

## **Hanson Howard Gallery, Ashland, OR**

### **Case Study Analysis Part I – Environmental Scan**

#### **I. Economic Scan**

**What economic factors are influencing the organization? Trends, Changes and Concerns:**

**Contributed Income– Individual, grants/foundations, corporate**

**Earned Income– ticket sales and earned income sources**

The Hanson Howard Gallery is a privately owned art gallery located in the downtown area of Ashland, Oregon. The City of Ashland's economic health relies heavily on the annual tourist population. This tourist population is one of the main targeted audiences for the Hanson Howard Gallery. The health of the annual tourist population directly impacts the number of potential visitors to the gallery, and thus, also directly impacts the number of potential art sales. That is not to say that all art purchases are made by tourists, however they do make up the vast majority of them.

**Government Income– local, state and national support:**

The gallery is a member of the local Chamber of Commerce, and the Ashland Galleries Association, which provides local exposure, especially to visiting tourist populations. However, the gallery does not receive additional state or national financial support as it is a self-sustaining, individually owned, for-profit business.

**Organizational economic past and present –what is the general financial health of organization, any budgetary concerns? Are there other economic factors that influence the organization's situation (touring trends, competition and other outside variables)**

The overall health of the organization has been tested, tried, and proven true. The Hanson Howard Gallery was first established in 1979, and is Ashland's oldest locally owned and operated art gallery. In 2011, the gallery was forced to relocate from their original location. Prior to the move, the gallery was located at 82 N. Main Street, which was a highly visible location also situated right next to the popular, local-favorite restaurant called Thai Pepper. Thai Pepper expanded their business, and had purchased the building, including the space that the Hanson Howard Gallery was renting. At first, this move posed a threat for the gallery's overall financial health. The cost of relocating, the duration of closure while the new gallery was set-up, as well as overall visibility and exposure concerns had the potential to be detrimental to the gallery. However, this move has proved to be a successful one. Now located at 89 Oak Street in downtown Ashland, the new location offers more exhibition space, as well as being located next door to another successful and local-favorite restaurant, the Standing Stone Restaurant & Brewery. The gallery is now also located closer to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which draws most of their targeted audience and demographic population.

## **II. Demographic Scan**

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

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

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

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

As of 2013, Ashland's population is 20,713 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). According to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, "Southern Oregon University is located in Ashland with over 6,500 students with faculty and administration numbering over 750. This sets the stage for a highly educated workforce and population, an engaged citizenry and a knowledgeable public" (Ashland Chamber; The Economic Base, 2014). As a result of being a University town, 56.5% of citizens over the age of 25 have Bachelors Degrees. When compared to the state average of 29.2%, and national average of 28.5%, it is undeniable that Ashland is a highly educated community with high levels of arts engagement opportunities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). For the Hanson Howard Gallery, this generates a demographic base of local well-educated individuals. As aforementioned, Ashland is home to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which is a major source of tourism to Southern Oregon year round. According to the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, the city of Ashland receives on average 350,000 tourists each year (Ashland: Doing Business Guide, p. 56).

For the gallery, this means that not only is the local population highly educated, but also depends on the tourist population. Generally speaking, the audience that attends OSF are also highly educated and have a vested interest in the arts.

## **III. Cultural Scan**

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

The general culture of the organization can be described as aesthetically driven, and artistically based. Owner Judy Howard is a reputable artist herself, and seeks out artists who produce artwork that she believes in. She has a keen eye for design, but can also be somewhat discretionary when it comes to the artists that she will accept to promote within her gallery (Telephone conversation with Judy Howard, October 16th, 2014).

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

Southern Oregon offers countless arts participation opportunities, including Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Peter Britt Festivals, the Southern Oregon University's Schneider Museum of Art, the Ashland Independent Film Festival, the Oregon Cabaret Theater, along with roughly 16 other art galleries in Ashland alone, and nearly 50 local wineries. This wealth of cultural opportunities draws a specific demographic to the region of the well-educated, well-established, arts appreciative individual.

**What leisure trends influence the organization?**

Ashland is also home to Mt. Ashland, which is open seasonally to skiers and snowboarders. Although Mt. Ashland is about a 45 minute drive from the city center, it attracts its own tourist population. Mt. Ashland is the only skiable mountains on the I-5 corridor in Oregon, as all other skiable mountains lie farther inland. Aside from skiing, Southern Oregon is also home to a wealth of outdoor recreational activities including hiking, camping, fishing, boating, white water rafting, and rock climbing. Along with recreational activities, Ashland is home to over 80 fine dining establishments, varying from French cuisine to Asian Fusion. The downtown area of Ashland also has its own thriving retail community. Shops are unique, with no two being to the same. There is a individualistic quality when it comes to the shopping in Ashland as “stores carefully select their merchandise to offer their customers something different than can be found in chain store shopping” (Ashland Chamber; Shopping, 2014).

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

Engagement and participation in the arts is a contagious affair, especially in Ashland. After a day of shopping, wine tasting, fine dining, and a play at OSF, it is nearly impossible to not visit at least one of the many art galleries downtown. Ashland offers an all-inclusive opportunity to participate in several various art forms. Live theater performances, film, culinary, fine wine, as well as visual arts encapsulate the arts participation experiences in Ashland. Being located three blocks from arguably the biggest artistic and cultural center in Ashland (the Oregon Shakespeare Festival), the Hanson Howard Gallery is privy to the hundreds of tourists that flood the area on any given day.

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

The Hanson Howard Gallery has very little engagement in the technology culture. They do have their own website and a Facebook Fan Page, but that covers the extent of their technological coverage. The gallery’s website is very rudimentary and offers very little promotional information. The main page of the site is a chronological list of exhibitions, starting with the current show and then on to previous shows. There is no promotional information on upcoming shows at this time. The site does not offer any navigational information, or for that matter, very much information about the gallery itself except for a small overview on the about/contact page. As of November 24, 2014, Hanson Howard Gallery’s Facebook page has not been updated since July 25, 2014.

## **IV. Other Environmental Elements**

### **Political – internal and external factors**

### **International Market – if applicable**

There doesn't appear to be too many governing political factors that affect the Hanson Howard Gallery, other

than city ordinances that have been previously established. The City of Ashland does have a law where all murals (both on public and private property) must have prior approval by the Public Art Commission (City of Ashland, Public Art Mural Packet, 2014). This can affect the types of artwork shown in the public eye within the City of Ashland. For example, if an artist wants to paint a mural on the side of the gallery, the design must first be approved by PAC before the mural can be created. This can lead to limits in artistic freedom for artists represented at the gallery.

## **Case Study Analysis Part II – SWOC Analysis**

**SWOC analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges) of the organization's cultural product, pricing strategies, product access (place), and promotional efforts:**

### **Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Challenges**

#### **Cultural Product(s)**

##### **Strengths**

- Art sold is mostly regional to the Pacific Northwest which supports local artists
- There is an allure to the purchaser to buy art while on vacation, not just for aesthetic value but for also a souvenir/sentimental value.

##### **Weaknesses**

- Not all art is easily transported. This can cause concern for tourist who are unable to return home with the art, or are unable to afford the shipping and packaging of the work as well.

##### **Opportunities**

- There is the opportunity to seek out other artists from other areas, nationally and internationally.
- There is an untapped opportunity at the local University. SOU has an incredibly talented pool of students that are creating all forms of artwork (drawing, painting, sculpture, jewelry and metalwork)
- The Hanson Howard Gallery leans more towards exhibiting artists that have a longstanding reputation as already successful artists. This could be expanded to include artists new to the art scene.

##### **Challenges**

- Regardless of the types of artwork exhibited at the gallery, there will be a large audience that will not come to the gallery, based on their preconceived notion that they do not “belong” in a gallery space, or that they do not know, understand, or appreciate art.

#### **Pricing**

##### **Strengths**

- Entrance to the gallery is free for the general public. Even those who are unable, or uninterested in purchasing art at that time, can still go into the gallery and enjoy the current exhibition.

##### **Weaknesses**

- Price per artwork varies, and is subject to the pricing of the artist and the commissions that the gallery will acquire upon purchase.

### **Opportunities**

- The gallery could invest in their own poster prints for purchase at a competitive price. Posters could be specific to the gallery, or to any particular arts. This could increase revenue sales, as well as the number of sales on any given day. Posters would also be easily transportable by traveling tourists. Instead of a delicate sculpture to carry home, or the added cost of shipping, posters could easily fit into a suitcase.

### **Challenges**

- Pricing for art is always subject for individual speculation. Determining the value of the art is not always an easily accomplished feat. There are some artists who price their work on the high end of the spectrum, and therefore, limit its sale potential.

### **Place (Access)**

#### **Strengths**

- Hanson Howard Gallery is located in the highly visible and accessible location in downtown Ashland. It neighbors a successfully and popular restaurant, which naturally draws people to its general location.

#### **Weaknesses**

- The gallery only has one site.
- One must physically be in Ashland to visit the gallery.
- Parking in Ashland can be difficult.

### **Opportunities**

- The gallery could take a more active roll with their website, featuring virtual and video tours
- The gallery could invest in eCommerce Sales, extending their art sales opportunities world wide.

### **Challenges**

- Hanson Howard Gallery is one of 17 art galleries in Ashland. There is a high level of competition, were all galleries target the OSF tourist population.

### **Promotional Efforts**

#### **Strengths**

- Hanson Howard Gallery participates in the City of Ashland: First Friday Art Walk.
- The gallery does use their own webpage and Facebook Fan Page for promotional efforts.

#### **Weaknesses**

- The webpage does not offer an extended amount of information.
- The Facebook Fan Page hasn't been updated since July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.
- The gallery relies on other second party affiliates for exposure (Ashland Gallery Association and the

Ashland Chamber of Commerce).

### **Opportunities**

- The gallery could feature themselves on tourist webpages such as TripAdvisor.
- The gallery could partner with restaurants around town, exhibiting art for public display (previously, this had been an arrangement that the Hanson Howard Gallery and Thai Pepper had made before the gallery was forced to relocate).
- The gallery could take a more active and vested interest in social media.
- The gallery could create a free pamphlet that would be available at the Tourist Information Center, local hotels, any are where else tourist information is made available to the public, highlighting current shows, artists, and the gallery itself.

### **Challenges**

- Additional collateral does take time to produce, as well as money.
- Additional collateral might require additional staff to be able to complete

## **Case Study Analysis Part III – Audience Analysis**

**Drawing upon what you learn from the demographic scan in part I, analyze the organization’s audience (participant) level. Who is attending? Who is missing? Define possible target segments to focus future efforts. Of those currently participating, what is their level of involvement? Are there other opportunities for engagement? A SWOC process for analysis can work for this section too.**

The general audience that visits the Hanson Howard Gallery are generally highly educated community members, or visiting tourists. The gallery is easily accessible, located in the center of downtown, blocks away from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The main targeted audience is the tourist population, in town to visit OSF. Since OSF is often attended by again, highly educated individuals with an appreciation for the arts, the Hanson Howard Gallery is able to draw upon that preexisting demographic.

The gallery audience that is missing from the already established targeted demographic is the University population, as well as other community members from surrounding areas. One way to target the University population may be to curate a show from student artwork. The exhibition could also be promoted by students, increasing the awareness of the gallery on campus and in the community.

In regards to current participants, there appears to be a wide spectrum of levels of involvement. Certain groups may take a more passive level of involvement: walking through the gallery briefly after dinner and on their way to a show up at OSF. They may not invest the time to “take in” the art that is represented, but rather use their gallery experience as a time killer between dinner and the theater. Other groups may be slightly more involved, taking their time through the gallery, and really exploring what the gallery has to offer, but not really investing

themselves to make any type of purchase. Other groups may take a vested interest in the gallery, spending time, energy and effort in exploring the space, asking questions about the gallery and artists, and then ultimately investing in the art.

Ideally, the Hanson Howard Gallery could participate in higher levels of community engagement, and business promotional efforts. There is a wealth of untapped interest from the art students at Southern Oregon University, as well as Rogue Community College. The gallery could social media to a greater extent, especially to reach and engage younger audiences. There also seems to be a lack of effort that actually reaches out to the tourist populations. Surrounding the gallery are several Bed & Breakfasts, fine dining establishments, other cultural centers, and retailers. After fostering stronger relationships with other organizations, pamphlets and promotional collateral could be placed at these organizations as a promotional partnership. In turn, the gallery would also promote local businesses and organizations.

## References

- Ashland: Living and Doing Business Guide. (2013). Ashland Oregon Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau. (2014). Retrieved November 24, 2014, from [http://www.ashlandchamber.com/files/2013\\_ldb\\_ol.pdf](http://www.ashlandchamber.com/files/2013_ldb_ol.pdf)
- The Economic Base. (2014). Ashland Oregon Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau. (2014). Retrieved November 24, 2014, from <http://www.ashlandchamber.com/Page.asp?NavID=852>
- Howard, Judy. (2014, October 16). Telephone conversation with Lena Freeman. Occurred October 16, 2014.
- Public Art Mural Packet. (2013, March 7). City of Ashland, Mural Application Packet. (2013) Retrieved November 24, 2014, from <http://www.ashland.or.us/Files/7%2025%2013%20draft%20update%20packet.pdf>
- Shopping. (2014). Ashland Oregon Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau. (2014). Retrieved November 24, 2014, from <http://www.ashlandchamber.com/Page.asp?NavID=893>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2014, July 8). State and county quickfacts [Ashland (city), Oregon census data]. Retrieved on November 24, 2014 from: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/4103050.html>