ACT-CO: Pandemic Strategic Communications Plan

Situation Analysis

- Community theatres rely on four main income sources: ticket sales, patron donations, membership, and local sponsorship or fundraising.
  - Community theatres are unsure as to whether we will have a delayed season, a shortened season, or a season at all in 2020/2021.
  - Without any revenue, community theatres cannot continue.
  - Patrons and members have themselves been put in financial stress due to the pandemic and are unable to provide traditional financial support to theatre companies.
  - Local sponsorship and community fundraising events have been cancelled for this year.
- As of today, there are little to no emergency financial measures brought forth by the Federal or Provincial governments to support community theatres.
- Without any revenue, community theatres cannot continue and so the long-term sustainability of any of these companies is in question.
- The closing of any community theatre due to financial duress would be a detrimental loss to society and leave a large hole in the Canadian arts and heritage landscape.

Key Messages

- Community theatres provide affordable, high-quality theatre in our local villages, towns, and cities.
- Community theatres contribute to the larger cultural landscape in society where musicians, artists, craftsmen, and dancers collaborate.
- Community theatres are fertile training grounds for young artists without which many of Canada's theatre artists would not have had a clear path to their career or industry.
- Community theatres have been greatly hurt by the pandemic and have seen all revenue sources disappear. Several community theatres have closed, and without immediate assistance, many more will have to fold.

Objectives

The objectives of this communications plan are:
1. Raise awareness of community theatre issues at this time.
2. Put pressure on local, provincial and federal governments for financial support.

Audiences

The audiences of this communications plan are…
1. Patrons of community theatres
2. Members of community theatres
3. Municipal, provincial and federal governments and leaders

Channels of Communication

1. Email
2. Webpage
3. Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)

Objective 1: Raise awareness of community theatre issues at this time.

Strategy: Provide frequent and consistent communications to ensure community theatre is "top of mind" for everyone and that the communication recipients understand what community theatre is and what could be lost.

Tactic 1: Create country-wide lobbying group of community theatre organizations to strengthen and amplify the message.

Tactic 2: Target authors of newspaper and online pieces, giving them the press release and offering interviews to broadcast the community theatre plight.

Tactic 3: Obtain endorsements (written and video) from professional theatre leaders (e.g. Tim Jennings (Shaw Festival), Adam Brazier (Charlottetown Festival), Antoni Cimolino (Stratford Festival), Thom Currie (Magnus Theatre)) to highlight community theatre's role in training artists for professional careers.

Tactic 4: Create video to use on webpage and social media for promotional purposes.

Objective 2: Put pressure on local, provincial and municipal governments.

Strategy: Contact the various levels of government to ensure community theatre's needs are being heard.

Tactic 1: Create and compile documents that include endorsements from professional theatre leaders, letters to government representatives that have already been sent, press release and key messages.

Tactic 2: Assign one or two people from our strategy working group to each level of government. These "ambassadors" need to be able to express the key messages of community theatre clearly and succinctly and need to be comfortable contacting the three levels of government repeatedly.

Tactic 3: Secure meetings with both federal and provincial government representatives to discuss community theatre's needs during the pandemic.