Investing in Early Career Excellence

Set the Intentions

- Ask yourself when hiring whether you will buy the talent you need or build the talent.
- Hiring is a pivotal point - make sure goals of candidate match company/organizational goals.
- What is your unique, honest development value proposition?
- As a manager, think of developing employees as if it were your own company.
- If you do your job well, people will leave.

Implement the Solutions

- Define what employee growth looks like for your company and the employee: skills acquisition, money, titles, responsibility, something else?
- Acknowledge what you can and cannot offer in terms of development at the time of hire.
- Decide to hold supervisors and organizations accountable for professional development.
- Initiate a rotational program as part of onboarding where new hires spend time working in each department before they start their official role.
- Walk early career employees through operational budgets.
- Focus early career employees on developing a manager mindset.
- Give ownership of projects to junior staff and involve them in organizational successes.
- Hire or keep in contact with stellar interns.
- Have promising employees shadow executive leadership regularly.
- Support membership on junior boards, professional’s organizations, fellowships.
- Find pro-bono or paid executive coaching.

More Resources

- Young Professionals in the Arts NYC
- Emerging Leaders of New York Arts
- Americans for the Arts Emerging Leaders Network
- Young Nonprofit Professionals NYC
- Jack Welch model
Maximizing Talent and Utilizing Feedback

Set the Intentions

- If you have many resource constraints and people only stay 2-3 years, look for teachable moments and opportunities to push their visibility and skill development forward.
- Managers often get credibility from former employees when they are brave enough to have a difficult conversation.

Implement the Solutions

- Identify talent especially in interns and entry level staff – who shows up interested, who say hello/goodbye, who are curious and asks questions – grow them by seeing what they are interested in.
- Ensure your best people (and interns) are developing the soft skills it requires to be a leader.
  - Invite into high level phone conversations as a fly on the wall.
  - Give them to opportunity to develop ideas and workable plans if they’d like to see something change.
  - Provide critical feedback to staff and look for the learning in the mistake when organizational or individual missteps are taken.
  - Have staff attend events and serve as liaisons to association and other meetings which helps them to build “street cred” in the field and outside the office.
  - Push on employee challenge areas – no one is perfect at everything.
  - Advocate for my employees when it’s time for them to move on.
  - Help employees build a network and develop a plan for their career trajectory.
  - Offer yourself as a resource when they are in need of improvement.
- Initiate regular team building activities to identify strengths and get to know your employees.
- Ask your staff to “critique up” ask how you can improve as a manager.
- Help them get exposure in the field and help them leave if there’s a serious weakness in an employee.
- Give employees a title boost if you can’t offer a salary boost.
- Commit to 360 evaluations, mid-year check ins, and/or individualized performance plans.
- Set examples through action.
- Invest in mid- and late career employees.
  - Encourage side volunteer projects.
  - Allow time for employee moonlighting/ freelancing/consulting.
  - Have employees shadow people from other organizations with a similar role.
  - Arrange learning sabbaticals.
  - Invite employees to identify a stretch project to work on in alignment with org goals.

Other Resources

- EMC Arts Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators Program
Creating a Culture of Innovation to Develop Talent

Set the Intentions
- It is important for our sector to respectful of people and also recognize that everyone of your staff will leave at some point.
- Think about creating innovative workplaces where people can thrive.
- Creating better teams is a great way to innovate. Teams should have a sense of healthy conflict and should be diverse.
- Can you create an org that can change the world where you still respect your staff?
- Look outside your field to find organizational innovation models that are the right fit for your organization.
- Ask where people want to go professionally and how you can help them get there.
- Don’t view yourself as helpless to be innovative. Ask what can you do?
- Question conventional wisdom, learn how to do a lot of things wrong then fix them!

Implement the Solutions
- Find a performance accountability system that works for you: Fractured Atlas uses OKRs: objectives and key results.
  - Every quarter, employees set their own objectives and their key results and they either meet or do not meet them. It is up to executive leadership to agree on appropriate OKR metrics and parameters and recalibrate as needed.
- Align staff roles/ feedback with organizational priorities.
- Structure opportunities for staff to lead meetings.
- Have staff give presentations (junior and senior).
- Host brown bag lunch sessions where an employee can present anything.
- Document the process and let it go when you have failures and innovations that don’t work.
- Create task forces: 6 person mixed leadership levels to solve an internal problem.
- Renovate your office in a way that’s responsive to how people work in your space.

More Resources
- Tim Cynova’s Medium Blog
- Free courses on innovation in arts and culture: IDEO, Vanderbilt, U of Michigan
- Book: Jason Fried (of Basecamp) Rework or Remote
- Book: Laslow Bock’s (of Google) book “Work Rules”
- Shared Leadership Proves Successful in Music Orgs
- Doing More with More: Putting Shared Leadership Into Practice
- The Dawn of System Leadership
- Distributed Leadership Quiz
- National Arts Strategies

Cultivating Staff Underrepresented in the Arts
Set the Intentions

- Approach this work from a collective action mindset – who else can you partner with to achieve your goals?
- Think about how your artist training program might be an avenue to develop arts managers.
- Look at diversity from different lenses (education, physical abilities, etc.).
- Think about a diverse environment vs. representation.
- Look at diversity on both administrative and artistic sides.
- Commit to moving beyond your usual audiences; no matter what your usual audiences are.
- Make developing diverse, empowered environments a priority.
- Use technology platforms to interact with and engage broader audiences.
- Be aware of optics of who represents the organization during (public facing events, at board meetings, new hire interviews, etc.).

Implement the Solutions

- Evaluate new hires on experience vs. potential.
- Research organizational level diversity to illuminate or identify challenges and opportunities.
- Allow staff members at different levels to address the issue – not just top down.
- Foster an awareness of culture/ experiences that staff members bring to the organization.
- Address the issues at the educational level (reach out to relevant education institutions).
- Attend leadership forums and forums on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Develop innovative mentorship strategy for employees and provide exposure to the field and to your organization.
- Initiate unconscious bias training.
- Have deliberate career mentorship conversations.

More Resources

- Article: The Radical Transformation of Diversity and Inclusion: the Millennial Influence
- Website: League of Resident Theater’s Diversity Initiative
- Website: League of Resident Theater’s Resources for Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- LORT Guidebook for orgs on how to talk about diversity and take action (forthcoming)
- Website: Women of Color in the Arts Leadership Through Mentorship Initiative
- Website: Theater Communications Groups SPARK Leadership Program
- Arts & Business Council of NY’s Diversity in Arts Leadership internship program
- Other national undergraduate internship programs for diversity in the arts
- EMC Arts Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators
- http://www.artequity.org/about trainings
- ArtEquity’s Valuing Diversity vs. Moving Towards Inclusion matrix

Further Reading
- What Do Arts Leaders Really Need?
- Moving Arts Leadership Forward: A Changing Landscape
- Emerging Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: Myths, Meaning, and Motivations

Arts and Nonprofit Leadership Blogs

- Tim Cynova
- Against the Grain
- Chronicle of Philanthropy
- Daniel Pink
- Josh Linkner
- Jumper
- Leadership Freak
- Marketing for Nonprofits
- Seth Godin
- The Artful Manager

Featured Guests and Breakout Leaders

- Tim Cynova, Chief Operating Officer, Fractured Atlas
- Kelvin Dinkins, General Manager, Two River Theater
- Ilona Jurkiewicz, Head of the Early Careers Center for Excellence, Thomson Reuters
- Harriet Taub, Executive Director, Materials for the Arts

Learn more about the Arts & Business Council of New York

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