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Marketing Plan Repertory Dance Theatre

I. Introduction and Overview:

The mission of RDT states; *Repertory Dance Theatre is dedicated to the creation, performance, perpetuation, and appreciation of modern dance.* Through a cooperative effort involving the Salt Lake City community, the University of Utah and a major grant from the Rockefeller Foundation the company was founded 48 years ago as a fully-professional modern dance company. Along with a full season of performances, RDT is committed to increasing the public's awareness and deepen their understanding of the arts through a variety of activities, free lectures, informal performances and open rehearsals bringing alive an area of cultural and social activity. Repertory Dance Theatre's future, like its past, will be rich with community involvement and education as well as artistic growth, preservation and innovation. The company is committed to developing partnerships and activities that will serve audiences of all ages. As it has continued for the last 50 years, RDT will further the bridges of understanding of Modern Dance into the next 50 years. Repertory Dance Theatre attempts to demystify the art of dance, making it a meaningful, vital and lasting part of the culture in Utah.

There are five outlined objectives for this proposed marketing strategy. One objective is to help raise revenue to decrease the debt that caused the failed rating

in the Zoo Arts and Parks financial analysis. This marketing plan will hopefully create a quick initial bump in attendance and therefore ticket revenue, but hopefully it will also steadily increase over time.

Another objective is to increase the company's earned income in order to create an even balance between the three areas of revenue. They currently are weighted in government funding, and are sitting at about 51% funded from government contributions. They would like to create an even split between the earned, contributed and government funding as they gain greater financial grounding.

One of the main areas that RDT must focus on is the demographics of their audience. They believe that their audience makeup is mostly woman over the age of 40. As an objective that would diversify their audience, this marketing strategy proposes innovative programs which would generate interest among new groups of people as well as concentrate on the younger college and professional demographic.

As another objective, RDT wants to build audiences by connecting young members to the performances through the use of technology. Therefore, this marketing plan will emphasize social media and its role with RDT.

The final objective is to help expand the downtown arts culture of Salt Lake City. RDT has already been a part of the campaign in the '90's to build the Rose Wagner Theatre in order to grow the downtown arts culture, but RDT wants to continue that initiative. This marketing plan will continue to encourage the desired cultural and urban growth.

Through a new program initiative entitled Dance and Drafts, a cross-disciplinary arts experience named Contemporary on Broadway, and a revised social media plan, RDT will meet the desired outcomes that are as follows; 1.) to enhance and refine the digital presence of the company, 2.) diversify the audience and 3.) increase audience attendance.

II. Situational Analysis

Economic Scan:

Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) is currently regaining its strength economically after the recession. The “Zoo, Arts and Parks” financial analysis that is conducted every year to organizations that the grants assist, failed RDT for the last two years in a row. RDT now has to submit plans to address the issues of concern and to make a strong effort in contributing money to the debt of the organization. Through prudent budgeting, RDT is actively working on putting money towards their increasing debt. Despite what ZAP has declared for the past two years, the organization is actually doing better. They were in dire straights for a couple of years through the recession, as many arts organizations were, and are now being able to strategically navigate out of that financial space.

As previously mentioned, RDT’s goal is to have an even balance between the three areas of income; contributed, earned, and government, as soon as possible.

Demographic Scan:

RDT is currently trying to figure out this very question. They believe the general demographics for the audiences of RDT is a slightly older, probably over 40, mostly female, crowd. They have found that the older audiences tend to be male and female in concentration, but the younger audiences tend to be more female. They recently conducted an audience survey that asked the age and classification questions, but only 36 people responded to the survey. The responses mostly came from the over 40 audience. What they don't know how to do with this information is interpret the data. Is it just that the over 40 crowd are the ones that would take a moment to conduct their survey, or is it the age demographic well represented, and the over 40 crowd is really who is attending their performances? The question remains unanswered for now. Currently, RDT is trying to adjust their appeal to a wider audience.

The cultural elements and social values of Salt Lake City, Utah, play a large part in the make-up of the audiences for RDT. The organization does have a college-aged audience interest, do in large part to the Salt Lake City location of a leading University in Dance, but they trying to create ways to better reach this particular demographic. RDT generally brings an educated, more liberal audience to its performances. Because dance is part of the primary and secondary school curriculum, RDT has a chance to captivate young audiences and grow them into older patrons as the organization continues to grow. Through technology, they are currently focusing on creating methods to bring these young students and families to more performances. RDT is trying to use methods like Social Media in order to

reach the younger audience, but they are also aware that they cannot lose their current audience in this concentration.

RDT is not aware of the national trends for audiences, but states that they believe the other Salt Lake City dance companies are seeing the same trends, in terms of audience demographics, as their own organization.

Cultural Scan:

The general culture of the board of directors is an interesting one. The board has grown a lot in the past year, and they are working on more. They have a wide-range of ages on the board, from 20's to retirees. About half of the board has an extreme interest in dance, and the other half does not. This creates a diverse and healthy board. The second half of the board who doesn't have much knowledge about dance has a large interest in nonprofit work, and are just now learning the ins and outs of the dance world.

The Cultural elements that encourage participation is the very location of the company within Salt Lake City. SLC is very artistically inclined and has even more of a specific interest and investment in dance. Young people are very encouraged to participate in the arts in Utah, and therefore, the state itself holds a lot of developed talent. Whether people continue to participate as artists themselves as they continue in adulthood or not, the early focus on the arts creates a wonderful audience participatory culture for the state and the city.

RDT's touring audience is usually comprised of university students and dance audiences. The dancers teach master classes and repertory to local dancers when on tour and sometimes include the local dancers in performance.

In terms of pop culture, RDT stated that shows like "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Dancing With The Stars" haven't made much of a difference to the overall audience interest or attendance, because of the nature of modern dance. The styles are so different than what they see on TV, that it would almost be detrimental for audiences to compare the two or attend a performance with certain expectations and then be disappointed. However, RDT's current fundraiser, Charette, brings in a different audience than their other events because of the cultural dynamics of the event. The idea is based on the pop culture appeal of judges, and bidding for the best dance. This fundraiser is very successful and highlights several dance artists throughout the community, therefore integrating new audiences and supporters into the fundraising campaign.

Culturally, the responses that RDT has been experiencing with technology and audience has not been great so far. The audiences are not engaging in the technology material that RDT is making available. Perhaps the audiences are seeing it, but they are not engaging in it. This includes media like Facebook, twitter, blogging, etc. All of the media platforms are present, but they are serving more as reminder to audiences about upcoming events than they are instigating conversation.

There has been some cultural/political action that has brought attention to the organization. RDT has an environmental focus for some of their material. Local

politicians have not been in support of the funding they received from environmental organizations and grants, and have made public statements describing their lack of support. RDT has received mixed reviews on their environmental programming. Some audiences loved the integration, and some are very resistant and don't believe that dance and environment belong together.

SWOC Analysis

Cultural Product:

Strength: RDT's efforts to bring dance to the community in terms of the product itself. The company's commitment to history, and the effort to keep historical dance works alive. They are a "museum" for dance and represent over 100 years of dance that is portrayed through visiting artists and video. They also present new work to keep the company relevant.

Weakness: RDT believes they need to do a better job of telling THEIR story. Salt Lake City knows RDT, but there are a lot of people that don't know the mission of the company, what they do, and what they're about.

Opportunities: RDT adds culture to Salt Lake City. Through their 48 years of historical dance that has been recorded, they want to provide a library for access of these materials. Their archives are some of the only material that exists for some of the historical dances, and they have the opportunity to provide the resources to a greater community, nationally and internationally.

They are working on transitioning some of the recordings to more current media in order to begin this archiving process.

Challenges: There is another Modern Dance company in town who ends up providing a lot of competition. Several times audience members come to a show and don't know what company they're seeing. There is a greater distinction nationally than in the city itself in terms of who the two companies are individually. RDT needs to meet the needs of their community and distinguish who they are.

Pricing:

Strength: RDT's ticketing is one of their strengths. Their standard full price ticket is \$30. This is pretty equal to pricing for similar organizations in Salt Lake City.

Weakness: The organization debates the question of the loss in value of the ticket and experience if they lower the price. Does it lessen the worth? Do they then lose the potential ballet-price donors because the patrons don't believe the organization is worth their donation, all based on the pricing scale?

Opportunities: The company tried something new with their most recent concert. They priced all tickets at \$10. It is a family-friendly show and the \$10 price tier spanned all ages. They were hoping to draw new audiences with

this pricing scale and allow an opportunity for new audiences to try something new that would ultimately be low-risk to their budget.

Challenges: They have been encouraged to increase prices so that they are similar to the ballet pricing. However, RDT does not want to alienate any of their audience, especially since they have a large student crowd. Another significant challenge is the number of arts venues in SLC that are constantly scheduled. There are many competing calendar of events.

Place (Access):

Strength: One strength is that everyone in the company, from dancers to administrators use and include technology and media in their approach to the public. Another strength in terms of access is the fact the dancers teach within the community. They are then able to represent the company and increase exposure to new audience members.

Weakness: RDT acknowledges their weak online presence in terms of their own digital representation. They are lacking the staff to update the website. They want to focus more on video efforts and post footage, but do not have the manpower to correct this weakness. They recognize that there is a plethora of info that is helpful on the website, but that they are not displaying it appropriately and promoting themselves as well as they could be.

Opportunities: The same weakness that RDT possesses, they see as a wonderful opportunity. The opportunity presents itself to have an incredible database of knowledge, videos, pictures, and communication on their website that would help tell their story. They have the material, and that was the hard part. Now if they can find the right people to enhance their digital communication, they will hopefully begin to benefit from the modern, social media world in building audiences.

Challenges: RDT runs programming for a community school that is focused on dancing for adults. This community effort is a wonderful way to build patronage for not only the community classes, but for audience members for performances. However, many people that are taking the community classes are unaware that they are linked into the larger umbrella of RDT as a dance company. The challenge then is connecting school to company and marketing to these already devoted –to-dance individuals.

Promotional Efforts:

Strength: RDT has a large presence in the newspaper and other print sources.

Overall, there is a positive and connected message for all of the arts venues in the city.

Weakness: RDT did not speak much to its own individual promotion, which probably says a lot. Perhaps if their own promotion was enhanced, their audiences would enhance too. It seems that there is a gratefulness to those

that promote RDT willingly, but perhaps they should be more aggressive singly.

Opportunities: The company is making an effort to enhance their video presence. They said that pictures don't do dance justice. Dance is a physical art form that moves, and pictures are stagnant representations. They want to expand their website to include a more interactive, movement approach.

Challenges: At the same time they have large print media coverage, there is the drawback that less and less people are reading the printed materials. Also, RDT's budget for advertising is incredibly low so they face many challenges in this area.

Audience Analysis

Salt Lake City has built an incredible patronage to the Arts. The city not only holds many talented individuals, but as a whole, the community emphasizes the importance of the arts to knowledge, experience and culture. The University of Utah is in the top five Universities for Dance in the nation. There is a hot bed of both new and old dancers within Salt Lake City. RDT is supported by this dance-centric community, but there is always room for growth. As mentioned, one of the most challenging elements for the company is the telling of their story. RDT is a dance company that is unique in its purpose and is one of the only companies who have the historical piece as part of their mission. They desperately need to find a new way

to market this piece. The historical uniqueness is often incomparable to other companies, yet at the same time, that uniqueness can be used against the popularity of the company as well. Our rapidly changing world, and one that usually only focuses on the present and the future, is not fostering the incredible resource that RDT holds in its historical works and the relevance of the history associated with them. Many audience members find the historical representation boring and uninteresting, and only want to attend contemporary works. And truthfully, if they're seeing contemporary modern dance, many people opt to see the other companies that are doing similar work, over attending RDT.

The 48 years of solid foundation that RDT has built sometimes works against itself. 48 years of presence means that audiences are accustomed to the model that RDT has created and therefore often want to try something new. Therefore, the emphasis that RDT now wants to place on THEIR story will most likely increase interest as people in the community have a chance to reexamine the cultural relevance of the company, as well as how they are moving into the future.

RDT has the opportunity to recapture some of its lost audience as they move their legacy into a new chapter with a new focus on their artistic staff. Their outreach and community efforts are extensive. Perhaps they can focus the same kind of energy on increasing their audiences for performances. RDT needs to focus their attention and concentrate on the younger, college-aged population, as well as the diversity in the gender demographic. As they stated, much of their audience makeup is older, and generally women. Focusing on a younger crowd will hopefully create audience members for life and focusing on bringing men to the performances

will most likely strengthen numbers as a whole. RDT is creating the material for engagement, but now they need to create a more thorough method on how to engage in that material, technically, physically, and emotionally. They have a loyal following, but they need to create more followers.

III. Scheme

1. Dance and Drafts:

Dance and Drafts uses institutional program development as a strategy. This program is a partnership with the local neighborhood breweries that are within walking distance of the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center. The intention of Dance and Drafts is to create a community within a certain demographic of the audience. This program is aimed at young professionals and students who would normally not attend modern dance on their own, but might be encouraged to attend with a group of people who have similar tastes and interests. This program would happen after performances on Friday evenings during each show of the season. This event will become a participatory piece of the performance, as it will start to expand the culture and dance discussions outside of the performance hall. The dancers and directors will be included in the “drafts” portion of this event as everyone gathers afterward at the brewery for a meet and greet with drafts in hand. RDT would be responsible for reserving and renting a space inside of the breweries, as well as hors d’oeuvres to accompany the drinks that are individually paid for.

This program encompasses several of the objectives for this marketing plan, but mainly emphasizes expanding the downtown environment in Salt Lake City in its partnership with other businesses, and expanding the demographics of the audience. Drafts and Dance is targeted to the younger population and the male audience that RDT wants to increase within its patronage. Increasing the attendance of these groups ultimately will affect the overall attendance for the year, thus achieving the main objective of audience development.

A sub-committee of the board of directors, named “friends”, would lead dance and drafts. This committee is an extension of the board and would be responsible for attending board meetings and planning the coordinated events. The young professionals that held these “friends” leadership roles would then also help to reinvigorate the board with new ideas for targeting the specific demographic to which they can speak.

2. Contemporary on Broadway: Reclaiming 3rd:

Contemporary on Broadway uses price bundling as a marketing strategy. This marketing strategy will highlight the theatres and arts organizations along Broadway in Salt Lake City. The specific organizations and companies that will be included are: RDT at the Rose Wagner Center for the Performing Arts, Salt Lake Film Society at the Broadway Movie Theatre, and Pioneer Memorial Theatre at University of Utah. Future partnerships could also include these organizations and institutions along Broadway; Plan B Theatre Company at the Rose Wagner Center for the Performing Arts, Odyssey Dance Theatre at Kingsbury Hall, SB Dance at the Rose

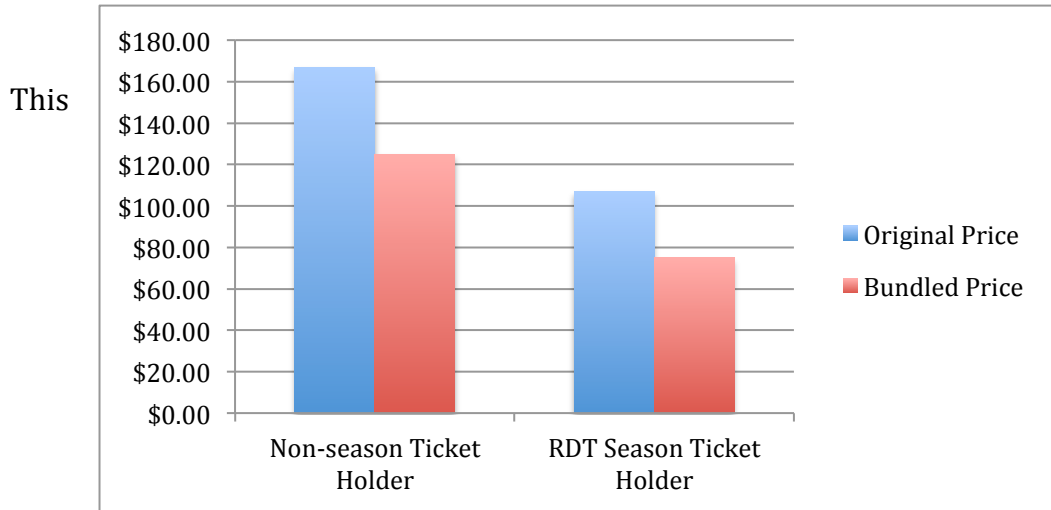
Wagner Center for the Performing Arts, and Sundance Film Festival at the Broadway Movie Theatre.

This new initiative offers bundled ticket packages that include 2 tickets to each “contemporary” venue one time a year. These ticket packages are offered at a reduced price from each ticket priced separately. With three organizations in a rotation, the ticket package would include a fall ticket to the premiere of an independent film at the Broadway, which the organization would choose. The winter ticket would be for the Pioneer Memorial Theatre’s winter show, and the third ticket would be for RDT’s contemporary spring show.

The objective of this programming is to provide an affordable option for a cross-disciplinary sampling in order to expand and diversify the audience for each organization, but for RDT specifically. The idea is to expand RDT’s reach to other audiences. Each organization will have access to membership listings for each other’s organizations. This access will allow RDT to target potential diverse audience members who normally would not have taken a risk to attend modern dance. The intention is then that the new audience members become season subscribers or at least returning customers. Like *Dance and Drafts, Contemporary on Broadway* will also satisfy the objective of enhancing the downtown arts environment, by encouraging people to explore all of the arts venues at their finger tips and to maybe reach beyond their comfort zone in what kinds of events they would normally attend.

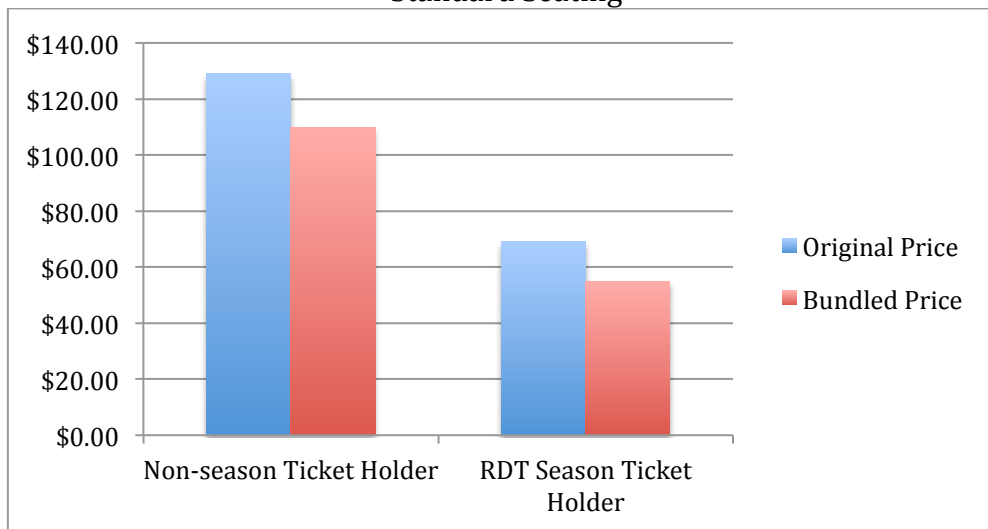
The price breakdown for the *Contemporary on Broadway* package is as follows:

Premium Seating



offers a 25% savings for non-season ticket holders, and a 30% savings for RDT season ticket holders

Standard Seating



This offers a 20% savings for non-season ticket holders, and a 20% savings for RDT season ticket holders

3. Social Media Plan:

RDT uses several media platforms for material delivery. However, sometimes this can be just as much of a downfall as it might be a positive attribute. Part of the marketing strategy for the social media plan is to actually pair down the number of methods for media content in order to make each avenue more effective and concise, and to discourage overlap of delivering the same content. The following are ways in which to downsize and condense in an effort to make a cleaner public statement:

Website: A new design to the website that includes more interactive features. There are incredible offerings in the website menus, from buying tickets and booking the company for a tour, to blog posts and lesson plans. The trouble remains that the homepage and overall design is not inviting and does not encourage exploration within the website. There needs to be a contemporary flare to the design that incorporates some kind of movement or action that becomes interactive when navigating through the site.

Facebook/Twitter: RDT employs both of these media platforms. Ultimately, the use of both types of social media fits within the objectives of the company, but each should be delineated for specific material. Facebook can be used for all types of interaction, and have it serve as the “mother” of all social media, as it is intended. However, the usage of twitter should be reformatted to only include audience member’s interaction. Prompts can be made by the company through performance weeks, but tweets should not be made randomly. Instead they should be strategically timed for most visible times of day. Twitter is for followers, not for

administrators, and although current news happenings and excitement about upcoming performances are worthy of a tweet from the company, twitter should remain as a platform for the community to create buzz about RDT.

Blog: It is suggested that the blog instead be turned into a monthly newsletter. There is a value to the material posted on the blog but it is not the best delivery method for the audience. If the same information was transformed into a monthly newsletter, the newsletter itself could be posted on the actual website under it's own tab, as well as have featured articles on the home page. This suggestion would allow highlighted material on the front page that would draw website visitors into the rest of the site offerings, and therefore create more traffic through the website as the company desires. The newsletter should include articles written by several dancers each month so as to establish a conversation with the artists. Currently, the new Assistant to the Artistic Director writes most of the articles, but perhaps there would be a broader appeal to have articles written and conversation initiated by the dance artists themselves.

Vimeo/YouTube: Video is important for dance because it is one of the few ways to actually document the art form, and is more effective than photographs due to the actual movement. Therefore, it is important for a video platform to exist, but it is suggested to choose one media channel for this purpose. Using Vimeo as it might be embedded into a Facebook post or the website, is a great idea for video quality. However, it should be eliminated from the homepage navigation menu. It seems to conflict with the YouTube option on the homepage and might confuse users as to which platform to use. Because of YouTube's broader audience and the

potential it has for interactive content, YouTube serves more purpose to the company. The video objectives of the organization will also be supported through a YouTube channel, as it has a more stream-lined and serious approach for video content and ultimately looks more professional. A YouTube channel will contain all of the videos uploaded and will make further discovery accessible for users.

Pandora: As a new media advertising strategy, the internet-based radio station Pandora, would advertise upcoming concerts and events. Pandora is more widely used as a radio platform than actual broadcast radio for the younger demographic that we are constantly trying to reach. Also, most people who are dance-minded are usually music-minded and therefore Pandora would serve as a advertising vehicle to that population as well.

IV. Implementation

Calendar for implementation for three suggested programs:

- June: Begin website redesign for launch in fall 2014
Contemporary on Broadway announced and mailers sent to season ticket holders, and community
Dance and Drafts promotion begins
- July: Blog platform switched to newsletter
"Friends" of the board created and initiated; begin *Dance and Drafts* planning
- August: YouTube channel created
- September: Advertisements on Pandora begin for fall concert
New website launched
- October: *Contemporary on Broadway* 1st event at Broadway Movie Theatre
First *Dance and Drafts* coinciding with first RDT performance
- November: Second *Dance and Drafts* coinciding with second RDT performance
- December: *Contemporary on Broadway* 2nd event at Pioneer Memorial Theatre
- April: Third *Dance and Drafts* coinciding with third RDT performance
Contemporary on Broadway 3rd event at Rose Wagner with RDT

The budget adjustments that are necessary in order to implement the three strategies are relatively minor for the programming, but pretty major for the social media adjustments. The social media plan will require \$3,000-\$4,000 for the redesign of the website. Because it is proposed that it is a redesign, not a reformatting, this cost is relatively low. The cost of radio advertisements on Pandora is roughly \$20 cost per 1,000 times heard. The remainder of the social media plan is just using resources within the company to renegotiate the social media in place and reconfigure the proposed ideas.

Dance and Drafts as well as *Contemporary on Broadway* would include new print media for advertisements: 2500 postcards at \$200 mailed to member list and advertised in local hot spots. Newspaper advertisements in City Weekly for a 6 week ¼ page color ad, with a 10% nonprofit organization discount totals \$4,406.40. Salt Lake Tribune and Dessert News are willing to run a free PR spot for each show/event.

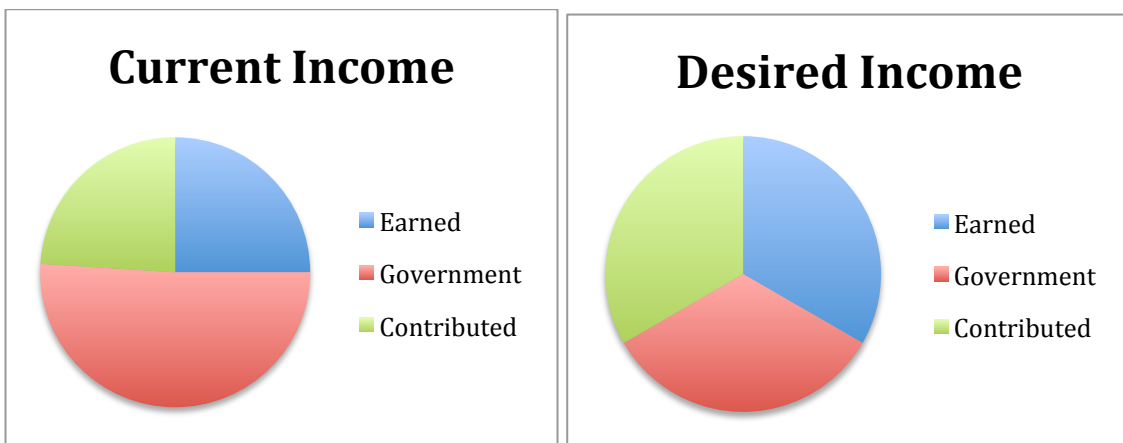
Squatters Brewery does not charge a rental fee for a banquet, therefore, the space would be free to host *Dance and Drafts*. The cost for hors d'oeuvres would be the responsibility of the "friends" committee to fundraise. Approximation for this is \$500-1000 per hosted event.

V. Evaluation Plan

The method to measure qualitative and quantitative results for the new marketing strategies includes documenting increase in attendees and increased

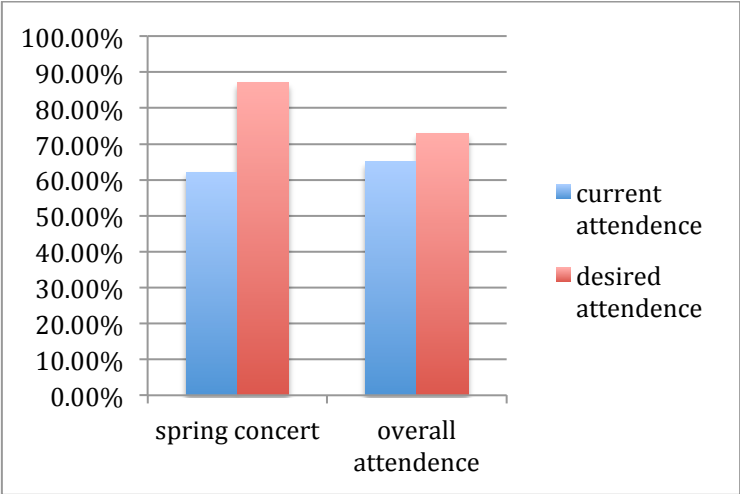
ticket revenue. To analyze the effectiveness of each portion of *Contemporary on Broadway*, all three organizations will conduct individual accountability as well as comparing and contrasting the results of attendance with one another.

The charts that follow demonstrate the current and desired income source for RDT. Once again, increasing ticket revenue with the new programming is the source of the increased earned income.



The following chart illustrates the proposed 8% overall attendance increase due to the new marketing plan as well as the 25% increase for the spring concert alone.

The 25% gain is expected with the promotion of the *Contemporary on Broadway* series.



Recommendations for future marketing development include increased community programming and retaining the younger demographic that these marketing strategies seek to gain.