

A VERBATIM PROJECT – WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

There's a perfect Verbatim Project for everyone. It all depends upon the goals of your group, and its resources of funds, time and energy.

We have engaged with municipalities like the town of Peterborough, NH, over a nine month period to create and produce a full-length musical theater production concluding with multiple performances and public debriefing workshop.

We helped the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation mark its 40th anniversary with a production called the *New Hampshire Character*. The highly-praised production, created and performed by staff, board members and other foundation constituents, playfully and affectionately celebrated New Hampshire's history, idiosyncrasies and bounty to a packed house of 700 celebrants.

We have worked with a human service agency over a weekend to help its staff develop as a team, and to chart new directions for the agency.

We offered a workshop at a school conference to help teachers explore their sense of place and how it impacts education, which led to a project of several weeks with middle school students who wrote, rehearsed and presented a show three times – each performance to a packed house!!

And we've done everything in-between.

Here's a sample budget for a large, long-term (six to nine month) project.

Revenue

Individual contributions	\$1000
Sponsors	1000
Ticket sales @ \$5 (300 tickets)	1500
Grants	1500
Verbatim Fund	5000
Tee Shirts/mugs/key chains, etc.	200
Program ads	500
TOTAL	\$10,700

Expenses

Artistic fee	\$4500
Administrative fee	1500
Space rental	600
Video	800
Lights, music, sound	1000
Set	800
Costume	400
Publicity	400
TOTAL	\$10,000

Smaller projects would cost proportionately less, and would not require some of the elements included in the large project such as costumes or set design.

We will work with you to develop a project of appropriate size, cost and design.

PUBLICIZING YOUR PROJECT

You've created a fabulous production and you want the world to see it. How do you let them know about it?

Press Releases & Feature Stories – free publicity

Newspapers will run your release if it is newsworthy. You will have opportunities to make news throughout your project.

- Your first release will announce your intention to undertake the project with details of funding, planning, key players, and a call for writers, actors and others.
- Later on, you might invite a reporter to do a feature on the collaborative, creative process of writing the production – plan for photos!!!!
- Another release would announce the logistics of your performances, ticket sales and other newsworthy details of the project.
- Finally, you want to have the media attend a performance and follow-up with interviews with key players and some audience reaction. Make sure you have all your people prepared and ready to talk to the media.

Advertising

Advertising costs money, so use it wisely. Talk to the ad staff at selected newspapers, and radio and TV stations to develop an ad strategy that will give you the most bang for the buck. Don't be afraid to ask them to sponsor your project by donating free ad space or time. Also consider placing ads in organizational newsletters, programs, church bulletins, websites and other alternative outlets.

Posters

Have you recruited a graphic artist to be part of your project? If not, you might want to consider it. Poster design and distribution can be done by volunteers. Production can be accomplished by making color copies, or by asking a printer to sponsor your project by donating materials and/or printing services.

Direct mail

A postcard with a clever message and all the pertinent information can inform a lot of people with relatively little expense. Ask everyone you know for their mailing lists. And don't forget the power of e-mail.

The Personal Touch

Civic Clubs like the Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions are always looking for speakers. Put together a presentation and take it on the road!!!

RAISING MATCHING FUNDS FOR YOUR PROJECT

Community Foundations

Vermont: <http://www.vermontcf.org>

Maine: <http://www.maineecf.org>

New Hampshire: <http://www.nhcf.org>

New York: For a listing of New York Community Foundations go to http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/gws_comm/comm_ny.html

Arts Foundations

Vermont: <http://www.vermontartscouncil.org>

Maine: <http://www.mainearts.com>

New Hampshire: <http://www.state.nh.us/nharts>

New York: <http://www.nysca.org>

Corporate sponsorships

Contact the larger employers in your area – businesses, colleges and universities, media outlets, and/or other organizations who might want to partner with you on your project.

In-Kind contributions

Printers, graphic designers, videographers, theater managers, students – think of people and services in the community who would want to support your project as a good will gesture, or for the visibility it will bring them.

Individual donations

Who has an interest in what you're doing? Have each member of your planning committee make a list, and then make a request. Make sure you invite donations as part of every message you put out to the community. Make it easy to support your project.

Here is some good advice from the Community Arts Network on locating funding for your project. Visit their site at <http://www.communityarts.net/>.

Contact your state arts council. Find out about their grant programs for projects like yours, and ask their advice on where else you might go to find funding. Where you live you might also have a local or regional arts council. Contact them.

<http://www.nea.gov/partner/>

At the federal level there's the National Endowment for the Arts.

<http://www.nea.gov/>

You can find lots of information about foundation and corporate funders by visiting the Foundation Center web site.

<http://www.fdncenter.org/>

If your proposed arts project has a strong civic component, or addresses a social issue, check with organizations outside the arts that are concerned with those issues. You might find a partner or financial support.

Notice where other projects in your area have found support, and who has funded similar projects in other places. Talk to individuals, both about individual contributions and advice and help on developing other sources of funding.

Above all, be prepared to be just as creative in trying to find funding as you are in developing the artwork. You might need to find a number of small funders to cover the costs of a project. That's okay. Every funder is a partner, and partnerships build communities.

VERBATIM PROJECT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Leadership Team – all things proceed from here.

A leadership team is established with one person designated as the leader or spokesperson for the project. This person is the primary contact for Tricinium, and facilitates the signed agreement and deposit.

Working committees are managed by the Leadership Team

- Recruitment
- Publicity
- Production
- Funding
- Writers & Performers

Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment events: Typically one or two opportunities for people to come and learn about the project are sufficient for recruitment purposes. The ideal number of writers for a large organization or community is 20 or more, but fewer than 50. At the event, Larry Siegel, the artistic director, gives an overview of the project, and time commitment required of the writers.

Recruitment is also a person-to-person endeavor, i.e., Who knows somebody who knows somebody who would be really good at something?

Ask yourself:

Who do you want represented in this project?

Who are your constituencies?

What are the tasks that need to be accomplished?

Who is your audience?

If you are an organization, you might want to include staff, board, clients, consumers, vendors, partners, etc.

If you are a municipality, consider all the different segments of your community including businesses, schools, churches, human service and non-profit sector, town employees, governing boards, law enforcement, courts, residents, etc.

The initial **press release** to announce your project can include a call for participants.

Book an appearance on a **local radio talk show** and put out the call.

Run **public service announcements** on local radio and television stations.

Place **fliers** in all the popular gathering places in your business, organization or community.

How it Happens

Writing sessions

Larry leads the writing process:

1. Organizing writing teams
2. Writing teams select a topic to write about
3. Teams write a narrative of the story
4. Teams write script and dialogue
5. Verbatim Classic – teams go to a place where stuff happens and record what they hear, and incorporate the material into their scripts
6. Larry demonstrates how to create a song with the underlying character and actions
7. Groups look for song ideas for their scene
8. Larry moves from group to group, working with each one
9. Drafts of scenes are presented to the full group
10. The script is completed

Production Meeting

The production team is assembled and creates a list of needs for the show, ie, house, stage manager, ticket sales, ad sales for program, program production, sets, costumes, make-up, sound, lights.

Revise and edit

Each group casts their scenes with members of the group or selected members of the community. There are no auditions.

Rehearsals

The Show(s)

The Wrap-up and Debriefing Session

