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ABSTRACT

- Thesis
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Title Attracting and Maintaining Funders After an Internal Crisis in an Arts Organization. Case: Dance Theatre of Harlem.	Number of pages 137 + Appendices
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Abstract <p>For a non-profit performing arts organization to succeed in the United States, it has to systematically develop its organization and fundraising. Due to the tightened economic climate, the importance of strategic fundraising has increased also in Finland. This thesis explores, how a performing arts organization attracts and maintains funders after an internal crisis in the United States.</p> <p>The thesis is a qualitative case study of one performing arts organization, Dance Theatre of Harlem, which is located in New York, in the United States. The primary data of this research are 21 semi-structured personal interviews conducted between November 2012 and March 2013. In addition, the following materials are used: the organization's internal documents related to the fundraising strategy, news articles and personal observations at different events during 2012 and 2013, as well as during an internship period at the organization's corporate giving team in 2012. The thesis develops a theoretical framework for managing strategic fundraising in the 21st century. The core idea is to treat donations as investments. The return on investment is as a healthier arts organization that is better able to create new content in line with its mission and engage its donors and funders.</p> <p>The research reveals that Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) has engaged in a major restructuring process since 2004, when its internal crisis peaked. During the restructuring, DTH has kept its mission at the core. Followed by a market analysis, DTH has reformulated its organizational strategy for several times since the crisis. As a result, DTH's fundraising has become more strategic and cohesive. From the fundraising perspective, the restructuring era can be divided into five different phases: damage repair and building trust (phase 1), new artistic era (phase 2), restructuring fundraising (phase 3), relationship-building and engaging (phase 4) and new dance company, new opportunities (phase 5). In 2013, DTH is a stronger organization compared to 2004. The overall financial situation has improved and the funding mix is more diverse. DTH is better able to attract and engage its donors and funders, and this has also been noticed by the stakeholders as enhanced donor and/or funder engagement and increased communications. The research shows six critical bottlenecks that can either speed up or slower DTH's entire fundraising: monitoring the relationship between the fundraising strategy, budgeting and diverse funding mix (1), improving the Board mix and Board involvement (2), prospect identification (3), lack of resources for cultivation (4), available time to find strategic fit with the funder (5) and institutional communications and marketing (6). Strategic management of the fundraising, as well as performance management of the entire organization are vital for DTH's future.</p>	
Keywords Fundraising, Philanthropy, Donations, Strategy, Crisis, Sponsorship, Performing Arts, Dance, United States, New York	
Additional information	