

MUNCIE CIVIC THEATRE

Campaign Plan

PR 565 Sec. 800



munciecivic.org

Muncie Civic Theatre

216 E Main St., Muncie, IN 47305

Presented by: Jennifer McGowen

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Executive Summary

Since 2020, Muncie Civic Theatre has dedicated their time to rebuilding their family within the Muncie community and finding ways to continue to perform through the ongoing pandemic. Since Muncie Civic Theatre is a non-profit, the decrease in ticket sales and participation within the theatre has taken its toll on attendance rates and funding for the theatre. Muncie Civic Theatre plans to return to their former performance rates and continue to increase their ticket sales and donations throughout the next year.

To help initiate the increase in revenue for Muncie Civic Theatre, the following goals have been set:

Goal 1: Increase ticket sales and overall attendance at events at Muncie Civic Theatre.

Goal 2: Increase donations and community support for the theatre's barrier-free and educational youth programs.

The campaign will begin July 5, 2022 and reach its major event by December 17, 2022. The basic campaign items will continue to run throughout the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons.

The campaign budget is depending on volunteers and local community support. The current budget is set to be \$7,000 with at least 600 hours of expected work.



Background

For the Muncie community, Muncie Civic Theatre (MCT) is not only a source of entertainment, but also a piece of history. Muncie Civic Theatre was established in 1931 by William H. Ball, who became the first president for the theatre (*Our history*).

Muncie Civic Theatre has always had a goal to provide for the community. They opened with the play “Dulcy” in 1931 at a building that is now the Cornerstone Center of Arts. During World War II, MCT’s actors dedicated their time to performing radio dramas for the community until the theatre reopened in 1947 (*Our history*). In 1961, Muncie Civic Theatre moved to its current location of the Boyce Block and has since been dedicated to preserving the old theatre and renovating it to its former glory.

In 2018, the Board of Directors engaged in their second capital campaign in response to an increase in ticket sales and educational programming, which resulted in a massive amount of funds that helped them contribute back to the community in a substantial way. From this point, MCT was thrilled to continue to provide entertainment to the Muncie community, but took a hard hit during the lockdown in the year of 2020 (L. Williamson).



Situational Research

For nonprofit theatres, the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 took a toll on their budgets and ability to perform for local communities. As controversial as it was to understand why the arts industry was so important, the arts and cultures industry contributed 4.5% of U.S. gross domestic product pre-pandemic, which was a larger share than construction, agriculture, and transportation (Guilbert, 2021).

Unfortunately, the performing arts industry has not yet fully-recovered to that GDP point since post-lockdown. Muncie Civic Theatre is no different.

Muncie Civic Theatre and many other nonprofit theatres experienced a loss of funding and revenue due to the pandemic. Multiple cancellations and postponements allowed for nonprofit theatres to keep some of their budgets stable, but most were unable to earn their typical revenue from ticket sales since audiences were limited (McGaha, 2021). Along with decreased revenue from ticket sales, donations and subscription rates also decreased since normalized seasons were difficult to secure. Therefore, nonprofits were losing much of their revenue for their seasons.

In late 2020, the Indiana Arts Commission placed online practices and expectations for Indiana theatres and artists to follow to continue their careers and earning revenue (Indiana Arts Commission, 2020). As a result, theatres dedicated their time to placing Covid testing measures, mask mandates, and limiting audience members and performers in their spaces. Muncie Civic followed this protocol, but since returning to a normal season in 2021-22, the audience attendance rates and ticket sales have not returned to the numbers that they were in 2019 or any previous year (L. Williamson, 2022).

For nonprofit theatres, the reliance on ticket sales, subscriptions, and donations is essential to the continued productions at these theatres. Muncie Civic Theatre suffered a 25 percent decrease in donations and subscriptions since the 2020 lockdown and a 32 percent attendance rate decline (B. Covert). MCT has seen these numbers fluctuate as they returned to a normal season in 2021-22, but they hope to increase these numbers and return to their 2019 rates during their 2022-23 season and future seasons.

Publics

Since Muncie Civic Theatre is a local, nonprofit theatre, it would not be wise to try and reach an audience located outside of Delaware County.

Therefore, the generalized publics are as follows:

Active Public	Customers, subscribers, participants, and everyone who already knows about MCT and actively attends shows and donates to the theatre.
Aware Public	Community members that are interested in performing arts venues, but are not aware of MCT and how it provides for the Muncie community.
Latent Public	Those who enjoy the performing arts, but do not attend shows due to the cost and time commitment.
Apathetic Public	Those who do not particularly enjoy the performing arts and do not have much awareness of local theatres.
Non-Public	Those who do not support the performing arts and/or do not live in Delaware County.

Key Publics

For this campaign, the focus will be on attracting three key publics: the aware, latent, and apathetic public. Each of the publics are important to the theatre since an increase in attendance from them will also be an increase in ticket sales.

Aware Public	This public will be the easiest to market to since they have an interest in performing arts and would be interested in an inexpensive way to watch entertainment while also supporting the community.
Latent Public	This public will be harder to market to since they are not actively looking for entertainment opportunities. The focus for this public will be marketing the variety of show dates and ticket prices offered at MCT.
Apathetic Public	This public will be the most difficult to market to, but can still be valuable to the theatre. Emphasizing the theatre's educational youth programs and their barrier-free performances will help this public focus on the community involvement of the theatre.

Goals

Goal 1: Increase ticket sales and overall attendance at events at Muncie Civic Theatre.

Ticket sales go straight back into the theatre, which helps MCT create the experience that they provide for the Muncie community. Since their ticket sales have declined since 2020, it is essential to increase ticket sales so the theatre can continue to provide for the community without having to stretch their grant and donation budgets. This goal will focus on the key publics of the aware public and the latent public.

Goal 2: Increase donations and community support for the theatre's barrier-free and educational youth programs.

With Muncie Civic Theatre being a nonprofit, they want to provide events "performed by the community members for the community" (*Our history*). For this mission statement, the community includes everyone! Therefore, having an increase in donations and awareness about the programs that MCT provides to the community will also increase the availability for these programs to expand and continue to grow. This goal will market to the latent public and the apathetic public.



Objectives

Goal 1

Objective 1 (1.1): To have an effect on the awareness of Muncie community citizens in Delaware County; specifically, to increase their understanding of the location of the theatre and the opportunities MCT presents (40 percent of Muncie citizens within six months).

Objective 2 (1.2): To have an effect on the acceptance of citizens in Delaware County; specifically, to increase their positive attitude towards attending shows at Muncie Civic Theatre (35 percent of Muncie citizens within six months).

Objective 3 (1.3): To have an effect on the action of citizens in Delaware County; specifically, to increase venue attendance at Muncie Civic Theatre (45 percent of Muncie citizens within one year).

Goal 2

Objective 1 (2.1): To have an effect on the awareness of citizens in Delaware County' specifically, to increase the knowledge about the barrier-free program and educational youth programs provided at Muncie Civic Theatre (25 percent of Muncie citizens within eight months).

Objective 2 (2.2): To have an effect on the acceptance of citizens in Delaware County; specifically, to increase their empathetic support for Muncie Civic Theatre's barrier-free program (30 percent of Muncie citizens within six months).

Objective 3 (2.3): To have an effect on the action of citizens in Delaware County' specifically, to increase the donation rate for Muncie Civic Theatre's barrier-free and educational youth programs (35 percent of Muncie citizens in one year).

Strategies

Overall Strategy

For both goals and all target audiences, the main strategy is to increase the audience's awareness and knowledge about Muncie Civic Theatre by interacting more with the community through hosting events, passing out flyers, and increasing social media presence.

Goal 1 Strategy

Specifically, the strategy to increase ticket sales revolves around making the audiences more aware about the theatre and the content they produce. Increasing social media engagement and broadening website advertisements will increase the ability for people to find Muncie Civic Theatre. On top of broadening the range of MCT, locally handing out flyers, hosting booths at local farmers markets or festivals, and increasing poster distribution will increase the visibility of the theatre within the local community.

Goal 2 Strategy

Specifically, the strategy to increase donations and awareness about MCT's barrier-free and educational youth programs focuses on informing the public about these opportunities and how the theatre being a nonprofit affects those programs. To reach these audiences, hosting an event would be the best opportunity for individuals to learn more about these programs and what their donation would be going to. Hosting an event that includes a venue tour, an information session to discuss the programs, a few classes to offer a glimpse into what these programs provide for participants, and a show from each of these programs would demonstrate everything that can be accomplished in these programs. On top of hosting the event, an increase in social media coverage of these programs will help increase awareness of these programs. Informative flyers and posters may also be distributed to help gain community awareness.

Tactics

Tactic 1

Poster and Flyer Distribution

Increase poster and flyer distribution within the community by passing out materials at local restaurants, farmers markets, festivals, companies, and any place that will accept the materials.

Tactic 2

Host an “Open House”

With a play on the theatrical term of “House,” hosting an “Open House” for the theatre would be beneficial in bringing people into the theatre. This event can include a venue tour, an information session on how the theatre functions as a nonprofit, a few classes to showcase the barrier-free and youth educational programs, and a variety of performances showcasing all the programs and talents that Muncie Civic Theatre provides. For this event, catering can be kept to a minimum of just concessions and money can be saved by having volunteers familiar with MCT and the general staff help with event coordination.



Tactics



Tactic 3

Social Media and Website Interaction

MCT currently has a small, and limited, interaction rate on social media and on their website. Increasing the range of reach for the website and social media will help Muncie Civic Theatre reach more people through their promotions. On top of promotional increase, increasing social media interaction will also increase the awareness of the public. Responding to comments, reacting to comments, and even reacting to other people's posts will increase the positive attitude towards the theatre.

Tactic 4

Direct Mailers

MCT depends heavily on season subscriptions to the venue. This is a good strategy, however, direct mailers currently only get sent to people who have already seen a show at the theatre. Therefore, expanding the amount of direct mailers going out to include a generalized information flyer will help increase the visibility of MCT. This can be a general information direct mailer that also includes information about ticket packages, donation opportunities, program information, and more about the theatre.

Budget

With Muncie Civic Theatre being a nonprofit theatre, it is important to save money during this campaign plan so they increase their return on donations and ticket sales. Majority of the budget will require lots of time and volunteers rather than money, which will help keep the budgets for shows at the theatre stable.

Tactic	\$ Budget	Time
Printing posters and flyers to pass out	\$1,250	Need time for designing flyers and posters, distributing materials, hosting booths at local events ~20 hours for design ~150 hours for distribution and booth management
Host an Open House	\$3,000	Need time for organization, set-up, rehearsals, volunteers, and visibility on event day ~80 hours in preparation ~180 hours in rehearsal ~18 hours day of event
Social Media and Website Range and Interaction	\$1,000	Need time for managing socials, creating promotional materials, and scheduling material ~70 hours to plan seasonal content ~20 hours a week to schedule content and respond on socials
Direct Mailer	\$1,750	Need time to create informative mailer and to search for addresses in the community to send to ~20 hours to design flyer ~40 hours to sort addresses and mail flyers
Total:	\$7,000	~600 hours

Timeline

Task:	Date:
Make contact	June 1, 2022
Begin social media scheduling and management (continuous)	July 5, 2022
Begin "Open House" preparation	July 18, 2022
Complete Design direct mailer Info flyers and print them	July 29, 2022
Complete and print flyers and posters (seasonal)	August 1, 2022
Finish mailing list for general flyers	August 17, 2022
Complete distributions of flyers and posters around the community	August 31, 2022
Send out direct mailer	September 7, 2022
Begin community involvement (presence at farmers markets, festivals, etc; will be continuous)	September 10, 2022
Gather volunteers and staff for "Open House" activities	September 20, 2022
Begin advertising for "Open House"	October 8, 2022
Initiate last stages of advertising for "Open House"	November 23, 2022
Hold "Open House"	December 17, 2022

Evaluation Goal 1

Goal 1 can be evaluated by comparing attendance rates and ticket sales from the 2022-23 season with the two prior seasons. If the sales and attendance rates have increased by at least 30 percent, then the campaign can be considered a success.

1.1

An increase in ticket sales signifies an increase in understanding and awareness about Muncie Civic Theatre. This can be measured by comparing 2022-23 season ticket sales with the previous two years of sales. If sales have increased by 40 percent, then the objective has been met and the campaign has been successful.

1.2

An increase in positive attitude towards the venue can be measured by several elements. First, a post-show survey can be sent out to audience members to gauge how attendees are feeling towards the venue. Since a consistent survey has not been sent out to attendees before, it will be difficult to gauge if positive attitude has increased, but the survey and its data can become a consistent part of MCT's analytics. Then, MCT can use social media comments and reactions to posts as a measurement. If positive reaction rates and comments have increased by 25 percent, the campaign has been successful.

1.3

An increase in attendance rates can be measured by comparing the 2022-23 season attendance rates with the previous two years. If the rates have increased by 30 percent, then the objective has been met and the campaign is a success.

Evaluation Goal 2

For Goal 2, a price comparison chart can be made to compare donations from the 2022-23 season with the previous two years. If donations have increased by at least 25 percent, the campaign can be considered a success. For measuring the support of the barrier-free and youth educational programs, success can be measured through enrollment in these programs and attendance to these shows. If the comparison chart evaluating participants and attendance to shows in these programs from the previous two years and the 2022-23 season indicates a 15 percent increase, then the campaign can be considered a success.

2.1

An increase in participants in the barrier-free and youth educational programs at MCT signifies the campaign has been a success and the objective has been met. This can be measured by comparing participant rates from the 2022-23 season with the previous two years. An increase of participants by 25 percent is a successful measure.

2.2

There are several ways to measure this objective. The first is to measure the attendance rates for these programs. An increase of attendance for this program by 20 percent can be seen as a successful campaign. Next, an increase by 15 percent in donations specific to this program can measure the success of the campaign. Then, an increase of 25 percent of volunteers involved in the program can also indicate the success of the campaign. All these measurements can use the data from the upcoming 2022-23 show season and from the previous two years to compare how the numbers have changed between the years and how significant the change was.

2.3

An increase in donation rates can be measured by comparing the 2022-23 season donations with the previous two years. If the donation rates have increased by at least 25 percent, then the objective has been met and the campaign has been successful.

References

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A photograph of a grand theater interior. The stage is framed by a large, ornate archway with a decorative border of lights. The stage is lit with several spotlights, and the curtains are red. The audience seating is visible in the foreground, consisting of rows of dark chairs. The ceiling is blue with white trim.

Contact Information

Jennifer McGowen is a Master's in Public Relations Student at Ball State University. She can be reached in the forms below:

Email: jamcgowen@bsu.edu

LinkedIn: [Jennifer McGowen](#)