Partnerships and Collaborations
Key Aspects of Thriving Arts Organizations

**RELEVANCE**
Align your work to the needs and wants of those you serve, building a future that relates to those needs.

**INNOVATION**
Consciously cultivate new ways of approaching your mission so it remains fresh and adaptive.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL**
A systemic approach to community change - building your network for partnerships and alliances.
Strategic Alliances Take Different Forms

- **Informal**
  - Communication
  - Cooperation
  - Similar or complementary goals. Mutual cross-referral of clients for services. Largely informal.

- **More formal**
  - Collaboration / Partnership
  - Joint endeavors or more formalized collaborations for mutually beneficial purposes. One organization may give the other access to its clients to provide a service it does not provide. Can be formalized by an MOU.

- **Formal / contractual**
  - Strategic Alliance
  - Formalize joint offerings such as shared programs or formalized arrangements for shared services (such as grant writing or audit).
  - Merger
  - The legal combination of two or more nonprofit organizations into a single unified nonprofit structure. Begins with an MOU and results in a formal dissolution of one or more of the organizations into a surviving entity.
Strategic Alliances Take Different Forms

- **Informal**
  - **Communication**: Information and idea sharing – informal relationship between two or more leaders.
  - **Cooperation**: Similar or complementary goals. Mutual cross-referral of clients for services. Largely informal.

- **More formal**
  - **Collaboration / Partnership**: Joint endeavors or more formalized collaborations for mutually beneficial purposes. One organization may give the other access to its clients to provide a service it does not provide. Can be formalized by an MOU.
  - **Strategic Alliance**: Formalize joint offerings such as shared programs or formalized arrangements for shared services (such as grant writing or audit).

- **Formal / contractual**
  - **Merger**: The legal combination of two or more nonprofit organizations into a single unified nonprofit structure. Begins with an MOU and results in a formal dissolution of one or more of the organizations into a surviving entity.
**COLLABORATION**

**BENEFITS:**
- Retain independent decision making and governance
- Minimal investment of time and resources
- Shared learning opportunities
- May build foundation for deeper relationship

**CHALLENGES:**
- Does not increase capacity
- Lack of clear expectations can create confusion
- May not realize full potential of relationship

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONSOLIDATION**

**BENEFITS:**
- Retain independent governance structure
- Increased efficiencies
- Relatively minor investment of time and resources
- Allows for increased focus on programming
- May build foundation for deeper relationship

**CHALLENGES:**
- Potential conflicts due to shared decision making
- Upfront investment of time and resources
- Requires close alignment of organizational cultures

---

**JOINT PROGRAMMING**

**BENEFITS:**
- Retain independent identity and governance structure
- Furthers mission impact
- May increase visibility
- More holistic programming
- May build foundation for deeper relationship

**CHALLENGES:**
- Requires shared decision making
- May require large upfront investment of time and resources
- Potential conflicts around branding
- Requires mutual trust and shared collaboration

---

**SERVICE ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP**

**BENEFITS:**
- Increased administrative efficiency
- Retain identity and independent governance
- Expansion possibilities
- Integrated service model

**CHALLENGES:**
- Initial large investment of time
- Potential inability to customize administrative services
- Significant changes in operations

---

**FISCAL SPONSORSHIP**

**BENEFITS:**
- Eliminates need for complex incorporation process
- Reduces liability
- Allows for focus on program delivery
- Utilize seasoned fiduciary oversight

**CHALLENGES:**
- Relinquished unique identity
- May require relinquished control over programming
- Not always suitable for highly complex programs

---

INCREASING INTEGRATION
Collaboration

Collaboration is a mutually-beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.
In order to begin a collaboration of partnership your organization should have, or be prepared to offer:

- **A clearly defined vision & purpose for the collaboration**
  - Knowledge of what you hope to accomplish
- **A firm commitment**
  - At every level of the organization
- **Time**
  - Not feeling pressed by daily work
- **A welcoming culture**
  - At every level of your organization
- **Adequate funding**
  - To cover unexpected expenses
SWOT ANALYSIS

**STRENGTHS**

Things you do objectively well or better than others or most. Unique staff competencies (licenses, training) or unusual financial strength.

**WEAKNESSES**

Things you do objectively not as well as others. Areas of relative weakness when compared to other orgs. Financial weakness.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Changes in the external environment that create new, tangible opportunities to strengthen some aspect of your programs, market coverage, complement your service offerings, etc..

**THREATS**

Changes in the external environment that will likely negatively impact some aspect of your funding, programs, or competitive position.
# Take stock of your assets

## Asset Mapping Template

**Strategic Alliance Prospect Under Consideration:**

*Instructions: Complete this framework in pencil - be prepared to erase and rethink as you move through it. Take about 30 minutes for your first draft. Fill in the boxes from left to right, filling in columns from top to bottom. If your answer doesn’t fit in the box, you’re overthinking it - try to simplify. This is meant to be quick and agile as an exercise so you can test your thinking with each other, gather feedback, and refine your ideas. Don’t let perfection be the enemy of good here - start with good ideas and a simple framework so you can test and refine your ideas and approach. The four grey boxes in the middle of the framework are your strategy.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets to be Considered</th>
<th>Our Assets</th>
<th>How Can These Buy Us Time?</th>
<th>How Can We Quantify These?</th>
<th>Relevance to strategic alliance prospect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>Physical Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>Physical Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>Physical Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>Physical Plant &amp; Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other intangible assets</td>
<td>Other intangible assets</td>
<td>Other intangible assets</td>
<td>Other intangible assets</td>
<td>Other intangible assets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Take Stock of Your Programs: MacMillan Matrix**

“Coverage” = other similar services or programs for audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Competitive Position</th>
<th>Weak Competitive Position</th>
<th>POOR FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Program Attractiveness: “Easy” to attract resources</td>
<td>Alternative Coverage High</td>
<td>Alternative Coverage Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Program Attractiveness: “Difficult” to attract resources</td>
<td>Alternative Coverage High</td>
<td>Alternative Coverage Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Compete to maintain market position</td>
<td>3. Aggressive divestment</td>
<td>10. Aggressive divestment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grow and strengthen</td>
<td>4. Invest, find a partner or divest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Partner with another strong competitor</td>
<td>7. Find partner, divest or reinvent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “Soul of the Agency” – defend your unique competence</td>
<td>8. Find partner, divest, reinvent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Orderly divestment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Then Look Outside Yourself
Consider Your Goals

- Audience or Program Diversification
- Funding Expansion
- Complementary or Wrap-Around Offerings
Identify prospective partners

- Good to identify several prospective partners who could help you accomplish your goals

- Think creatively about prospective partners (including those outside the arts or in different art forms)

- Or think big and broad - example: Art in the Age of the Internet (Partnership of 14 Boston based arts orgs)
Open Discussions

- Values alignment
- Positive reputation
- Time for exploration
- Openness / Transparency
- Potential brand alignment
Aim for Building Trust
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Conflict</th>
<th>Causes &amp; Signs</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication conflicts</td>
<td>• Not enough information being exchanged</td>
<td>• Check interpretation of information to ensure consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inaccurate information being exchanged</td>
<td>• Clearly define terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unclear communication leading to misunderstandings</td>
<td>• Work to clarify assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making of assumptions by one or more parties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Conflicts</td>
<td>• Insufficient or imbalanced structures, processes or systems</td>
<td>• Carefully examine the context of the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time limitations</td>
<td>• Adjust deadlines or timelines to alleviate pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Conflicts</td>
<td>• Inconsistent or unrealistic expectations, abuse or gross imbalance of power</td>
<td>• Revisit the design of the process to ensure it is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Judgements made based on stereotypes, sexism or racism</td>
<td>favorable to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unrealistic perceptions (see communication conflicts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal conflicts</td>
<td>• Try to limit impact of emotions and personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low comfort level between or among partners</td>
<td>• When conflicts arise, avoid defensiveness, judgment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• and ask other to do the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Show concern for the points of view of all involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure power is balanced or deemphasized at the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Conflicts</td>
<td>• Qualitative or quantitative differences between partners in interests, needs</td>
<td>• Encourage compromise and accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or perspectives</td>
<td>• Seek and emphasize common commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Conflicts</td>
<td>• Collaborative partners having opposing values, points of view, philosophies</td>
<td>• Ensure power is balanced or deemphasized at the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or beliefs (can result from cultural differences or considerable differences</td>
<td>collaboration table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in missions)</td>
<td>• Seek and point out shared goals and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Acknowledge and respect value differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Considerations

- Choose a neutral convener
- Get a facilitator (to ensure meetings are effective and don’t get derailed)
- Disclose your self-interests
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- Details about the mission of each organization
- The objectives and scope of collaboration (including length of time)
- Specifics of what each partner will do
- Guidelines defining marketing & branding agreements
- Financial arrangements & accountability
- Income sharing agreements
- Guidelines for ownership of jointly-developed materials and use of those materials after the MOU expires (intellectual property)
- Settlements of disputes
- Review and evaluation agreements (how you will know it was successful)
- Length of time the MOU will be valid (period of performance)
Questions?