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Review: Strategic Planning in the Arts
By Michael Kaiser
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To be released in 2019, *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide* by Michael Kaiser, (formerly the President of the Kennedy Center), is a thoughtful, straightforward text on contemporary issues facing arts and culture managers and leaders. Kaiser's work reflects a practical approach suitable to both collegiate coursework and professionals in all areas of the arts and culture industries. This book, focusing on preparation for strategic planning, the planning process itself, and implementation of the strategic plan, replaces other texts in this subject area that are out of date since the emergence of a new digital market and fluctuating audience attendance patterns driving an ever-increasing nimbleness required by arts and culture institutions to stay relevant.

This text is an easy read filled with graphs and charts that are ripe for adaptation to many institutions- no matter the scale and the mission. Written in a pragmatic tone, Kaiser creates chapters that are easy to read in isolation for specific direction on various stages of the strategic planning process, or as a complete text providing a cohesive handbook for an organization or leader facing the prospect of strategic planning. Given Kaiser's stature in the arts, surprisingly, this book is readable and equally relevant to new, small, local arts organizations and large, iconic, American cultural institutions. While it may be difficult to extrapolate all

lessons from this text to a European context, the book is still relevant if only for the pointed and thoughtful questions that conclude each chapter. These questions should guide any arts and culture decision-maker on a daily basis and can be the prompts for related conversation. Kaiser, who is known for teaching busy professionals the realities of running arts institutions in the times of reduced funding and declining audiences, has written an easy to follow 'key' to the strategic planning process that is neither 'dumbed down' nor overly academic in tone.

Kaiser's book situates the task of strategic planning squarely within the operational domain of organizational activity. This framework is refreshing, and direly needed, as many arts organizations view strategic planning as isolated and situational rather than an integral part of the organization's daily activities. Divided into two main sections, the content of the strategic plan and the processes of implementation and assessment of that plan, this text includes an updated version of three frameworks useful to the arts and culture leader. Kaiser updates the SWOT analysis and accompanying guiding questions, offers a simplification of the Porter business analysis model, and suggests on-going use of the Cycle model for audience and donor engagement and re-engagement.

Also included is a short primer on mission statement writing, an overview of basic budget and financial functions, discussions focusing on the difference between institutional and program marketing, and an analysis of industry trends that gives context to organizations and institutions seeking direction and clarification through the strategic planning process. Further conversations on board representation and its impact on the strategic planning process, a focus on technology, and a discussion

of possible fallout from the strategic planning process round out Kaiser's book. This text is an enjoyable read giving both context and pragmatic advice to the strategic planning process. While not 'mired in the weeds' by discussing tactics for obstacles, *Strategic Planning in the Arts: A Practical Guide* by Michael Kaiser, should become a sought-out tool for university classrooms and an equally valuable resource on the bookshelf and desks of arts and culture professionals.