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**Marketing Plan**

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I. Introduction and Overview of Plan

**History and Mission:**

Lane Youth Theater is a relatively new (and completely made-up) organization for my group’s Cultural Administration project. LYT operates out of an old store within a strip mall located in Springfield, OR. The abandoned storefront was renovated into a 250 seat black-box theater, and LYT is now in its third year of operation.

LYT is primarily an educational organization. The actors, who are also the educators, put on four productions every year. Some show times are during weekday school hours for field trips. The other show times are evenings and weekends. The intended audience is K-12 students and their families.

Educational programming at LYT includes weekend workshops, summer camps, and in-school workshops. In these programs, the students pay a fee to participate and end up putting on their own production. Family and friends are the primary audience.

The founders of LYT noticed that outside of Eugene, educational theater program was lacking in K-12 schools. They noticed specifically that the elementary school population was lacking the most. Our mission is to serve the greater Eugene area to help spread the art of theater, while being centrally located. Beyond that, LYT strives to provide exceptional quality in our theater education.

**Marketing Goals, Strategies, and Desired Outcomes:**

In creating a new marketing plan, LYT hopes to get its name out there and become more visible in the greater Eugene/Springfield area, reaching students in more rural areas of Lane County. LYT also hopes to continue growing its only 3-year-old donor base. LYT’s first strategy will be **direct marketing**. This will address reaching schools in more rural areas of Lane County. The second strategy will be **email marketing**. This will address growing their donor base. Their third strategy is a **social media campaign**. This will increase online visibility, reaching potential new donors and reaching people in more rural areas.

II. Situational Analysis

**Environmental scan**

**Economic Scan**

LYT gets most of its revenue ($500,000 per year) from ticket sales for their professional performances. This is LYT’s primary function. The next biggest income source is from private donations ($200,000 per year). We have been very fortunate to build such a strong donor base after only three years. Many donors were attracted to our sustainability efforts, by repurposing an abandoned store into a small theater. Donors who gave to the renovation fund became invested in the organization and are now recurring donors. We also receive a small percentage of our income from grants ($80,000 per year).

Though we are a relatively new organization, our building renovation garnered considerable attention from the community. Thus, our first season of programming was very successful. Our numbers dipped quite a bit in our second and third year, but this was projected and budgeted for.

LYT is aware that it is not the only theater in town. We are also not the only Children’s theater in town. Rose Children’s Theater is the most similar to LYT, but Rose only puts on shows with children actors. Their age range is 4th grade through high school. They are missing the demographic with the greatest need: elementary schoolers. While it serves 4th and 5th grade, it misses K-3. Rose also misses out on the ticket revenue from having professional shows put on by adult actors. While there are other professional and community theaters in the area, only LYT has content geared specifically toward youth.

**Demographic Scan**

Our main audience is made up of K-12 students and their parents. They come to watch our professional shows. The students are also the participants in our educational programs. Our older demographic is one of our lowest age demographics, which is reflected as a challenge in our somewhat limited contributed income/private donations, since older people are more likely to make donations to nonprofit organizations.

LYT’s lowest demographic for our evening and weekend performances as well as outside of school educational programs are those with lower socioeconomic status. We reach all socioeconomic statuses fairly well with our daytime/field trip performances because we are drawing directly from public school classes, and the schools are paying for cost of admission. This is on par with many children’s theaters.

Our biggest demographic challenge is reaching those outside of the Eugene/Springfield areas. That is why we started out in-school program. We take a small team of actors/educators out to an elementary school in more rural areas once a week for 10 weeks. They work with one grade level on devised theater techniques and the students make up their own play based on relevant curriculum material. At the end of the 10 weeks, the students perform their devised plays at a school assembly. We apply for grants to cover some of the cost of this particular program. That way, it is doable for schools in poorer, more rural districts.

**Cultural Scan**

LYT currently has a board of 15 members. Many board members have backgrounds with K-12 education or professional theaters, but there is a high degree of cultural diversity on our board and in our staff. We choose popular repertoire for our professional shows (like A Christmas Carol and Romeo and Juliet) because pop culture sells well, especially with youth. Oregon is a fairly green and environmentally conscious state. This has some influence on the participation in our organization, because our building is repurposed.  With the renovation of the building only three years old, our technology is all fairly up to date.

**Other Environmental Elements**

Political elements are very important when it comes to arts funding. Oregon is a fairly liberal state, and so is Lane County in particular. When this is the case, government funding for the arts is typically more abundant. This is important, since LYT relies on government funding for about $80,000 per year.

**SWOC analysis**

**Cultural Product**

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| Strengths | -LYT’s educational programming gets students to participate by letting them be the actors in their own show-Our professional programming generates the revenue to fund educational programs-By watching our professional shows, students are shown a high level of performance, for which they can strive in their own productions-Our In-School programming reaches students who wouldn’t otherwise participate in recreational arts-The Weekend workshops assist aspiring young artist by providing master classes with professional actors and guest artists |
| Weaknesses | -Our educational programs are few (Summer, In-School, Weekend Workshops) |
| Opportunities | -Our In-School program has the opportunity to raise awareness of our organization within non- Eugene and Springfield communities, encouraging them to make the drive-Since our theater is somewhat small (250 seats), we have more frequent performances, giving the community many opportunities to fit us into their schedule. |
| Challenges | -We only do four professional productions per year. It will be a challenge to pick shows that can cater to the vast range of K-12 audiences |

**Pricing**

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| Strengths | -Our shows are priced competitively for professional productions ($15 for most shows, $20 for our holiday season show)-The pricing generates plenty of revenue for our needs |
| Weaknesses | -For larger families, the ticket prices can add up quickly, making it an expensive outing. |
| Opportunities | -We have the opportunity to offer discounted tickets for students under 18, and other discounts for students participating in our other educational programs, making the cost within read for larger families. |
| Challenges | -It will be a challenge to market our productions well enough to make sure that we are meeting our projections for number of seats sold. |

**Place (Access)**

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| Strengths | -Springfield is centrally located within Lane county-Our lot has ample parking-The recent renovation means our building is up to ADA access standards-Our staff goes to different schools as part of our In-School programming, bringing the theater to them. |
| Weaknesses | -Springfield and Eugene have less of a need for our program than more rural areas. |
| Opportunities | -In repurposing an abandoned storefront into a theater, we have the opportunity to bring business to the surrounding stores and revitalize the area. |
| Challenges | -Because our theater is repurposed from an existing building, we do not have a lot of room to grow from here. We would have to start another theater at another location, which would be a challenge. It is also a challenge to keep interest high without growing out of our space |

**Promotional Efforts**

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| Strengths | -We received lots of publicity for our sustainable building renovation. This makes us unique.-LYT has a solid website with clearly organized information. |
| Weaknesses | -Our logo was made by a college student with limited experience in graphic design. |
| Opportunities | -We have the opportunity to build relationships with the schools we go to as a form of word-of-mouth promotion. |
| Challenges | -Our logo, using primary colors, can easily create the misconception that our organization is only for children when, in fact, we serve youth all the way through high school. It will be a challenge to combat that with our other promotional content. |

**Audience Analysis**

LYT audience is mainly K-12 students and their parents. This is our target audience, so we don’t envision this broadening, unless it’s broadening to more extended family of the K-12 students. We do, however, envision growing out K-12 audience to student outside just the Eugene/Springfield area.

III. Scheme

**Direct Marketing**

In this strategy, staff members (actor/educators) will travel to more rural parts of Lane County to make a direct presentation to the schools. They will perform a short play at a school assembly and speak to the music classes. With them, they will bring some Lane Youth Theater Brochures and hand them to students. These brochures will have discount codes for show tickets and educational programs

**Email Marketing**

With email marketing, our main goal is to make sure we are not missing out on the low-hanging fruit. We will send emails to previous attendees and participants. We will make a direct solicitation for donations as well as include other offers and promotions.

**Social Media**

Our social media campaign will focus on videos and going live. We will pay to utilize Facebook’s advertising tools to target a very specific idea of a person. The person LYT has in mind is a soccer mom of 3 kids named Erika who is busy driving her kids to all their activities while keeping the family happy and healthy. Our videos will be of the students in our educational programs learning and having fun and creating great performance art.

IV. Implementation

**Direct Marketing**

LYT has recently received a grant from the Lane Arts Council to visit 4 rural elementary schools per year. LYT staff will work with the 5th grade class once a week for 8 weeks to help them put on a play and perform it for the school, bringing the theater to them. While in the area, LYT staff can go around to other elementary, middle, and high schools in the area (a few hours before working with their resident 5th graders each week) and make a direct presentation. That way, most of the staff, time, and resources covered by the grant can be stretched even further to market LYT to rural areas.

LYT will need to have special brochures to include the discount codes for school presentations. We can look into community partnerships with companies such as QSL to potentially subsidize printing costs. The play used to present to rural schools can be a short 15-minute performance that requires minimal costumes, no backdrop, and perhaps only a few small props. These will just be materials that can fit into the LYT van and be part of what is used for the educational program funded by the Lane Arts Council grant.

**Email Marketing**

LYT does four major performances per year. Each show runs about 4-6 weeks. Now that LYT has three seasons under its belt, we need to start reaching out to build a loyal donor base. When people buy tickets or sign their student up for classes and programs, we are required to get some of their contact information. We will use the email addresses from patrons who bought tickets for season three in our annual giving campaign in Fall 2017. We will gather these emails from our database and send out a email blast in September 2017, thanking them for coming to Lane Youth Theater, hoping they enjoyed the performance, and asking them to be a part of what LYT brings to the community by making a donation.

This will require email software, like Emma, and has been brought up budget meetings to plan for this expense in the 2017-2018 season. Software like Emma will be a worthy investment, and will be very intuitive and quick for our marketing director to use.

**Social Media Marketing**

For our social media campaign, we will begin by going live on Facebook during an educational program, particularly our first dress rehearsal leading up to the students’ fall production. Second, we will go live at the first master class of fall 2017. We will have our marketing director video both of these events. Third, we will make a more professional video, showcasing our first professional production of the fall. Under the direction of the artistic director and marketing director, the video will show interviews with performers and show “backstage access” to rehearsals, costuming, set design, etc.

We will rent a nicer camera to shoot this video. We will hire a college intern to shoot the video and edit it down to two and a half minutes. We will pay our intern $250 ($300 if he/she has his/her own camera, so we do not have to rent one). We would upload the video to LYT’s YouTube channel, then share it on LYT’s Facebook page two weeks before opening night.

V. Evaluation Plan

(Measuring and evaluating outcomes)

* What is your method to measure quantitative and qualitative results?
* How will you evaluate effectiveness of each marketing strategy?
* What are the recommendations for future marketing plan development?

**Direct Marketing**

Because of the special discount code in the brochures that we send home with students, we will easily be able to track if people buy tickets or sign their student up for an educational program using the discount code. We will aim for 10% effectiveness in this marketing effort. If we give brochures to 10 students at a school and get 10 people to buy discounted tickets, we will be thrilled. The cost of printing is fairly inexpensive. Getting people to come to a new theater is difficult. A 10% return is worth the cost, especially since rural areas are harder to sell.

If we get too many people taking advantage of the discounted price, we can lower the discount or just isolate the discount to educational programs. More likely, if we get less than a 10% return, we can try increasing the discount.

**Email Marketing**

With email marketing software like Emma, it will be easy to track engagement with our email blasts. We will be able to see how many people opened it, how many people clicked through to our website, and how many people donated by clicking through to our website. We hope to get a 45% open rate and a 15% click through rate. We will assess what our ROI was for donations via click-through after our first e-blast. We will use this figure to set our standards for the next campaign in the spring.

If our open and click-through rates are lower than expected, we can look into making our subject titles more attention grabbing and making our emails more visually engaging.

**Social Media Marketing**

We will pay to use Facebook analytics for our video advertising. Because we are planning to go live twice in the fall, we hope to have a 15% increase on impressions AND engagement on our second live video within the first four days. With our professionally made video, we hope to get 1,000 views in the first two days.

If we do not reach these target goals, we can alter the “profile” of the specific kind of person we are trying to reach (I called her Erika above).