



**Case Study Analysis**

*SteamPlant Arts*

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## **I. Organization Background**

SteamPlant arts was founded in 2010 by recent graduates of the University of Oregon's Arts Management Graduate Program with the intent to create a makerspace for artists in the Eugene/Springfield area. SteamPlant Arts offers open artists studios, educational classes, a gallery, and available tools and equipment on site.

## **II. Environmental Scan**

### **a. Economic Scan**

#### *Contributed Income*

Most contributed income comes from individual donors, as well as grants from foundations and corporations. SteamPlant Arts most recently received a Small Capital Improvement Project Grant from The Ford Family Foundation for \$50,000 to expand studio and exhibition space. Corporation grants have ranged from \$1,000 to \$20,000 and have been implemented in the expansion of educational classes and programming, and grants from the Lane Arts Council and the Oregon Arts Commission have aided in the creation of scholarship programs for local artists to collaboratively produce pieces of public art for Eugene.

#### *Earned Income*

This source of income is mainly earned by ticket sales, membership fees, studio rental fees, and program fees. SteamPlant Arts presents 2 large annual fundraisers. In the Summer they host a community-wide, multidisciplinary arts event involving music, art, crafts, food, and beverage. In the winter they present their annual craft fair in which artists from around the region can sell their art and crafts. SPA also presents an annual guest speaker with a public lecture in which tickets are sold to the entire community. The majority of their earned income is supplemented by the artists' monthly studio rentals, program fees for the various classes, and membership fees from over 100 individuals.

#### *Government Income*

SteamPlant Arts has received funding from mostly local and state entities. The University of Oregon and Lane Community College annually give money to the organization, and the City of Eugene aids the organization in the creation of public arts projects by providing free consultations and forgoing permit fees.

#### *Organizational Past and Present*

The organization is healthy in that they are earning a surplus each year, however it is small in comparison to many other arts organizations.

#### *Other economic factors*

SteamPlant Arts is the only makerspace in Eugene so there is not a lot of competition from other organizations. They have an excellent relationship with ADX in Portland, which is the closest regional makerspace.

**b. Demographic Scan**

*What is the general audience or make up of the participants?*

The primary audience at SteamPlant Arts is adults ages 25-35. This is the main age range of individuals who rent studios, own a membership, and participate in programming. SteamPlant Arts aims to serve underrepresented individuals in Eugene, so race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status are highly varied.

*Any trends in sex, age, heritage, or education with participation level?*

The programs are mainly aimed towards adults in relation to fabrication, production, and professional development, but there is currently one class available for youth. Many of the participants are at or just above the poverty line because of affordable access to resources and facilities.

*How do national trends compare to the organization's demographic trends?*

SteamPlant Arts is comprised of about 40% minority participation, which is higher than other makerspaces around the country that are usually more expensive and more homogenous demographically.

*What demographic characteristic is of most concern to the organization?*

Demographic characteristic of the most concern: They advocate for diversity across all areas, and they are continuing their methods for strengthening scholarship programs and more affordable access to the facilities to widen their range.

**c. Cultural Scan**

*What is the general culture of the organization and board?*

The Board is comprised of 13 individuals, the majority of which are women. They have an Executive Committee and a Fundraising Committee within the Board. The organization currently staffs 4 full-time positions: The Executive Director, Facilities Manager, Program Coordinator, and Graphics and Communications Director. With the grant received from the Ford Family Foundation, SteamPlant Arts will be able to staff a part-time Equipment Technician and a part-time Curator. Each artist renting a studio is required to volunteer 10 hours each month. The offices are located next to the studios and provide an open office atmosphere in addition to the open studio atmosphere.

*What local cultural elements or social values encourage participation?*

SteamPlant Arts values diversity, collaboration, and community involvement. They are partnered with the City of Eugene in order to produce public art to enrich the cultural fabric of the city and of the community members. Eugene has a higher poverty percentage than that of the state, so SPA provides affordable spaces and education so that those individuals who want to participate in the arts are able to

through gallery visits, membership access to the facility and resources, and educational programming.

*What leisure trends influence the organization?*

SPA has partnered with the Lane Arts Council to become a stop on the First Friday ArtWalk. The facilities are always open to the public within their business hours, encouraging people to stop in and check out the gallery and interact with the artists in the space.

*What popular culture elements influence the artistic offerings of the organization?*

The organization does not possess any artistic theme, but rather the artists are free to create and make art in whatever method or context they feel fit. The artists at SPA have created art influenced by pop culture in two-dimensional and three-dimensional methods, and some of these were highlighted at exhibitions over the years.

*How has the organization responded to the technology culture?*

So far the organization has been focusing on traditional hands-on methods of making and creating art through painting, sculpting, woodworking, and welding. In their upcoming expansion project SPA plans to add a large multimedia lab including a 3D printer, more advanced software systems, a plotter, and a projector. The demand for technology has increased dramatically over the last 5 years specifically, and now the organization is responding with a plan. SPA hopes that this technology lab can be utilized in the next planned public art project.

**d. Other Environmental Elements**

*Political*

These factors are always important to arts organizations to receive support and funding from governmental entities and the community. Politics definitely influence the artistic output from SteamPlant Arts, especially within their conception and execution of public art projects around the city.

*Other "X" factors specific to the organization and art form*

The organization is focused mostly on local inclusion and local output. Their partnership with ADX in Portland helps their market become wider than the Lane County Area, but national or international inclusion is not yet on their radar.

### **III. SWOC Analysis**

*SteamPlant Arts*

#### **a. Cultural Product**

##### *Strengths*

SteamPlant Arts produces several types of art within a year. They present gallery exhibitions 6 times a year highlighting the talents of local artists and makers, produce public art every 2 years by a local artist on scholarship to SPA, and provide affordable educational programming to those who may not have been able to go to school or for any other interested individuals. They have been increasing in membership size each year and the demand for more studios has increased as well.

##### *Weaknesses*

Most of the art created within the walls of SteamPlant Arts are unseen by the community. Not all artists renting studios are able to present their art in a gallery setting and have to sell their art on the side. SPA aims to foster a space for collaboration and creativity in order to cultivate artists' talent and produce public art, but public art is a slow-moving activity and only 2 works of public art have been fabricated within the past 5 years.

##### *Opportunities*

With the upcoming expansion project, a second, larger gallery will be constructed to showcase more artists' work, and a technology lab will provide opportunities for varied production and conceptualization for art in general. This will allow for a wider range of programming, art forms, and more interest from the community and potential members and artists.

##### *Challenges*

Addition of new programs, members, artists, and art projects will present strain on the current staff. More volunteers will be needed to ensure the facilities run smoothly. Addition of programming will be difficult to fit into an already tight schedule and tight space.

#### **b. Pricing**

##### *Strengths*

SteamPlant Arts offers many levels and variations of pricing to fit everyone's needs and budget. These tiers range from \$5 day passes with access to all the equipment, to a \$200 per month studio rental with unlimited access to the facilities and equipment. Classes are presented 7 times a week, with a pricing range of \$10 per class to \$30 per class, depending on the subject matter and resources used during the session. Membership fees range from \$50 per month to \$150 per month and include access to the facilities and fabrication equipment.

### *Weaknesses*

The organization claims to be “affordable” for everyone, when in fact the studio rentals are fairly pricey. Many people cannot afford to pay \$200 on top of their regular rent or mortgage.

### *Opportunities*

As they grow and gain more revenue each year, the studio prices can be reduced, especially with the addition of 8 new studio spaces and more revenue from the addition of a class and more gallery space. More funding opportunities can be sought to be able to decrease these prices so that more people below the poverty line can rent their own monthly studio space rather than paying a membership fee to use the facilities.

### *Challenges*

The cheapest end of each price range of course includes the least amount of included products and advantages, so how should these be marketed towards people so that they still seem worth it?

## **c. Place (Access)**

### *Strengths*

The building is located near a bike path and equidistant between downtown Eugene and the University of Oregon on the Willamette Riverfront. The area directly across from the building has been rapidly developing, including the new Barn Light location and the Hub, a modern student living facility. SPA possesses a large parking lot that can be used for community and business events.

### *Weaknesses*

SteamPlant Arts is somewhat awkward to get to on foot, being near Coburg Rd and parallel to railroad tracks. The property consists of only SPA’s building, so there is not much reason to venture to that side of the road unless one intends to visit. It is also not very ADA-friendly, making it difficult for alter-abled individuals to enjoy the resources at SteamPlant Arts.

### *Opportunities*

Placing art objects near the building might spark some incentive to explore the area on foot. Partnering with businesses like the Barn Light and Elk Horn Brewery, which are both in close proximity to SteamPlant Arts, might aid in drawing in new visitors. Any development on the Willamette Riverfront will aid SteamPlant Arts’ visibility and integration into the community.

### *Challenges*

Renovating aspects of this historical building to comply with ADA code will be difficult and pricey. If these renovations were to take place, the facilities might need to be shut down for a certain amount of time and the organization would

not be able to afford this. Finding other ways to encourage people to visit the building outside of the First Friday ArtWalk is difficult.

**d. Promotional Efforts**

*Strengths*

Their website is very intuitive and well-designed, making the many elements of the organization easily understandable and accessible. A monthly web zine is produced by a group of artists within SteamPlant Arts, highlighting the art investigations and questions being explored at SteamPlant Arts. The zine consists of ads from local businesses, and a calendar of events revolving around the arts community. They have a monthly ad in Eugene Weekly, either advertising the organization in general or an event coming up at their gallery or in a class.

*Weaknesses*

SPA cannot afford a wide array of printed materials such as booklets and brochures to inform people about the organization and its programs, so they rely mostly on electronic methods of advertisement. Their budget needs to be increased to allow for addition of marketing materials.

*Opportunities*

Adding a lab to the building will present opportunities for the artists to market their shows and products themselves. They can design and print their own flyers, posters, and business cards to further their professional visibility and career. They can also use these computers for social media use to update their own sites with photos of what they are working on or promote a program.

*Challenges*

SteamPlant Arts is made up of many different parts and it is difficult to market all of these at one time. Many people have contrasting ideas of what the organization mainly does, so adding larger marketing materials such as booklets or brochures will provide printed resources that inform of their many different programs and ways to get involved. Gaining new followers on social media or increasing website visits is also hard to do without a large amount of printed materials for the public to see and become interested in before accessing the web.