

Five-Year Strategic Plan



Mission, Vision, Goals & Strategies Ann Arbor Summer Festival 2010 – 2015

Estimated Attendance: 60,000+



The Ann Arbor Summer Festival's Long-Range Planning Committee initiated this project in March 2009. The strategic planning team referenced best practices in strategic planning from both non-profit and for-profit environments to develop the work plan.

The working team for this plan was comprised of festival staff, the Long-Range Planning Committee, and representatives from each festival standing committee. This team met frequently to share findings, discuss and debate recommendations, and summarize results. Team members include: Erik Bakker, Christie Barrett, David Baru, Alan Cotzin, Peter Fayroian, Julie Fritz, Patricia Garcia, Jim Kosteva, Jerry Lax, Jamie Mistry, Sudha Maheshwari, Amy Nesbitt, Peter Schork, and Robb Woulfe. It will be the responsibility of the Long-Range Planning Committee to provide guidance and support for the festival in alignment with this plan and to review the five-year plan annually for improvement or necessary revisions.

The project included an overall situation analysis, sharpening the festival **mission**, articulating the five-year **vision and goals** for the festival, defining the **strategies** to achieve the five-year vision, and developing mid-term **action plans** for each strategy.

The Ann Arbor Summer Festival's **mission** is to *present a world-class celebration of the arts and entertainment that enriches the cultural, economic and social vitality of the region*. Furthermore, the festival will represent **core values** of *excellence, diversity, and relevance*.

Over the next five years, the festival has the following **vision and goals**, which are aligned with mission of the organization. The five-year **vision** is to be a nationally recognized arts festival and enduring local treasure – a widely anticipated, interactive hub of creative and community energy. The **goals** are: **(1)** deepen audience and community engagement **(2)** improve financial health of organization **(3)** strengthen key partnerships and develop new mutually beneficial relationships **(4)** further enhance and extend reputation of the festival **(5)** continuously improve leadership and administration.



Photo credit: Myra Klarman

We identified five organizational goals and strategies to achieve them. Addressing these priorities will enable the festival to move toward its vision – these included:

1. DEEPEN AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Days and Hours of Operations:** Improved alignment of festival days and hours of operations to periods of maximum audience participation.
- **Programming and Venue Alignment:** Continue to line-up programming that will address most popular audience interests; utilize a wider range of appropriate venues for each program (with selection based on genre, audience segment, capacity needs, and cost considerations).
- **Volunteering:** Mature the festival's volunteer program and expand levels of volunteerism within the community.
- **Marketing and Promotions:** The festival will increase its marketing reach (e.g., number of people engaged, unique visitors) and improve returns on marketing (e.g., increased attendance volumes and frequencies, greater loyalty).
- **Targeted Engagement Initiatives:** The festival should continue to implement initiatives that engage the core audience. At the same time, we will also identify and implement special initiatives each year that further improve audience diversity.

2. BUILD A FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

Ultimately, the festival needs long-term financial stability in order to deliver on our mission. Financial stability was defined for the festival using both short and long-term objectives and five strategies.

- Renewed focus on fund development as a priority.
- Building festival endowment.
- Aspiring to make Top of the Park at least break-even.
- Delivering a profitable and lower-risk Mainstage season.
- Improving cash flow.

3. STRENGTHEN KEY PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOP NEW MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Continue to reinforce the strong and mutually beneficial relationships between the festival and the City of Ann Arbor and University of Michigan.
- Solidify our relationship with priority organizations that can benefit the festival the most holistically, and cultivate multiple relationships/linkages (e.g., via board and prior trustees, festival staff, and new board appointments).
- Develop the next tier of partnerships – organizations that can provide significant benefits to the festival across a smaller number of criteria but are also high priority partners. Cultivate these relationships via the festival staff and committees.

4. FURTHER ENHANCE AND EXTEND THE REPUTATION OF THE FESTIVAL

- **Clarity and Communication:** Defining, articulating and demonstrating the unique value proposition of the festival.
- **Association:** Alignment to high-profile sponsors, funding agencies, partners, media and/or other events that reflect our values.
- **Talent:** Attracting and retaining top talent of all kinds (e.g., board, staff, seasonal management, volunteers, high-quality artists).
- **Openness:** Working in partnership with our community and audiences, listening to and implementing feedback, being open to ideas, broadening the audience of our programs.
- **Advocacy, Thought Leadership and Giving Back:** Supporting growth of our creative industries, serving as a leader and resource for local/national colleagues in the arts presenting arena, being a good community citizen.

5. CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

- Year-round organization optimization.
- Continued outsourcing of non-core functions.
- In-season cost structure improvements.
- Infrastructure and technology improvements.

Exhibit 1 provides a visual schematic of the Mission, Vision, Goals and Strategies:

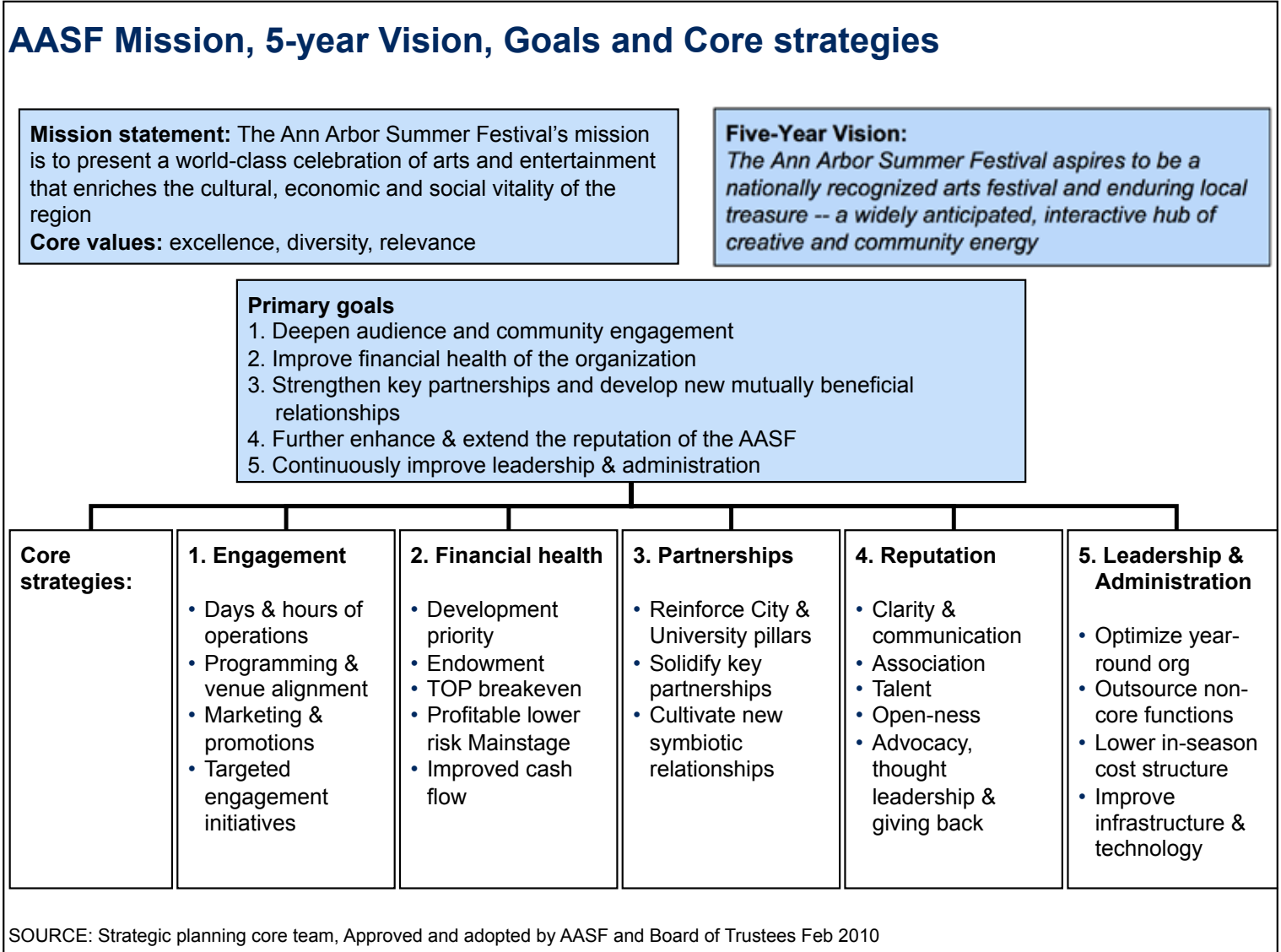


Photo credit: Myra Klarman

The Ann Arbor Summer Festival is an exhilarating celebration of performing arts, outdoor entertainment, and community spirit. A boutique music and arts festival, the three-week gathering offers dozens of performances, activities, exhibitions, and screenings representative of the best in music, dance, comedy, film, street arts and family entertainment.

Founded by Eugene Power, and established as an equal partnership between the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival presented its first full season in 1984. Early festival seasons emphasized classical music and theater, but have since become more popular and diverse in nature, encompassing a breadth of performance genres. What began with a vision for a summer cultural event that would connect audiences with world-class artists, bring community together, and showcase the city and state as a major arts destination, now flourishes as one of the leading performing arts festivals in the country.

Today, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival produces two concurrent programs, one indoor and one outdoor, at various venues and spaces across the University of Michigan campus and in downtown Ann Arbor. The indoor Mainstage series includes ticketed performances of world-class music, dance, theater and comedy. The outdoor program, Top of the Park, is held along a beautiful campus green and offers admission-free concerts, movies under the stars, open-air spectacles and unique family attractions.

As the festival enters this next phase of its development, it continues to attract a diverse audience of thousands, and the best performers from around the world, to a small, Midwestern city that revels in welcoming them. As witnessed in the past few years, the festival is becoming more of a cultural and social destination, and less about a specific concert-going experience. The dramatic growth of the festival in size and range of offerings parallels its growth in reputation as a major cultural event in the Ann Arbor community, and as a premiere artistic enterprise in the national and international festival-presenting arena.

Moving forward, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival will continue to present the best possible artistic experiences to as many people as possible through excellence, diversity, and relevance. Building upon an already successful model, the festival will begin to introduce a greater variety of events, venues, ticket prices, and program partners. With the green of Ingalls Mall serving as the nucleus of all activity, the festival will take place in multiple Ann Arbor venues (indoor and outdoor). Ultimately, downtown Ann Arbor would also become a destination city during festival season featuring world-class culture, award-winning dining, eclectic shopping – all catalyzed by the Ann Arbor Summer Festival.



Photo credit: Myra Klarman