

AbaF

Tips on managing and evaluating a partnership

Successful partnerships are all about relationships, and your partnership will require ongoing work to ensure its success. Both the arts and the business partners need to be very clear about the amount of work that will be involved in the partnership for it to be successful.

Once the arts – business contract or agreement has been signed it is important to develop a joint partnership management plan.

A partnership management plan is an effective way to ensure that desired outcomes are met and equally important that it allows for growth, depth and evolution to meet new requirements.

Develop a partnership management plan

A partnership management plan usually includes:

- defined goals and objectives with specific targets
- measurable performance indicators/KPIs linked to each partner's objectives
- a delivery schedule with milestones
- joint calendar to track and co-ordinate events and initiatives
- roles and responsibilities for each partner
- processes and timelines for reporting on budget
- methods and tools for capturing evaluation data

Involve the whole company

- Leadership from the top. In some companies champions or ambassadors are appointed for the partnership. This champion has roles including speaking at partnership events, placing messages in publications.
- Appoint partnership teams. Teams within both organisation can be responsible for managing the partnership and making it work by taking on specific responsibilities. However, it is important that as many people as possible in the organisation know about the partnership and the areas where they can assist with delivering the business benefits and nurturing the relations.
- Take a whole-of-company approach. This means both partners encourage personnel from all levels to promote and participate in partnership activities.

Develop an evaluation strategy

Evaluation is an essential part of the ongoing management of a partnership. Evaluation

- enable partners to know how successfully the agreed benefits are being exchanged
- identifies any problem areas and steps to addressing these areas
- provides quantitative and qualitative evidence of the benefits obtained
- invites partners to contribute new ideas
- provides valuable data when seeking to renew the partnership
- if the partnership does not work out the partners can withdraw or try another option
- provides a record of achievements to attract other partners

Identify evaluation guidelines

To ensure effective evaluation of the partnership:

- agree on clear, realistic objectives
- establish outcomes for each of the objectives
- agree on how to measure the outcomes
- draw up a report based on these measures
- meet regularly to review progress and discuss future directions and improvements

Sample evaluation plan

Benefit	Objectives	Evaluation methods
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be seen as a business with a strong sense of community • to be identified with activities which are beyond the primary purpose of the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of performances and audience size • amount of media coverage • increased access to arts offering by target group
Staff development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to recognise and reward staff • to create opportunities for team building • to attract and retain staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff take up rate of ticket offers • surveys of staff satisfaction after participating in arts and cultural activities • measurement of staff satisfaction, absenteeism, performance
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and enhance relationships with clients/business leaders/community leaders/government • generate new business through networking relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of special events • number of events taking advantage of partner's facilities • numbers of priority guests clients attending functions • letters of acknowledgement and appreciation
Market positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brand visibility to target markets • increase brand awareness with the public • gain media coverage • market reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of people attending events • number of ticket sales and subscriptions • visitation to websites • amount of editorial/advertising in partner's publication
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be seen as a good corporate citizen • to project the company's values positively • to extend the company's reach into the community and stakeholder groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of media coverage – number of articles, quantity in column centimetres • surveys of audience measuring opinions of business partner's contribution to the community • feedback from audience members