Starting, Repairing, and Revivifying a Dance Series

Bob Henshaw
Albany NY
Five Components of a superb dance:

Dancers: respectful energetic dancing

Caller: well selected, accurately called dances

Musicians: on time; collaborate with sound person; competent performance

Sound person: loudness and quality to please dancers and musicians

Dance organizer: venue; logistics; set the “rules”
Larry Jennings Principle:

- The dance belongs to the organizers
  - But it is given for others

Do it only if it gives you joy and satisfaction

- Or you will burn out
Vision
• Must on its face seem desirable to dancers and would-be dancers
  – Fill a perceived gap?
  – Are there too many dances now?
  – Are there conflicts with other events?
  – Are you a known quantity?
  – Did you check with all other dance organizers?

• You desire buy-in.
Vision
• Why the Vision might fail:
  – You failed to consider alternatives
  – Organizers do not have a monopoly on good ideas, or on good ways to fix a problem
  – Times are changing:
    • Tastes
    • Traditions
    • Rules vs. no rules
    • New dance styles popular
Mission

• Most crucial step
• Provides the general intentions of
  – What you plan
  – Why you propose it
  – How you hope to do it
  – Identifies possible problems and suggests how you might overcome them
  – Asks for help
Mission

• What:
  – General statement of what is and is not now available and who you are
• Establishes real need and that you will solve it
• Establishes your legitimacy
Mission

• How:
  – Describe your intended approach
• What we have already done
What we intend to do
Mission
• Identifies potential problems
  – Here’s what we have thought of so far.
  – Identifies anyone or anything that might be affected by the new proposal.
• Solicits help:
  – If you have more ideas, we’d like to hear them
Mission

• Successful if:
  – Demonstrate there is a perceived need
  – Your proposed series will fill that need, and others do not
  – Any opposing interests accounted for
  – Proposed for good reasons, and not poor
Mission

• Must stand alone

• Because these are your core beliefs, resist subsequent changes, unless really really appropriate
Examples (see attached .pdfs)

“Pleasures of the Town” Newsletter

“Dance Flurry” Mission Statement

“Puttin’ on the Dance” Mission Statement
Goals

• Must directly implement the Mission Statement
• Statement of intent
• Provides little detail of what to do
• Does not tell when
Goals

• Example of good goal:
  – We will provide live music by bands known throughout the northeast

• Example of poor goal:
  – To hold dance events
Objectives

• Must implement the specific goal
• Adds timeframe
• Can be more than one objective for each goal
Actions

• Must implement the specific objective
• Provides detail on what to do
• Can be more than one action for each objective
Evaluate

• For each action, objective, goal:
  – Does this implement the step above it?
Main guideline:
• New series:
  Begin at the beginning: “Don’t just do something; stand there!”

(What you are doing may not implement the objective, goal, or mission)

– Most common mistake:
  • just starting in “doing something”
Main guideline:

• Evaluating existing series:
  – Work in reverse order
  – Does each step implement the step above?
  – Resist changing Mission