



Strategic Refresh

A Plan for the Festival's Future



STRENGTHS

Author/Presenter Quality

Office Location

Welcoming to All

Diversity of Program Content

Alumni Board Work

Good Donor Relations/ Funds Development

Resilience!!

Adaptability

Increased Number and Quality of Staff

Community Value

Reputation

Warm and Genuine Author Hospitality

Volunteers

Year- Round Programming

Improved Website and Registration Process

Books in Schools Program

Centrality and Walkability of Festival Weekend

Harbor Springs!

Reputation with Publishers

Strong Board

Better Board Diversity

Implementing Nonprofit Best Practices

Budget Adherence

Quality of Consultants

Relationship with Between The Covers

Unique and High Quality Programming and Panels

WEAKNESSES

Donor Fatigue

Location

Venue Capacity

Housing/Hotels

Website- Regular Updates

Lack of Family Engagement at Festival

Unbalanced Donor Base

Donor Appreciation

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships with Businesses

Partnerships with Other Nonprofits

Increase Business Financial Support

Changing Publisher Landscape

Quantifying Economic Impact of Festival

Continue to Improve Regional Awareness of Festival

Sustained Funds Development

Schools Programming

Mid-Grade Events at Festival

Expand Genres for Special Interests, i.e. Golf, Boating, Health/Wellness

Hybrid Events

THREATS

Changing Publisher Landscape

Tech Issues and Costs Around Hybrid Events

Inconsistent Global Issues and Their Impact

Losing Staff/Succession Planning

Transportation

Loss of Office Space

Financial Difficulties

"Cheapening" of America/ Diminished Arts and Culture

GOAL 1: Maintain organizational and operational excellence

Objectives

1. Increase board engagement and effectiveness

- Ensure a diversified skill set of board members
- Engage the next generation of board members
- Regularly review board structure and processes to ensure continued effectiveness of board and committees
- Create a path for former board members and key volunteers to remain engaged as ambassadors for the organization

2. Continue to improve critical reviews of all organization events and operations

- Staff, key volunteers and board provide input in creating event evaluation
- Solicit attendee and presenter feedback

3. Create and maintain a succession plan for key staff

- Ensure all job descriptions are up to date
- Identify key volunteers as resources
- Accessibility to all policy, procedures and passwords

GOAL 2: Ensure the financial strength and sustainability of the organization

Objectives

1. Increase philanthropic support of the organization

- Have a intentional, specific plan for each phase of the donor relationship process
- Ensure all involved in donor engagement have plan & knowledge base to be opportunistic & spontaneous in creating donor engagement
- Focus on building the path for donors to \$10,000+
- Convert more attendees into donors
- Establish policy and procedures for creation of specials funds for donors to give Honor, Tribute or Memorial gifts
- Create an endowment focusing on planned/legacy gifts and allowing for outright gifts as appropriate

2. Grow earned revenue

- Sell out every ticketed weekend Festival event increasing perceived value of events
- Sell out all additional off-season events
- Maximize program advertising revenue
- Increased merchandise sales

GOAL 2: Ensure the financial strength and sustainability of the organization

Objectives

3. Optimize foundation funding by leveraging relationships of board members to key private foundation leaders

- Consistently encourage board to provide information on connections they have to area and national foundations
- Engage board in their connections to open doors to private foundations

4. Increase local business and regional corporate financial support to the organization

- Work with partners to measure impacts of the Festival, including but not limited to economic impact of Festival Weekend
- Review current opportunities in collaboration with the board members
- Develop new sponsorship opportunities for local businesses

GOAL 3: Position the organization's brand value as a literary leader—on a regional and national level

Objectives

1. Increase awareness and engagement among targeted populations

Outcomes:

- Deepen connections at every level within publishing industry, positioning the organization as a “go-to” book festival
- Build out and execute a local, regional and national public relations plan increasing brand value to key audiences

2. Attract top-tier keynote speakers

3. Build mutually beneficial relationships with other local and regional nonprofit partners

- Petoskey Library
- Harbor Springs DDA - Ice Festival
- NW Michigan Arts & Cultural Network
- Good Hart Artist Residence
- National Writers Series
- Great Lakes Center for the Arts

4. Focus efforts and funding on non-event initiatives

- Indigenous Voices
- Writer in Residence



GOAL 4: Present an excellent festival program

Objectives

1. Increase effective communication and collaboration between the board, committees and staff

Outcomes:

- Board input is solicited annually during the earliest formation of the Festival programming
- Provide sufficient time for committees to give input and develop annual plans in key areas of work
 - Author Committee
 - Marketing Committee
 - Funds Development Committee

2. Optimize programming for schools and educators

Outcomes:

- Ensure that relevant constituencies (educators, parents) are routinely given an opportunity to provide input on school programming and family engagement
- Based on constituents' input, develop and execute plans to expand programming and deepen family engagement

3. Increase local business engagement for Festival Weekend

- Review current engagement opportunities for local businesses
- Develop engagement opportunities for local businesses by leveraging the marketing committee and any sub-working groups of the board

4. Incorporate additional literary events outside of festival weekend

- Develop plan for quarterly literary events
- Ensure that sufficient resources are directed to any program expansion.