



**CUISR**

Community – University Institute for Social Research

***Broadway Theatre Membership  
Assessment  
A Research Report***

**by Cameron Moneo, Maria Basualdo,  
Isobel M. Findlay, and  
Wendy MacDermott**



*Building Healthy Sustainable Communities*

## **Community-University Institute for Social Research**

CUI SR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUI SR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUI SR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUI SR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

CUI SR gratefully acknowledges support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through their Community University Research Alliance program. CUI SR also acknowledges the support of other funding partners, particularly the University of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Health Region, Quint Development Corporation, and the Star Phoenix, as well as other community partners. The views expressed in this report, however, are solely those of the authors.

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CUISR thanks the following for their contributions to this publication:

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon is Saskatchewan's only independently-run cinema specializing in foreign and domestic independent features and repertory film, and one of only seven such movie houses still operating in Canada today.

First opened in 1946, the Broadway Theatre experienced highs and lows before reinventing itself in 1984 as a cinema dedicated to quality independent and repertory films and a host of live events such as the Saskatoon Soaps. When ongoing financial difficulties closed the doors in August 1993, the public campaigned to purchase and reopen the historic theatre. A planning committee stepped forward, and a community organization called the Friends of the Broadway Theatre, Inc. formed and took ownership of the Broadway.

The Friends of the Broadway Theatre Inc. received charitable status in 1995 and the theatre building was officially recognized as a Municipal Heritage Site by the city of Saskatoon in 1997. The Broadway Theatre continues to be Saskatoon's unique "window on the world" through its support of film and live acts that represent the variety of cultures the world over, and through its service to the arts and entertainment interests of the local multicultural community. Members of the community in return show their support by volunteering time and donating money to the not-for-profit Theatre.

This report by Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR)—at the request of the Board of Friends of the Broadway Theatre Inc—investigates some of the pressing membership issues confronting the Theatre in 2007. The goal of the research project was to assess member satisfaction with the organization, to enable the Broadway Theatre to better meet current and potential member and patron needs, and to improve and increase the membership loyalty and numbers.

In addition to a brief history of the Theatre and a literature review, the report is based on quantitative and qualitative research methods: an online survey, a shortened "lobby" survey, key informant interviews, and three focus group discussions. The data from the different sources is merged and analyzed and reported in the Results section of the report. The report concludes with recommendations in the areas of internal and external communications, partnerships, facilities and programming.

## INTRODUCTION

### History of the Broadway Theatre

The Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon is Saskatchewan's only independently-run cinema specializing in foreign and domestic independent features and repertory film, and one of only seven such movie houses still operating in Canada today.

The Theatre first opened in 1946 in the city's Nutana District, just a bridge away from the heart of downtown Saskatoon. It was the city's first eastside theatre, and was originally built to show popular movies of the time (first features included *Hollywood Canteen*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and *They Died with Their Boots On* with Olivia de Havilland and Errol Flynn). By moving a stage in front of the movie screen, it played host to the occasional live musical performance as well. The Broadway over the decades became an "adult" movie theatre, and operated this way until 1984, at which time it reopened in its current incarnation: as a cinema dedicated to quality independent and repertory films.

In 1984, the Broadway attracted whole new audiences to its unique film product. Members of the University of Saskatchewan Film Society—devotees of the now defunct Place Riel theatre on campus—were a homegrown audience for the Broadway's foreign cinema offerings. Such programs as "family/kids matinees" on Saturdays and Sundays drew line-ups around the block, and helped to clean up the reputation of the Theatre left over from its previous operations. Other perceptions that it's too artsy or financially secure have also been thought to plague the Broadway.

The addition of a stage in 1984 opened the theatre up to hosting live acts. For instance, the Broadway features the Saskatoon Soaps, an improvisational theatre group, which debuted in 1984 and draws enthusiastic late Friday night crowds.

The Broadway closed in August 1993 as a result of ongoing financial difficulties associated with operations. In a grand show of Saskatoonian spirit, the public campaigned to purchase and reopen the historic Theatre. A planning committee stepped forward, and a community organization called the Friends of the Broadway Theatre, Inc. formed and took ownership of the Broadway. Many members of the community backed this new ownership by buying 4500 memberships to the Theatre, a sign of the public's investment in the Theatre as one of Saskatoon's cultural landmarks. The Broadway once again took its place as Saskatoon's standing repertory, independent cinema with a renewed emphasis on offering:

- o diverse films
- o festivals and live performances that cut across all age and cultural demographics
- o an affordable venue for Canadian artists to showcase their work.

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### **The Broadway Theatre and the CUISR Research Initiative**

Since the sale of 4500 memberships during its 1993 reopening, the Broadway has struggled to maintain a consistent core of members. While the Theatre has averaged 1700 annual membership sales since 1993, when this study started in 2007 the theatre was experiencing a drop in its membership and revenue. Film attendance, by members and non-members alike, is an ongoing concern for the 430-seat Theatre. (Live events, it should be noted, are often well-attended.)

In May 2007, the Broadway Board of Directors approached the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) to investigate some of the pressing membership issues confronting the Theatre. The goal of the research project was to assess member satisfaction with the organization, to enable the Broadway Theatre to better meet current and potential member and patron needs, and to improve and increase the membership loyalty and numbers.

A student with CUISR conducted a literature review to determine how the Theatre's situation compared with its fellow Canadian repertory and independent cinemas, and to identify research on this topic. The review produced little with which to compare the experiences of the Broadway. The literature review was then refocused to the North American movie theatre industry, with a focus on attendance issues. The research overall gave new insight into how the general public's movie-watching habits are transforming in the new millennium, and left a picture of shared struggle (and occasional triumph) for small alternative cinemas in Canada.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Movie Theatre Attendance and the Status of Canadian Independent Cinemas**

If one reads the weekly North American box-office reports, it seems that the movie theatre industry is currently experiencing a golden age of profit. It is now quite common for a “buzz” (read: heavily promoted) film to gross more than \$70 million dollars on its opening weekend, which means the average theatre playing it could earn \$18,000 in ticket sales over three days—on just one film. Even if approximately 65% of this gross goes directly to the distributor (Leong, Kalins, Levy, De Marcillac, and Scholze, 1996), the movie theatre industry will accumulate greater profits with busy weekend crowds who are more than likely to stop at the snack bar before they head to their seats. (Theatres report the concession is where cinemas really make their money.) The numbers seem to indicate that moviegoers, now more than ever, flock to see films on the larger-than-life silver screen.

Yet the fear that movie attendance may be slipping is always present in the theatre industry. According to a report published by Statistics Canada, movie attendance was actually down in 2005 from that in 2004 (Worboy, 2007). The report indicated that, indeed, ticket sales slumped 7.8 percent in 2005 below totals in 2004 (Canadian Press, 2007). Furthermore, the report found that

The motion-picture theatre industry recorded total operating revenues of about \$1.2 billion, down 5.3 per cent from 2004, while operating expenses edged up 1.3 per cent and salaries and wages increased by 1.9. As a result, operating profits totaled just \$29 million, a substantial decline from \$110 million in 2004.

Opinions are many as to why theatre attendance should dip so dramatically. One may choose to believe the industry’s unofficial take on 2005: that “there were few major blockbuster films released during the important summer months of 2005, dampening interest and accounting for some of the decline in attendance” (Canadian Press, 2007). But, even if 2005 was just an “off” year in terms of box office attractions, it still wouldn’t fully explain why, as a poll conducted for the Associated Press showed in the same year, 73% of North Americans preferred to watch films at home, versus only 22% who preferred seeing films in theatres (CBC, 2005). An article by Edward Jay Epstein at Slate.com written in 2005 tells the story of how most of the money studios now make on their films arrives after theatre showings:

What has inexorably changed is the location of the studios’ crucial audience. In 1948, with studios earning all their revenues from the box office, that audience was moviegoers. Even as late as 1980, when the audience had television sets and video players, studios still earned 55 percent of their money

from people who actually went to movie theaters. In 2005, however, those moviegoers provided the studios with less than 15 percent of their worldwide revenues, while couch potatoes provided it with 85.8 percent.

If “buzz” films still draw people to the big screen for those big opening weekends, there are contradictory signs: given the choice of staying at home or trudging to a theatre to see the same movie, most would opt for their smaller home television sets over the expansive silver screen. Studios have responded by rushing their films to DVD as soon as possible. As Slate reports, the “window” between a film’s theatrical release and its release on DVD and other home-viewing formats is now as small as three months. The studios are putting their stock in DVD sales, and movie theatres are suffering for it.

Have we simply lost our appreciation for a night out at the movies? One blogger, writing for the financial website *The Big Picture*, believes the public reluctance to attend movies in theatres is remarkably simple to break down:

Let’s nip this one in the bud, shall we? 7 factors are hurting theatre attendance:

- 1) Social factors eroding theatre environment (talking, cell phones, babies crying, etc.);
- 2) Sacrificing long term relationships with theatre-goers for the increase in short term profitability (commercials, no ushers, etc.);
- 3) Higher quality experience elsewhere (Home theatre);
- 4) Declining quality of mainstream movies;
- 5) Easily available Long Tail content alternatives (Netflix, Amazon);
- 6) Price;
- 7) Demographics: Aging babyboomers simply go out to movies less. (Lefsetz, 2005)

This list seems comprehensive enough. The experience at movie theatres is “not what it used to be”; couple this with a boom in home theatre technology and you have an approximate picture of why the majority of movie watchers’ habits have shifted.

Of course, heretofore we have mainly discussed the problems with the multiplexes, or “chains”; there is infinitely more at stake for independent and repertory cinemas in Canada when it comes to dwindling audiences. Independent theatres cannot compete with the sound, picture, and stadium seating. Survey respondents complained of the sound and picture at the Broadway. Besides, blockbusters—barring a surprise flop—will always do blockbuster business in theatres; one can imagine that, in the future, mega-budgeted, overly-hyped blockbusters will be the only reason the majority of people will leave their homes to see a movie. Smaller, independent fare—which struggles to find a sizable audience as it is—may become all but impossible to see in theatres when

the people's consensus is that they would rather wait to see these films on DVD, or on video-on-demand cable TV, or on their computers.

It has never been easy for independent and repertory cinemas in Canada. The surprising fact is that there are only seven other cinemas of the Broadway Theatre's type left in this country. An article published in the *Dominion* in March 2007 made note of a particularly disconcerting phenomenon:

...recent death-spiral of repertory cinema in Toronto. It started in the city's north end with the closing of the Capitol (1998), the York (2001) and the Eglinton (2002), all subsequently converted into corporate event theatres by an "entertainment consortium" of four Toronto investors. Next came the literal collapse of festival favourite the Uptown in 2003. And in July 2006, the trend moved south with the closing of four of downtown Toronto's best-known rep theatres. (Allensimon Gadke, 2007)

If people are not attending movies as much as they once were, then how can independent theatres—whose audiences cannot match the size of those at the chains—be expected to survive much longer? Judging from the facts stated in the *Dominion* (2007) most aren't.

Many repertory theatres have to be rescued by the community if they hope to keep their marquees lit. Just as the Broadway was resurrected by way of a community campaign in 1993, so too have such theatres as the Revue in Toronto avoided the wrecking ball through community outreach. In the same March 2007 article in the *Dominion*, notice is given of the "Save the Revue" campaign organized by a local group calling themselves the Revue Film Society:

Since June 8, 2006, [Terry] Burrell and the other members of the Revue Film Society have been getting hundreds of people to sign petitions and donate money through their Save the Revue campaign. The community has responded with gusto, producing more than \$30,000 and negotiations are currently underway between the Revue's owners and a nostalgic, Liverpool-born local who plans to lease the space to the society upon purchase of the theatre. Burrell's vision for the reopened Revue is as: 'a community space on par with Roncesvalles Village's best community centres, public schools and churches.

Since this article's publication, the Revue has in fact been successfully purchased by a local couple, who have in turn entered into a lease with the Revue Film Society, with the aim of handing theatre operations over to the Society (Revue, 2007a). According to the Revue Cinema's website, plans are in place to ensure the future success and viability of the theatre:

We aim to keep programming in tune with the diverse needs and wishes of

the community. We will also work on special programs for students and seniors during the day and late-night shows to make good use of the theatre; (Revue, 2007a)

We are developing . . . special series for specific interest groups; innovative sponsorship opportunities; and eventually, we hope, initiatives with educational and charitable aims. To become a member, you must attend at least one meeting of the [Revue Film Society] or one of its committees, demonstrate interest in our goals and apply to the board for membership; (Revue, 2007b)

The Revue means to have its members highly aware and deeply committed from the outset—this seems to be their best defence against the threat of gradual community complacency about the Cinema:

To become a member, you must attend at least one meeting of the [Revue Film Society] or one of its committees, demonstrate interest in our goals and apply to the board for membership. (Revue, 2007b)

As cultural shifts to an in the home-theatre era, attending local movie theatre is seen by some as a necessary altruistic act. The Revue is optimistic about its future, despite the challenges ahead:

Trying to revive an independent theatre might seem foolhardy in the current environment. Few local movie houses have survived in the tough theatre business where they must entice viewers away from their television sets, DVDs and computers on the one hand, and compete against the big multiplexes on the other. Roncesvalles Village [where the Revue is located] is a unique community, and Toronto is a film-loving city. We believe with lots of support behind the scenes and at the ticket booth, we can succeed. (Revue, 2007b)

With the theatre not scheduled to reopen until late 2007, the Revue Film Society will have to wait and see for now whether or not their efforts are in vain. The Revue recognizes that it is possibly one of many projects in Canada that is currently fighting the good fight for quality cinema and local community movie houses. As the newly hired Manager of the Revue, Tim Bourgette, says, “We hope the reopening of the Revue will create a model for how communities can save institutions like their local theatres” (Revue, 2007c). *The Broadway might do well by monitoring the progress of the Revue as it embarks on its second life as an independent, community-owned and -operated theatre.*

If the Revue offers an example, like the Broadway, of the hardships and ongoing struggle of independent, repertory cinemas in today’s cultural climate, then the ByTowne Cinema in Ottawa is surely the reverse side of the coin: a flourishing independent theatre, providing specialized cinema to a large clientele, with no danger of closure in sight. A 2004

Corene Sullivan article published in *Ottawa Insight* on the Carleton University website sends reports from the nation's capital of "droves of people lined up [at the ByTowne] on Rideau Street [even] in minus thirty-degree weather" on weekends to see opening films at the one-screen cinema (Sullivan, 2004). It's one thing to see a packed megaplex refuting the idea that people prefer to stay home and watch movies; it's an entirely different, more surprising, and heartening thing to witness the ByTowne's triumph. The author of the Carleton article can't help but pose the obvious question:

So how does David [i.e. the ByTowne] survive in the presence of Goliath?

[Bruce] White [owner and programmer of the ByTowne] has many answers to that question. He says that the theatre has a large number of regulars that account for a significant portion of the ByTowne's revenues. 'We have a heavily downtown clientele, arts lovers, people who go out a lot,' says White. Most of these people have memberships to the theatre. According to White, the theatre has between 12,000 and 15,000 members, who make up approximately 70 per cent of attendance numbers on a regular movie night (Sullivan, 2004). To some extent, the ByTowne may just be fortunate to exist in a city and a neighbourhood with a healthy population of cinephiles who appreciate a night out at the cinema, who still love the art of cinema passionately enough to want to see films—good ones—where they were originally meant to be seen. There are other possible reasons for the ByTowne's popularity. For one, the theatre was formerly owned by Famous Players, and thus boasts 70mm projection capabilities and an atypically large screen for an independent cinema; in other words, the theatre can hold its own in a world where megaplex facilities set the standard. Other reasons include the Cinema's price-break on admission for members (not wholly uncommon for independent theatres); the "excellent" popcorn; the "unique aesthetics" of the theatre, which includes "50s-style airplane seats" (Sullivan, 2004); and the Cinema's favourable location in the city, where the nearest competition is from the repertory Mayfair cinema—a theatre with which White doesn't believe the ByTowne is in competition at all (Sullivan, 2004). As Sullivan points out, even the manager for corporate affairs for Famous Players (which has since merged with Cineplex Odeon to form the Galaxy conglomerate), Andrew Sherbin, can give some indication as to why the ByTowne might be the alternative sensation that it is:

"The demographic that goes to see our movies [i.e. those screening at Famous Players] is between 12 and 25 years old" [says Sherbin]. White says ByTowne patrons tend to be upwards of 30, and therefore an entirely different market.

One must keep in mind that Saskatoon and Ottawa are not the same city. There are factors internal to the smaller city of Saskatoon that wouldn't pose a concern in Ottawa, e.g., the inevitable close proximity of the other theatres in downtown Saskatoon, the comparative smallness of the Saskatoon arts community, etc. But there are no doubt lessons to be learned from the success of the ByTowne—whether they come from the Cinema's promotional strategies, or from its programming, or from somewhere else, is

something that demands further investigation. Here, in the example of the ByTowne, is a theatre that shows films outside the mainstream, never screens any guaranteed “blockbusters,” and yet every weekend seemingly manages to draw that supposed 22% of the public who still care to see their films in a darkened movie house. The ByTowne happily disproves the common wisdom in the movie theatre industry that says the chains always command the biggest audiences.

## **METHODS**

### **Quantitative and Qualitative Methods**

To ensure diversity of opinion, useful data, and qualitative commentary for the Broadway Theatre membership assessment, research drew on both quantitative and qualitative methods, on surveys as well as focus group discussions and key informant interviews, on statistics as much as stories about the meaning of Theatre membership to participants.

An online survey was developed and posted on the Broadway Theatre website for a month from July to August 2007. The survey was widely announced at events at the Theatre and via the Theatre listserv. 172 participants completed the survey, 66% of which were members of the Theatre.

A shortened survey was developed to be completed on site in the lobby of the Theatre. Box office personnel invited members and non-members to complete the survey. 144 participants responded. Quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS and themes were manually extracted from qualitative survey responses.

The focus groups (see below) and key informant interviews added to the diversity of voices represented. The three key informants included those who have been or are currently associated with the Theatre as staff and/or board members. The semi-structured interview drew on the particular histories of informants’ relationships to the Theatre and an adapted version of the SWOT Analysis.

Data from the lobby and on-line survey were merged and analyzed together with the findings from the key informant interviews and the three focus groups. The findings are presented in the Results section of this report.

### **Broadway Theatre Focus Groups**

As part of the qualitative research, CUISR planned a series of three focus group sessions with members and past and present affiliates of the Broadway. For participants, the focus groups were an opportunity to come together with their peers at the Theatre—whether they be fellow members, volunteers or co-workers—and share with one another their hopes, thoughts, opinions, and concerns about the Broadway. For the facilitators, the focus groups were, more than anything, a valuable chance to hear directly from the people

whose voices were perhaps most vital to the project—the people whose satisfaction with the Theatre was of central importance to accomplishing the project’s goals. The objective of these focus groups was for participants to discuss how effectively the Broadway Theatre is currently operating and what could be done to increase its effectiveness, especially with regards to attracting more volunteers, members, and donors, and to keeping current ones satisfied with their experiences at the Theatre. To meet this objective, a method—commonly used in assessing the viability of business ventures—called the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats or Obstacles) Analysis was employed at each focus group. Participants at each focus group were asked to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the Broadway as they pertain to the Theatre’s mission of increasing member, volunteer, and donor participation and satisfaction. After the SWOT Analysis, each participant was asked to jot down on post-it notes what in his or her opinion were the crucial short-term and long-term priorities for the Theatre, based on the issues the group had discussed during the SWOT.

Every effort was made to ensure each participant’s contribution was respected by the rest of the group. If the focus groups’ success was limited in any way, it may be that occasionally one or two participants dominated a discussion, which may have inadvertently silenced another participant’s opinion. To counter this, where possible the group participants were asked to take turns each giving their opinion about a certain topic. Hopefully each participant in the Broadway Theatre focus groups left at the end feeling confident that her or his opinion had been heard, and that she or he had learned something or understood an issue better as a result of hearing the views of the others. A few participants openly expressed their satisfaction with the way the focus groups went.

### **Selecting and recruiting participants**

Initially, CUI SR and the research team had plans to hold two focus groups with approximately eight participants per group. The first group was intended to be for a mix of current and former film-going members of the Broadway Theatre, and was scheduled for 17 July 2007. The second would be for current members only, and would take place on 23 July 2007. Sign-up sheets for the two focus groups were drafted and posted in the lobby during Broadway’s Volunteer Appreciation Night on 22 June 2007. At the same event, flyers about the CUI SR research study and the focus groups were handed out to those in attendance. The CUI SR student researcher also made a formal announcement about the study and the focus groups before the night’s film began. By the end of the evening only a couple of people had signed up for the focus groups.

The research team met with personnel at the Broadway on July 9th, 2007 to plan a new strategy to recruit focus group participants. At this meeting, the team reevaluated the purpose of the focus group. Given the other methods of data collection and the difficulties with recruitment, the team agreed on eight current members. The team also discussed the importance of hearing from students, from both university and high school; therefore, a second focus group was organized for students. A third focus group was proposed at

the meeting: on July 19th, past and present affiliates of the Theatre (Board members, volunteers, donors, etc.) would be invited to participate in a session. Arrangements were made for the Broadway Theatre to randomly contact potential participants for the groups, by phone and by email (numbers and email addresses were gathered from member/volunteer contact lists). By the end of the week, participants for each group had been successfully recruited. In the final counting, six current members participated on the July 17th, four past and present affiliates participated on July 19th, and eight students participated on July 23rd. (It should be noted that some people who had signed up for the first two groups were absent on the dates of their sessions.)

### **Procedure for the Broadway Theatre Focus Groups**

#### **1. Introductions and fielding questions.**

At the beginning of each focus group, the participants were provided with food and beverages and encouraged to enjoy an informal social setting. Once the participants were comfortable and everyone had introduced him or herself (including a comment on their involvement in the theatre), the facilitators formally started the session by explaining the nature of the research study, how the focus groups fit into the research goals, and how the participants' input at the focus groups would benefit the final research report. Participant questions and concerns were fielded by the facilitators at this time.

#### **2. Informed consent.**

Two copies of a consent form had been handed out to each participant prior to the start of the session: one to return to the facilitators, one for the participant's records. At this time, participants were asked to follow along as one of the facilitators read the form aloud to the group. Participant questions and concerns about the form were answered, and the participants were asked to sign their consent if they agreed to the terms of confidentiality and ethical treatment specified in the form.

#### **3. SWOT Analysis.**

The SWOT Analysis method was explained to participants. The facilitators answered participant questions and concerns before the focus group began. Participants were asked to discuss:

- strengths of the Broadway Theatre in terms of attracting more people and maintaining current members, volunteers, and donors. The general question posed was: In what areas is the Theatre particularly strong? Strengths are things internal to the Theatre, i.e., things that the Theatre is doing, or has under its power to do.
- strengths the Theatre had compared to other theatres and other charitable organizations in Saskatoon.
- areas of improvement at the Theatre. An example of a more direct prompt used was: in what ways could the Theatre be more responsive to the needs of members?

- external opportunities the Broadway. They were prompted to consider what resources in the city lie untapped by the Broadway. Participants also spoke about upcoming opportunities in the city that they felt the Broadway should seize.
- obstacles faced by the Broadway. The facilitator also prompted them with the question, How can the Broadway cope with dropping memberships?

The groups often made suggestions as to how the Theatre could use its Strengths and Opportunities to combat its Weaknesses and Threats.

*Note:*

In the first session, held on July 17th, a slightly different approach was used to the SWOT Analysis. The group was split up into two teams of three, each team going off into another room with one of the facilitators to proceed through the SWOT in the fashion described above. After about an hour, the two teams met up again and the facilitators shared their respective notes to the whole group. The teams were split up not only to make the group more manageable, but also to gain a greater variety of responses. This method of dividing up the team was abandoned in the next two focus groups, in one case, because the group was so small to begin with; in the other, because the facilitators were confident that they could manage the group as a whole and still draw out the full diversity of opinion.

#### **4. Debriefing and reflections on priorities.**

After the SWOT Analysis was completed, the main facilitator reviewed the main issues discussed during the session. Participants were invited to clarify or correct the facilitator's interpretations. To close the focus group, participants were provided with post-it notes and asked to write down what they saw as short-term and long-term priorities for the Broadway, based on the topics discussed in the SWOT. In the July 17th session, participants were then asked to share their chosen priorities with the rest of the group, and after that to hand the post-it notes back to the facilitators. This final step was not done in the second or third groups because the sessions had run late

#### **5. Thank-yous and reward for participation.**

Participants were thanked for their time and valuable contributions to the study at the end of each focus group, and were rewarded for their participation with a coupon for one free film admission at the Broadway Theatre. A few declined the reward, happy to have participated for the benefit of the Broadway and not wishing to receive any bonus for doing so.

#### **Transcribing and Analyzing the Focus Groups**

Handwritten notes of the group's discussion were taken by both facilitators present at the July 17th session. For the July 19th session, an audio-recording was made to go along with the student facilitator's handwritten version of the discussion. On July 23rd,

handwritten notes were taken by two facilitators and again an audio-recording was taken. The research team deemed the handwritten notes sufficient for data analysis.

A thematic analysis of the data taken from the SWOT in all three focus groups was conducted by the student researcher for CUISR. The researcher divided up key themes represented across all the focus groups by major and minor importance.

## **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

Focus group data, interviews, and the two survey data were integrated and are presented below.

### **Characteristics of survey respondents**

The following demographics represent data from both surveys. 68% of respondents were members of the Broadway Theatre. Age was evenly distributed with 55% representing members aged 35 to 54 years. Just over half (64%) were female and 61% live in the east side. 89% had attained post secondary education. Additional demographic results are presented below contrasting members with non-members.

The following questions were asked only of those who completed the internet survey. 34% of the respondents earned over \$75 000 annually. 95% spoke English as a first language. 56% had been members for less than 5 years.

### **Differences between members and non-members.**

It is important to note that some non-members were members who had not yet renewed their memberships. Some non-members may be considered similar to their member counterparts, thus diluting differences between groups. Despite the above 'contamination' many differences between the two groups were revealed.

Although it was not stated directly, based on qualitative comments, most members likely reside within neighbourhoods within a short distance of the Theatre. "The Broadway Theatre in my opinion is central and valued amenity within the Broadway area that enhances quality of life..." Fewer than half of non-members reside on the East Side.

Members attend movies more exclusively and frequently than non-members. On the other hand more non-members attend events (as opposed to films) exclusively.

While more members have donated their time and money to support the Theatre, it is perhaps more interesting that more than one-in-five non-members have made donations.

**Table 1. Member and non-member differences**

	Members	Non-members
Live on east side	71%	40%
Live on west side	16	24
Live outside of Saskatoon	5	24
Films at least once a week	21	5
Films less than monthly	32	85
Broadway more than other theatres	68	32
Broadway less than other theatres	7	33
Go to Broadway for movies only	85	47
Go to Broadway for events only	4	21
Have donated	44	22

The differences between members and non-members are significant (t-test).

Both members (35%) and non-members (26%) volunteer (again, many non-members were members in the past) and have gifted memberships (21 and 14% respectively). Members learn of the films and events from the calendar, where more non-members hear much more via word of mouth.

**Reasons for not being members**

Non-members reported they were not members for the following reasons:

- Have not gotten around to it (10)
- Don't go often enough/ not worth it (9)
- Living outside of Saskatoon (7)
- Did not know about membership (6)
- Cost (4)
- Don't go to movies (4)
- Not interested (2)

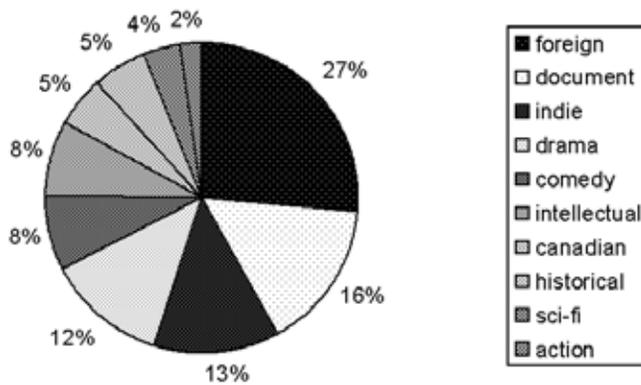
*I really enjoy the Broadway Theatre. Keep up the good work. We appreciate you all so much!! Vive le Broadway!*

*Increasing Fees*

While increasing fees is rarely a popular notion, respondents felt they could support minimal increases. 88% would support up to 5\$ increase in membership (44% for 5\$) and 76% would support a dollar or less increase in movie admission fees.

### What they come to see!

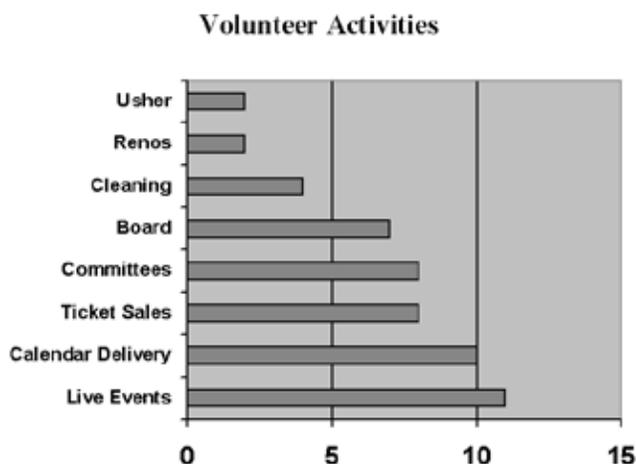
There was significant diversity in interests; however, most reported foreign films, documentaries, independent films, and dramas. While many respondents indicated they preferred documentaries, other respondents commented that the increase in documentaries shown at the Theatre has caused them to attend less often. Canadian films was another genre that showed significant disagreement. Some attended because Canadian films are played, while others were not fans of Canadian films. Figure 1 below shows the genres Broadway movie-goers want to see most.



**Figure 1. Film Genres of choice of survey respondents**

### *Volunteering*

Respondents reported many volunteer opportunities with the Broadway Theatre. Figure 2 below shows the volunteer activities performed by respondents. Members and non-members alike volunteered for special events such as the Fringe Festival and Flicks. Calendar delivery was another popular activity.



**Figure 2. Volunteer Activities of Broadway Members**

### **Community-Oriented Nature of the Broadway**

An extremely important contribution of the Theatre was the sense of community felt by members and the idea of supporting alternatives. “I love the community atmosphere. It is not commercially-driven and the people who run the theatre, volunteers, and movie/event goers are passionate and dedicated people. I like supporting independent grassroots efforts.” Many commented on the comfortable atmosphere and friendliness. “At the Broadway, I feel like I’m watching movies in my living room with a group of friends.”

Almost everybody agreed that the Broadway was definitely “part of the community”; as one participant said, “I consider this my community theatre.” The Broadway’s status as a “community-based” organization was generally seen by the focus group participants as one of its most appealing assets. One participant cited the fact that the Broadway opens up volunteer work “in a variety of areas” for people as part of what helps the Theatre attract members of the community. Another participant called the Broadway a “hub of activity” that was particularly “important for [the neighbourhood’s] identity.” By keeping an active focus on the community and on creating new opportunities for community engagement, the Broadway exercises one of its singular strengths as a theatre.

Participants noted that the Broadway’s strong community feel was directly tied to its “friendly” and “familiar” atmosphere. Participants seemed to suggest that the Broadway exists both in a larger community, and as a community itself. Participants found that they could feel at home or feel they are among friends at the Theatre: “I know employees here; there are familiar faces”; “I always seem to run into people here.” The Broadway

is more “personal,” said one; others deemed it more “people-friendly” than theatres like the Galaxy. Many participants when speaking of the Theatre used the pronoun “we,” whether consciously or unconsciously. Only in the third focus group did a participant bring this tendency to the attention of the rest of the group: “You identified the Broadway as “we,” not “you” or “it”--that’s a strength.” The participants’ use of “we” attests to the strong sense of belonging felt among people at the Broadway. To this effect, the Theatre’s offer of membership was called a “great” strength. Part of the “incentive” of the membership, said one, is that “you feel like an owner” of the Broadway, you feel that you have a tangible relationship with the Theatre. One participant noted that the Broadway has on its side a “very loyal cohort”; the “inner circle” present at the Broadway’s Volunteer Appreciation Night was recognized as a testament to the number of Broadway-lovers who stand by their theatre.

Focus groups and survey responses were consistent; however, the importance attributed to the strengths differed somewhat. For focus group participants, the community-oriented nature of the Broadway was most important, whereas access to quality films (75 responses) was most important to survey respondents.

A possible reason for this subtle difference could be the degree of engagement associated with focus groups. In other words, those who were willing to commit themselves to participate in a focus group may be more engaged in the Broadway community than a participant who invested less time to complete a survey.

### **Recommendations**

To enhance the community atmosphere and value of the films, a number of people suggested opportunities to convene afterwards to discuss the film or simply visit.

While the vast majority appreciated the community ambiance and ownership, there were some who just wanted to watch a good movie and were not interested in becoming part of a movement. Is there room for both ‘types’ of movie-goers and how can that be encouraged?

### **Quality of Programming**

Participants, members and non-members reported the quality of programming at the Broadway as one of the Theatre’s primary strengths. Participants agreed that the Broadway plays the best films in town. The calibre of the Theatre’s films was at the top of its strengths for at least one participant, whose opening remarks were, “First off: the fact that we’re showing quality movies [is a strength].” The Broadway’s film programming is part of what sets it apart from other theatres in town. One participant pointed out that more award-winning, critically-acclaimed films play at the Broadway than anywhere else in town. Some saw the fact that the Broadway didn’t serve “Hollywood films” as positive. One participant noted that, for the Broadway, “content is first,” and suggested that she felt she could “confidently assume that [quality] movies will come to the Broad-

way.” On the live events front, some participants made specific mention of the strength of the Saskatoon Soaps improv group in bringing in younger crowds on Friday nights. In fact, many seemed to believe that the live events programming at the Theatre was quite strong, commenting that the events were usually “well-chosen and well-attended.” One participant recalled the enthusiastic scene at a recent live performance by an African music troupe: “The place was jumping; people were dancing in the aisles.”

Some members suggested more member input into movie selection and reported a disparity between the interests of (past) members and current selection. “I truly think the film selection in the last three years does not reflect the tastes of the membership. I’ve talked to a number of current and former members that have stopped viewing films at the theatre because of the documentary nature of the selections.” Selections, according to a few, were also viewed as too mainstream and ‘safe’. Other survey respondents, primarily former members, indicated the selection consisted of too many documentaries, and as a result they have not renewed memberships.

### **Unique place in culture**

While the programming at the Broadway was seen as a top strength, the participants for the most part were willing to admit that the films and live events at the Broadway may primarily serve a certain “niche”—this service, however, was voted a strength of its own. Recognition was given in all sessions to the “diversity of people” who attend the Theatre, implying that the Broadway is particularly well-equipped to serve a diversity of interests, something of which the homogenized programming at the bigger theatres in town are incapable.

Participants highlighted some of the manners in which the Broadway impacts local culture. One drew attention to the municipal government’s recognition of the Theatre as “One of Saskatoon’s four cultural flagships” (along with the city’s art gallery, symphony orchestra, and professional live theatre [p. 11 of Marketing Report]). Broadway thus has a cultural reputation in Saskatoon; the Theatre’s annual participation in the Saskatoon Jazz Festival and the Fringe (though not in 2007) uphold this reputation. One participant said the strength of the Broadway in the context of local culture was “its dedication to the arts in town.” Finally, some thought the Theatre’s place in the history of Broadway Avenue and of the city of Saskatoon was a significant strength.

While, survey responses corroborated these perspectives, there were some who indicated that the ‘clientele’ of the Broadway theatre was less diverse than it could/should be. “I rarely see a diverse audience at the Broadway. Often I am the only visible minority in the audience. A true COMMUNITY theatre should be reaching out to all sectors of the community including Aboriginal, new immigrant/ refugee, people with disabilities etc.”

## **Strength of the Venue**

The group participants in all three sessions singled out the Broadway's venue as an asset. On the whole, participants agreed that the unique features of the venue—its comfortable seating for 430, its capacity for both stage and screen performances—make the Broadway much more attractive to attend, and to rent. “The comfortable ambiance and seats of the Theatre make viewing a pleasure,” said one participant. Another participant confessed to “love the décor” of the venue; still another showed appreciation for the renovations made on the venue in recent years: “Gotta love the new washrooms.”

Others took notice of the Broadway's special advantage over other theatres in that “it can be used in more than one way.” Live events were seen as boosted by the strength of the venue; one participant mentioned that the “feedback from performers is great—entertainers enjoy this venue.” When asked about what separates the Broadway from other non-profit organizations, participants identified without hesitation the venue as a definite edge held by the Broadway over similar organizations. It was apparent in all sessions that the participants held the Broadway venue as distinct from other theatres and performance venues in town. The Broadway venue is just another part of the “difference” offered by the Broadway; here again, the participants saw “difference” as a chief strength of the Broadway Theatre.

For members, the location was a definite asset in terms of cultural identity and being walking distance from home.

The most common suggestions for improvement involved the quality of the sounds and projections systems. One respondent suggested moving the screen closer to the audience.

## **Unique touches/different experience of the Broadway**

Participants felt that the Broadway was better—and therefore stronger—than other theatres in town for its attention to creating a unique experience for patrons. The fact that patrons can purchase memberships at the Broadway is something exclusive among movie theatres in Saskatoon. The “perks” that come along with membership contribute to attracting new members; the price break on admission for members was brought to the fore by one participant as a major strength, since ticket prices for her and many moviegoers are “a big factor in choosing a theatre.” Another participant saw that the Broadway feels like a “destination” because of the unique touches it offers; as he saw it, people end up saying, “I want to go to the Broadway because of the extras.”

Outside of membership, there are other “extras” and unique alternatives available to patrons of the Broadway. The focus group participants showed an appreciation for items available at the concession stand. A surprising (or maybe not so surprising) number of participants said the “real butter on the [Broadway's] popcorn” heightens the Theatre's appeal for moviegoers. The participants also recognized the Broadway's attention to

social and environmental issues at the concession. The Broadway's allowing mugs for coffee is an environmentally-friendly gesture of which the participants took notice; some also said they liked that the Broadway sells fair-trade concession items, and expressed a hope that this trend at the Broadway's concession stand would continue and expand to include other local products.

Finally, the participants explained that they were drawn to the Theatre because, as one pointed out, "Most people are better behaved here." The Broadway experience of sitting with an audience is a refreshing change from the mainstream theatres; here, participants said, you aren't likely to hear people talking or to be bothered by cell phones disrupting the film. It is clear that the participants felt that there are things offered at the Broadway that are not available from other theatres in Saskatoon.

### **Communications: Calendar/website**

Some participants evaluated the Broadway's distribution of a monthly calendar and its website as strengths. The Broadway monthly calendar has become a reliable source for many patrons. Some participants felt the published calendar is "done really well," and at least one saw a strength in the way the Theatre distributes the calendar: "I can just walk down to Broadway and grab a calendar." The Broadway's use of the internet was viewed as positive. The Broadway website ([broadwaytheatre.ca](http://broadwaytheatre.ca)) is "fine" according to some participants. One participant did express enthusiasm for the Broadway's "e-calendar"; another said the "Email list [on the website] is good if you use it." One participant viewed the Broadway's new Facebook page as a step in the right direction. The message sent by the participants' identification of this strength category is that they felt the Broadway generally makes good use of the internet. While there are strengths, the Broadway might want to consider exploring further possibilities of cyberspace exposure.

Lack of knowledge about events and films (e.g., not getting the calendar or getting it too late) was still a concern expressed by survey respondents. Discrepancies between what films were posted electronically and those on the calendar were also mentioned. Some survey respondents also reported their inquiries or suggestions went unheard, causing them to refrain from contributing in the future.

A particular focus for communication could be younger potential members. Focus group participants indicated there were few 'younger' movie-goers. Twenty-five percent of members who responded to the survey were under 35 years of age. Concerns were also raised about the cultural homogeneity of Broadway patrons. Concerted efforts should be made to communicate with and promote to a variety of cultural groups.

### **Recommendations**

Improved communication was a concern expressed by many participants ranging from responsiveness of staff to transparency—to a clear understanding of the meaning of

membership. In particular, what does member-owned mean to the board, to staff, to members, and others? Marketing outside of the existing membership was also viewed as problematic. Board members need to be talking about memberships to people in their workplaces and board, staff, and volunteers need to be building on their connections in the community. The Theatre should be working to retrieve some of the buzz that used to get the Broadway regular media coverage, including regular spots on a CTV morning show. In addition to expanding communication to non-members and targeting a greater diversity of audience (age, ethnicity, abilities), members felt they had inadequate information about:

- How to become a volunteer and volunteer opportunities
- Advantages to membership (new and renewal)
- Broadway future directions
- Member roles or opportunities
- Board composition
- Fundraising needs
- Upcoming films or events
- To enhance communication with members and patrons:
  - o add a survey when people become members
  - o put suggestion box at the exit
  - o ensure staff available in lobby after movies
  - o attach monthly questions/small survey for patrons on regular email announcements
  - o list the names of the Board members on the website
  - o realign office hours to meet member needs
  - o publish office hours in lobby as well as on website
  - o update membership database
  - o develop membership information package
  - o send membership renewal reminders
  - o streamline in-person membership renewal (separate from ticket purchase to reduce time in line)
  - o add online membership renewal to website
  - o update e-mail list

- o develop volunteer information package
- o add online volunteering capacity to website
- o increase staff training (see Professionalism section below)
- o develop comprehensive internal and external communication plan

**Recommendations:**

- Advertise widely, often and creatively
  - o Produce more handbills about different movies
  - o advertise in high schools
  - o advertise in public libraries
  - o advertise in the tunnel at U of S and put up flashy posters (clubs advertise for free- Film Society)
  - o advertise in the Bessborough and other hotels
  - o market the “funkiness” of the Broadway and brand away from “adult, intellectual”
  - o develop business-card-sized coupons
  - o distribute 100 tickets a day to students; make the window small (have it expire at the end of the week)
  - o consider “Gold Pass”: \$200 for the year—full access to Theatre; life-time memberships
  - o align volunteer appreciation night with National Volunteer Week
  - o consider potential to operate as a community box-office, away from Ticketmaster; sell tickets for the Refinery, Saskatoon Opera, etc. at the Broadway
  - o promote to special interest groups (ethnic film promotions), develop attractive package for groups
  - o promote films as an “event,” Theatre as a “destination”
  - o engage in more membership drives (10 memberships to sell with incentives)
  - o develop a “Welcome Wagon” promotion for people moving into the city
  - o develop a Broadway Movie Club

Another related issue was volunteer burnout. With many members reporting they are

unaware of events and opportunities to participate, much of the burden sits on a few shoulders.

### **Professionalism**

While a comfortable environment was put forth as an asset, the level of professionalism was viewed as detrimental to the success of the Broadway. The following illustrate participant concerns regarding professionalism:

- photocopied signs for the bathrooms; items stored by the downstairs bathrooms
- Not handling Interac correctly
- Doors and shows not opening or beginning on time; “[This] pisses people off, especially in the winter time”
- Broadway’s reputation as a “slack-ass place” (e.g, occasional messiness)
- Box office staff not knowing what they are doing

### **Programming**

Survey respondents indicated that movie selection (many documentaries) has affected their willingness to renew memberships and attend films. At the same time, many members indicated their film of choice is a documentary. Providing opportunities for member input may be well worth the added work required. Inviting members to suggest films or vote on a slate of possible films may be effective means to more meaningfully engage the membership. Focus group participants discussed exploring films on line (digital prints to which there is no limitation on prints) and increasing the utilization of the building.

### **Recommendations**

Special events programming

The following is a list of ideas generated by focus groups:

- Organize interactive events
- Bring in old VHS, get a ticket
- Stump the movie grad, get a ticket
- Galaxy-bashing event: “just go to the Galaxy in a van and pick people up—to get people talking, media coverage”
- Organize an outrageous theme nights (Bring your mother-in-law/wear your wedding gown, get in for free to After the Wedding)
- Organize a local Short Film Festival
- Utilize YouTube

- Pick up the ball dropped by U of S Film Festival
- Attract more live events (Amigos-type crowds)
- Approach high school drama department about renting the venue for a screening of their drama production

### **Partnerships**

As shown in the literature review, the independent film market is facing challenges across the country; however, success is possible. The Broadway might be able to gain valuable insight from theatres such as ByTowne and the Revue (see Literature Review). Other opportunities for collaboration should be sought including the following suggestions provided by participants:

- working with Persephone, e.g., free ticket in Persephone book; or bring in Persephone stub for free Broadway admission
- connecting with other community (cultural, special interest) groups
- work with Calories (or other Nutana vendors): movie-and-a-meal deal
- explore opportunities with the Mendel

### **Other suggestions**

Running shows longer or re-running shows later was suggested by many who are unable to attend a particular night or who find out 'too late'. Some respondents suggested additional viewing such as weekend matinees and earlier evening shows. Along the lines of time viewing, one respondent reported frustration when shows do not start on time.

Suggested improvements to concession included

- high end
- locally-made
- fair trade
- baking

## **CONCLUSION**

According to survey respondents (many of whom are members)

- The greatest value the Broadway Theatre provides to the community is access to films and increasingly performers that would not be available otherwise.
- Respondents felt that the Broadway lends significantly to the social fabric of Saskatoon, and Nutana in particular.

- Broadway members feel inadequately informed of opportunities to participate.
- Partnership opportunities exist within the community.
- Minimal price increases would be acceptable up to one dollar for admission and up to 5 dollars for membership fees.
- Community cinemas across the nation are facing similar struggles with the advent of high-end home entertainment technology and competing with large movie theatres.
- Broadway members are, for the most part, educated, affluent, and east-siders.
- Broadway members attend films almost exclusively, while the opposite is true for non-members
- Membership has decreased in recent years. Former members cited the following as most common reasons: no time to renew including inconvenient renewal process, not interested in the recent selection of films (particular mention was made on numerous occasions of too many documentaries), not attending frequently enough to make a membership worthwhile.
- Respondents indicated they prefer foreign films, followed by documentaries, independent films, and drama. (There is significant overlap between films labelled as foreign, independent, and drama.)
- Professionalism was an issue raised by a few respondents.
- Concerns around both internal and external communication suggest the need for a comprehensive communication plan.
- Many suggestions and much constructive criticism was provided by respondents, indicating a genuine interest to see the Broadway thrive.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

As the Broadway seeks to implement recommendations, the community sense of ownership must not be compromised. There is significant support from the community that reaffirms the Broadway's place in Saskatoon and in Nutana in particular. Lessons can be learned by sharing methods and practices with similar theatres and organizations in Canada. Similarly, members and non-members alike provided many suggestions to strengthen the Broadway. Many of these are presented below. Please review the results section for additional detail.

Building on recommendations and developing a comprehensive internal and external communication plan should be a priority—and a key tool in uncovering opportunities and addressing challenges. A proactive and strategic communication plan can guide the

Theatre's decisions when it aligns with and clarifies mission, vision, priorities, and goals. Enhancing transparency and accountability, a communication plan impacts ownership, commitment, and bottom lines. The process is as critical as the outcomes when all are engaged in the process of determining the following elements of a communication plan:

- Situation analysis
- Objectives and outcomes
- Targeted audiences
- Key messages
- Strategy
- Measures of success

### **Internal Communications**

- Seek ways to obtain membership input on movie selection. While many prefer documentaries, too many has resulted in decline of membership.
- Develop a volunteer committee responsible for communicating volunteer opportunities and coordinating volunteer activities. If funding becomes available, this might be a priority for new staffing.
- Publish and display board member list.
- Seek member suggestions on what to serve at concession. Keep the real butter popcorn! Identify additional local flavour treats to offer for purchase.
- Make staff, volunteer, and board training a priority. As in many non-profit organizations where people are overstretched, multitasking sometimes means tasks get overlooked.
- Ensure procedures are understood and followed by all staff (procedures manual, staff identity tool, membership, volunteer, and board packages relevant here).
- Solidify the meaning of membership (for a theatre sustained by membership). Ensure that all understand the meaning of membership and are able to support member and Theatre needs. Staff, board, and volunteers should communicate regularly (in face-to-face and electronic media) to develop a culture where everybody knows his or her roles and responsibilities, where everybody takes ownership of the Theatre mandate and mission, and everybody's contribution is valued and respected.

### **External Communications (Promotion and Advertising)**

- Take under advisement some of the better promotional ideas of the focus group participants; use exciting promotions that capture the city's attention,

get the media and people talking about the Broadway's calendar of events.

- Enhance data base and mailing lists.
- Systematize e-mail lists.
- Use data base, mailing and email lists for regular notices, fundraising, special events, membership renewal, etc.
- Send PDF of calendar to members via email list.
- Attract audiences and turn audiences into members.
- Develop incentives for members to sell memberships.
- Consider different categories of membership.
- Consider an "inside" Broadway critic to write a weekly article reviewing the new "quality" movies a few days in advance of showing.
- Market the brand of the Broadway with an eye to capturing its essence in a "catchphrase" that stays with people (though avoid getting too hokey with this); people need to know that the Broadway films aren't all "difficult, esoteric art films"—let them know why the films that play here are worth seeing for everybody.
- Identify complementary organizations (e.g., cultural groups, community arts groups) with whom to collaborate and promote the Broadway.

### **Partnerships**

- Communicate with other similar theatres and organizations in Canada on a regular basis; share methods and practices with each other.
- Explore potential for partnering with other member-based organizations and culturally diverse groups for various cross-purposes.
- Continue to explore opportunities to use the venue for live events. This may be a means of shifting the demographic of members and patrons.
- Explore opportunities to engage University of Saskatchewan and SIAST students. The U of S has a number of opportunities for inexpensive or even free promotion.
- Partner with the Yard and Flagon, Lydia's, Amigos, Hose and Hydrant, Bud's on Broadway, The Roxy on Broadway, Vangelis Tavern to promote a Student Night on Broadway.
- Partner with Calories, Nino's, Pestos, Sushiro, Weczeria, The Upstairs, Taj Mahal, Szechuan Kitchen to promote dinner or dessert and a movie on Broadway.

## **Facilities and programming**

- Make continued inroads into the use of the venue for live events; this is a major strength that can be expanded by targeting acts that draw younger and culturally diverse groups.
- Increase efforts (with Board support) to secure first and immediate access to first-rate films
- Ensure doors are open on time and that Theatre staff are on hand after events.
- Develop transparent, clear publicity and practices on theatre rentals (information sheets and contracts)
- Continue to pursue upgrades to the equipment; if the quality of the screen, sound, and picture gets a boost, the Broadway stands to draw more moviegoers looking for something distinct from the home-viewing experience.
- Ensure membership understands fundraising needs for new equipment.
- Once upgrades are made, advertise them; the general movie going public is likely to show some interest or at least curiosity in a “new and improved” Broadway experience. Maintain the comfortable atmosphere of the Broadway while addressing concerns about professionalism; ensure the volunteers are prepared for their posts and review membership renewal processes. Take time to respond to member questions and suggestions.
- Explore all possible funding options, within the community and on the provincial and federal levels.
- Explore options for socializing or film discussions after a film. This could take the form of a partnership with local merchants (e.g., booking Amigos back room).

The Board (outgoing and incoming) is committed to using the results and recommendations of this study in its strategic planning. Plans for enhancing communications, promotions, and publicity are already underway and will be enhanced by the findings and recommendations in this report.

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