

Limited resources may be expanded through strategic alliances. However, the League must differentiate its services to members from those offered by other organizations and target them specifically for historic theatres. The League will consider alliances that expand capacity, provide access to competencies, and afford branding and opportunities for enhancing our credibility, opening sales channels and providing capital to support growth. Other strategic considerations for assessing prospective alliances include intellectual property, geographic reach, level of risk, exclusivity, barriers to entry for competitors, innovation, resource sharing and similar values or organizational culture.

2009 Operating Theatres Survey

From Strategic Planning Progress Report, 2006-2009, April 2009, and Strategic Planning for the League of Historic American Theatres, Final Report 2006-2009, July 2009 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

As the final step in the organization's three-year planning process, the League conducted an online survey of member and non-member operating theatres to determine how it can better serve to sustain operating historic theatres.

Respondents Profile

- 86% are LHAT members
- 68% identify as CEO, ED or GM
- 93% currently work in an historic theatre
- 59% represent fully operating theatres
- 29% represent partially operating theatres
- 61% are planning or engaged in capital work
- 44% attend LHAT conferences

Whom do they serve?

- 38% are in markets of 50,000 to 300,000 (compared to 43% of LHAT member theatres)
- 20% are in markets of less than 50,000 (compared to 23% of LHAT member theatres)
- 15% are in markets of over 1 million (compared to 15% of LHAT member theatres)
- 14% are in markets of 500,000 to 1 million (compared to 13% of LHAT member theatres)
- 12% are in markets of 301,000 to 500,000 (compared to 8% of LHAT member theatres)

What needs do they serve?

- 58% provide a multi-disciplinary program
- 12% provide theatre
- 10% provide music
- 9% exhibit film
- 1% provide opera
- 1% provide dance

How do they serve those needs?

- 39% have a combination operating model (rent, present, produce and/or exhibit)
- 26% are arts presenters
- 19% are rental facilities
- 7% are film exhibitors

- 6% are producing companies

How do they serve those needs? (Human resources)

- 58% have fewer than 5 full-time personnel
- 28% have 6-15 full-time personnel
- 14% have more than 15 full-time personnel
- 44% have fewer than 5 part-time personnel
- 28% have 6-15 part-time personnel
- 23% have over 25 part-time personnel
- 5% have 16-25 part-time personnel

How do they serve those needs? (Facilities)

- 16% operate more than one theatre
- 82% of secondary theatres have fewer than 800 seats
- 39% have fewer than 800 seats in their primary theatre (compared to 42% of LHAT member theatres)
- 22% have 800-1,200 seats in their primary theatre (compared to 22% of LHAT member theatres)
- 22% have 1,200-1,600 seats in their primary theatre (compared to 19% of LHAT member theatres)
- 17% have 1,600 or more seats in their primary theatre (compared to 17% of LHAT member theatres)

How do they serve those needs? (Financing)

- 65% have annual operating budgets under \$1,500,000 (compared to 64% of LHAT member theatres)
- 16% have budgets of \$1.5M to \$2.49M (compared to 18% of LHAT member theatres)
- 11% have budgets over \$5M (compared to 7% of LHAT member theatres)
- 8% have budgets of \$2.5M - \$5M (compared to 6% of LHAT member theatres)

Important Issues

A majority of respondents identified the following issues as extremely or very important (listed in order of importance, based on five-point scale):

- Community relations and development (4.70)
- Audience relations and marketing (4.14)
- Financial stabilization (3.99)
- Making the case for support (3.79)
- Programming and artist relations (3.61)
- Facility operations (3.58)
- Governance and board development (3.25)
- Human resources (2.84)

Interest in Services

A majority of respondents identified the following services as extremely or very important (listed in order of interest, based on five-point scale):

- Access to a network of peers who share common goals (4.10)
- Information/practical support to answer specific questions (3.89)

- Professional collaborations to exchange ideas/experiences (3.89)
- Professional development seminars/workshops (3.63)
- Directories and data on the historic theatres field (3.40)
- Publications on field news (3.24)

Since 2007, LHAT-CHAT has become a most popular service, while interest in directories and publications has declined.

Preferred Access to Information

Respondents indicated their preference for accessing information in the following ways (listed in order of usefulness, based on five-point scale):

- Web searches (3.60)
- Peer consultations (3.59)
- Multi-day national conferences (3.49)
- Two-day regional forums (3.46)
- Professional consultations (3.34)
- Periodic publications (3.24)
- Webinars (3.04)
- Telephone consultations and textbooks (2.70)

Interest in Proposed Programs

Respondents expressed interest in the following programs for improving their communities, their business and their historic facilities (listed in order of interest, based on five-point scale):

- Building community loyalty (4.23)
- Reinforcing community identity (4.16)
- Stimulating downtown revitalization (4.13)
- Stimulating pride of place (4.13)
- Anchoring creative economies (4.05)
- Integrating new technologies (3.89)
- Leveraging value added marketing (3.84)
- Leveraging value added fund raising (3.80)
- Offering national visibility and prestige to local theatres (3.74)
- Integrated planning – program, market, facility (3.74)
- Leveraging value added community relations (3.73)
- Leveraging value added programming (3.65)
- Historic venue policies and procedures (3.64)
- Full spectrum of operating models (3.63)
- Historic theatre maintenance (3.63)
- Facility growth and creative space development (3.51)
- Capital project planning and management (3.48)
- Theatre as real estate (2.96)

Consultant Recommendations

During her final report on the League's 2006-09 strategic planning process to members on July 17, 2009, consultant Janis Barlow recommended that LHAT work to:

- Define the field and broaden understanding of "historic" theatres to **great** American theatres
- Reposition itself as a League of Historic American Theatres interested in sustaining the field of historic theatres

- Attract larger theatres in larger markets with services relevant to all theatres
- Program at the intersection between operating theatre member issues and needs and LHAT competencies as a national network

Also, Barlow recommended program development related to the following top member issues, preferences and needs:

- Community relations and development
- Audience relations and marketing
- Financial stabilization
- Access to a network of peers
- Web searches
- Integrating new technologies
- Leveraging value-added marketing
- Building community loyalty

Barlow concluded her final report on the League's 2006-09 strategic planning process by recommending development of a web-based, interactive guide to historic American theatres (like historichotels.com), since it responds to most top member issues, preferences and needs.

IV. League of Historic American Theatres Core Competencies

From Strategic Planning Progress Report, March 2009 by Janis A. Barlow & Associates

Historic theatres are successful survivors. Their longevity is due to managements who constantly adapt their programming, operations and facilities to remain relevant, and to communities who embrace them as iconic, creative places of public assembly.

The League of Historic American Theatres is a national network of resources and practitioners. Through research, experience and peer exchanges, League members have developed a number of distinct competencies in the following areas:

Improving Communities

- Building community loyalty
- Reinforcing community identity
- Stimulating downtown revitalization
- Stimulating pride of place
- Anchoring creative economies
- Offering national visibility and prestige to local theatres

Improving Theatre Business

- Leveraging the historic theatre – value added marketing, fundraising, programming and community relations
- Historic venue policies and procedures
- Integrated planning – program, market, facility
- Full spectrum of operating models

Improving Theatre Facilities

- Integrating new technologies
- Facility growth and creative space development – construction, expansion and rehabilitation
- Capital project planning and management
- Theatre as real estate

V. Mission – Vision - Goals

Mission

The **League of Historic American Theatres, Inc.** (www.lhat.org), a non-profit membership association, is a professional network dedicated to sustaining America's historic theatres for the benefit of their communities and future generations.

Vision and Values

We believe that historic theatres are irreplaceable social, economic, historic and cultural resources for their communities. As iconic, creative places of public assembly, they build community loyalty, reinforce community identity and heritage, stimulate downtown revitalization, promote pride of place and anchor creative economies.

The League of Historic American Theatres envisions these unique showcases for human creativity, arts and culture as vital assets in livable communities throughout North America.

Strategic Direction

Whereas:

- Current and former League members have driven the rescue and rehabilitation of hundreds of historic American Theatres during the past 30 years;
- An extensive network of successfully operating historic theatres is both the vision and the means to realizing the League's mission;
- The rehabilitation and ongoing stewardship of historic theatres have unique demands best served by a niche organization;

The League of Historic American Theatres will place new emphasis on programs that serve to sustain operating historic theatres.

Goals

The League of Historic American Theatres commits its energy and resources for the next three to five years toward achieving the following goals:

1. Strengthen the League's network of operating historic theatres.
2. Expand organizational capacity to facilitate the League's network.
3. Promote public interest in America's historic theatres.

VI. Plan of Actions

Since the League of Historic American Theatres is a national network with resources for improving historic theatres, their businesses, and their communities, the 2006-09 planning process identified the need to reinforce the League's role as facilitator rather than provider of services. League programs facilitate relationships, share information and help members sustain historic theatres for the benefit of their communities and future generations. Unlike many of its members, the League is not in the business of event management; but it uses events, such as its annual conference and historic theatre forums, as the means of developing relationships among members and helping them solve common problems associated with successfully operating historic theatres.

Program Goals

As the League builds organizational capacity to facilitate a growing network of operating historic theatres, it will limit its programs to ones that:

1. Provide access to networks of peers who share common goals;
2. Facilitate professional collaborations to exchange ideas and experiences;
3. Provide professional development related to historic theatre sustainability.

League programs will focus on the biggest issues identified by operating historic theatres: community relations and development, audience relations and marketing, financial stabilization, integrating new technologies, programming and artist relations, and facility operations.

Program Strategies

Recognizing issues and challenges unique to operating historic theatres, the League facilitates information exchange among members through peer interaction, conferences, and collaborative projects.

- **Peer Interaction**

Peer interaction will be facilitated through web-based enhancements to LHAT-CHAT, the League's website and other publications. These programs provide opportunities for exchanges among historic theatres in similarly sized markets and with similar primary operating models and programming missions. An annual awards program defines standards and inspires excellence in the field. Additionally, during the first year of this plan, the League will assess its former Peer Advisory Review program to determine its value in sustaining operating historic theatres. Similarly, the League will review its State Colleagues program to determine its value in promoting peer interaction through affinity groups and growing the network of operating historic theatres.

- **Conferences**

Convening for meetings, seminars, forums and tours of historic theatres has always been an effective means of building relationships and consolidating the League's network.

The largest annual gathering of historic theatre professionals, community leaders, and service providers and suppliers, the League's Annual Conference and Theatre Tour attracts participants from across the U.S. and Canada. The four-day conference, preceded by a tour of historic theatres in the region and seminars on topics of particular interest to historic theatres, includes sessions in a variety of formats designed to encourage networking, information exchange and professional development.

In addition to the League's annual conference, two-day historic theatre forums, hosted by member theatres, provide unique opportunities for managers, staff and board members of historic theatres and other community leaders, as well as consultants providing management, planning, feasibility and programming services for historic theatres to exchange information on best practices for restoring,

operating and programming historic theatres. With attendance limited to 55 participants, each forum provides an intensive, intimate training and professional networking experience.

- **Collaborative Projects**

Historically, the League has focused on conferences and communications to sustain its network of historic theatres. In an effort to advance our field by promoting public interest in historic theatres and to strengthen our network of operating historic theatres, the League will create an online showcase and gateway to the world of great American theatres (**greatamericantheatres.com**).

Developed during the first year of the plan, this project, which responds to multiple interests and needs expressed by operating historic theatres, will serve as a demonstration of the kind of project that League members can undertake collaboratively for mutual benefit.

Strategies:

- In order to inspire appreciation for the theatre experience by identifying a national field of great American theatres, the site will be gorgeous;
- To create a contemporary on-line resource for cultural tourists and people interested in great American theatres, the site will be informative and useful;
- To engage theatre audiences, architectural enthusiasts and heritage tourists in planning cultural vacations, the site will be easy, convenient and interactive;
- To attract public access to a broad range of great American theatres, the site must be promoted through participating theatres to their audiences and partnering organizations;
- To encourage a high quality of guest services in operating theatres, the site will provide a customer satisfaction function and reward system for highly successful theatres.

Eligible theatres must demonstrate historical, architectural or cultural significance and be a member in good standing of the League of Historic American Theatres.

Home Page and Site Map

To provide general information, partner ads, links to the League of Historic American Theatres

Search Keywords

Find a theatre by state, city, program discipline, original date, original architect, style, haunting

Mandatory Fields of Information:

About the Theatre (250 word promotional description)	Original Architect
Thumb Nail Photos (4 – exterior, lobby, auditorium, stage)	Trivia
Address	What the Experts Say (style, designation, uniqueness, awards and reasons for designation)
Phone Numbers	Guest Satisfaction Rating
Program	Artist Satisfaction Rating
Date Built	Blog

Pay for Link Information:

Base Income for the League:

Link to theatre's website and/or box office (mandatory) - \$250/year per theatre

Links and ads to relevant national organizations - \$250/year

Income for Participating Theatre (which would recruit and vet sponsors):

Links to sponsors, service providers and suppliers

Links to partnering local Historic Hotel of America

Link to partnering local tour operators

Program Objectives, Actions and Measures

The following section describes the following elements of each program:

- Objectives
- Actions– describing measurable activities undertaken to achieve objectives.
- Measurements – data collected and analyzed across a range of identified actions to assess progress toward each objective.

The League of Historic American Theatres will employ ongoing evaluation to:

- **Measure progress** towards goals and objectives. Develop new strategies when progress is slower than expected, and revise objectives when they are achieved earlier than projected.
- **Learn and improve.** Assure resources are being employed in an efficient, strategic and well-considered manner. Refocus resources if necessary to assure impact.
- **Communicate results** to inform decision-making and member engagement.
- **Integrate planning** into ongoing organizational development efforts.

Outcome Measures

In addition to measuring program outputs and efficiency, the League will routinely collect the following data from theatre members to assess impact over time:

Theatre

Current seating capacity
Year built
Year first opened
Original architect
Architectural Style
Historical status

Operations

Operations status
Annual operating budget
Paid full time and part time personnel
Volunteers
Annual facilities costs
Sources of operating support
Current capital fundraising goals

Last major capital investment project

Status
Project Start Date
Project End Date
Estimated Hard Costs

Programming

Current business model
Current programming priorities
Market area population
Total # of events per year
Total # of “use” days

Organizational Structure

Owner
Operator

Peer Interaction: Membership Network

Program Objectives:

1. Increase the membership network's knowledge, experience and wisdom of operating historic theatres.
2. Increase revenue from membership dues.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Annually target membership recruitment of operating theatres with annual budgets of \$1.5 M+ and 1,200+ seating capacity	Theatre membership will grow to 67% of total membership	Theatre membership will grow to 70% of total membership	Theatre membership will grow to 75% of total membership
Revise membership categories to reflect field aspirations.	Dues revenue will increase 3%	Dues revenue will increase 5%	Dues revenue will increase 5%
Annually assess operating theatre members' satisfaction.	Develop benchmarks		

Peer Interaction: Online Communication

Program Objectives:

1. Increase member interaction.
2. Increase member access to peer networks.
3. Increase member resources available online.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Develop interactive, dynamic web site.	Develop benchmarks	Increase usage 10%	Increase usage 10%
Enhance technology for LHAT-CHAT as vehicle for affinity groups.	Develop benchmarks	Increase usage 10%	Increase usage 10%
Improve archival function.	Develop benchmarks	Increase usage 10%	Increase usage 10%
Annually assess operating theatre members' satisfaction.	Develop benchmarks		

Peer Interaction – Other Publications

Program Objectives:

1. Improve access to members' information resources.
2. Increase efficiency of publication production.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Transition from quarterly printed publications to monthly online newsletters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2010 – 1 printed issue of <i>InLEAGUE</i> with member directory; 1 printed issue of <i>InLEAGUE</i>; 1 printed issue of <i>InLEAGUE</i> with conference program; 3 monthly online newsletters • 2011 – 12 monthly online newsletters; 1 printed issue of <i>InLEAGUE</i> with conference program • 2012 - 12 monthly online newsletters; 1 printed issue of <i>InLEAGUE</i> with conference program 	Develop benchmarks for increasing circulation while reducing costs.	Increase circulation 10%	Increase circulation 10%
Annually assess members' satisfaction.	Develop benchmarks		

Peer Interaction - Awards Program

Program Objectives:

1. Acknowledge significant accomplishments or distinguished service to our field.
2. Inspire excellence in our field.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Annually recognize a historic theatre that demonstrates excellence in community impact, quality of programs and services, and quality of rehabilitation of its historic structure.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.
Annually recognize an exemplary individual who demonstrates vision, dedication, selflessness and excellence through his/her contributions to historic theatres and their communities.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.	Qualitative expert panel review of nominees.

Conferences – Annual Conference & Theatre Tour and Historic Theatre Forums

Program Objectives:

1. Increase member participation.
2. Increase membership.
3. Increase net revenue to support operations.
4. Maintain participant overall satisfaction.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Convene member-hosted annual conferences in San Antonio, Schenectady, San Diego and target regional participation.	Increase member participation 3%	Increase member participation 3%	Increase member participation 3%
	6 new members	8 new members	10 new members
	Increase net revenue 3%	Increase net revenue 3%	Increase net revenue 3%
Annually convene two member-hosted historic theatre forums in exemplary operating theatres.	Increase member participation 3%	Increase member participation 3%	Increase member participation 3%
	Increase net revenue 3%	Increase net revenue 3%	Increase net revenue 3%
Assess participants' satisfaction.	Maintain overall rating of Good-Excellent by 90% of respondents		

Collaborative Projects – Great American Theatres Website

Program Objectives:

1. Advance the field of historic theatres through greater public awareness.
2. Attract public access to a broad range of great American theatres.
3. Expand the League's network of operating historic theatres.

Action	Measurements		
	2010	2011	2012
Create a contemporary on-line resource for cultural tourists and people interested in great American theatres.	Qualitative assessment of web site	# hits	
		# new members	
		Revenue generated	
Assess participants' satisfaction.	Qualitative assessment of web site	Overall satisfaction	
		# tickets ordered	
		Partner testimonials	

Program bench marks will be established following a full year of program implementation to determine targets for subsequent years.