



TOOL-KIT
**BUSINESS
SPEAK:**
CAN WE TALK?

Businesses value partnerships with the arts. They have been and are being used as a key way to enhance the critical thinking and creativity skills of the corporate workforce, and to help businesses achieve other goals including recruitment, retention and team building.

Before heading into any conversation with a business, take a look at the [8 key drivers](#) for business partnerships for the arts. Some of the reasons may resonate more than others with a specific business or community, but it is good to be aware of a range of options.

"Aetna has a long tradition of celebrating art, culture, and diversity in communities where our employees work and live. We also acknowledge that the arts can play a vital role in promoting health and wellness. That's why through our sponsorships, employee fundraising, and volunteerism, Aetna ensures the arts continue to thrive." Mark T. Bertolini, Chairman, CEO and President, Aetna

Before you meet:

In order to build a relationship with a business, you need to leverage your partnership assets, identify strong opportunities of alignment and showcase your ability to execute mutually beneficial relationships.

- ▶ Know your mission – a simple, clear message about who you are and what you do.
- ▶ What makes your organization unique in the community?
- ▶ What are the core competencies that attract your audience?
 - Know your target audience/customer – the people who know and care about what you do.
 - How does your audience make-up compare with the overall population of your area?
 - What is the median age of your audience? Does it skew older or younger?
 - What are your audience's education and income levels?
 - Is your audience ethnically diverse? Focused on a specific ethnicity?
 - Is your programming family oriented?
- ▶ Know how many people you reach/serve.
 - What is the average audience size?
 - What is your e-mail reach?
 - What is your social media reach?
 - What is your direct mail reach?
- ▶ Know how many employees you can engage.
 - What is your capacity for volunteers, both for pro bono or one-off projects? What might these volunteer needs be?
 - Do you have events like backstage tours, open dress rehearsals, gallery previews or talks available for business employees?
 - Can you bring the arts into the corporate workplace through performances, demonstrations, exhibits or workshops?



Each business is different. You will need different pitches. For example, marketing departments might care about return on investment (ROI), while some foundations may be more interested in the cause.

ROI can include a variety of different things that can be measured, including:

- ▶ Social impact (how the company's actions can affect the surrounding community; how many people are served)
- ▶ Visibility and/or association with target audience (Will an association with the arts organization help reach a desired audience, increase sales, enhance the perception of business in the community?)

Having the answers to the questions above will help you clarify what your organization can provide in terms of measurable impact.

The meeting

Consider how your organization can add value to the prospective business partner. Get inside the head of the prospective business donor and identify with his/her values and priorities.

- ▶ What is the mission of the business?
- ▶ Who are their current customers/clients?
- ▶ Who are their prospective customers/clients?
- ▶ What nonprofits does the business currently work with?

Discuss the ways your arts organization might help with:

- ▶ Branding opportunities/increased visibility
- ▶ Opportunities to reach targeted consumers
- ▶ *Employee engagement* through volunteer opportunities (group activities or pro-bono consulting); networking events (dress rehearsals, gallery previews, etc.)
- ▶ Foster creativity with *arts-based training*; employee art exhibits; artists-in-residence at the business

Be very specific about how the arts can help solve business problems and how this particular business would benefit in a partnership with your organization.

Resources

[Information on the Arts Incubator of the Rockies \(AIR\) Curriculum](#)

For examples of companies who are already taking advantage of the skills the arts have to offer, [click here](#).

Take a look at the tool-kit for [Creating Partnerships with Small and Midsized Businesses](#)

Want to hear more?

Watch our on-demand webinars to learn how to PARTNER.

[Award Winning Arts and Business Partnerships](#)

[Getting Big Results: Arts Partnerships with Small and Midsized Businesses](#)

