

BOOK REVIEW

Arts Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach

By Carla Walter

Reviewed by Patrick A. Kelsey, Savannah College of Art and Design

Russell Belks, of York University in Toronto states in his forward to Carla Walter's *Arts Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach*, this is a "text for just how to accomplish such a reconciliation of art and business" (Walter, 2015, p. xiii). This textbook delivers just that reconciliation and a lot more. *Arts Management* positions the arts or, more accurately, the cultural and creative industries, in such a way as to close the gap between art and commerce. In addition, *Arts Management* presents the production of art as a viable business model that indeed has the right to sit at the bargaining table next to other industries. Early in the text, Walter posits the "culturepreneur" as our focus of attention, using Andrea Hausmann's definition of "artists undertaking business activities within one of the four traditional sectors of the arts who discover and evaluate opportunities in the arts and leisure markets and create a business to pursue them" (p. 10).

Arts Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach is a compendium of all aspects of commerce, ranging from finance, production, and marketing to legal, talent management, and technology, "to provide a university upper-division undergraduate and graduate-level text that covers the principles of arts management and entrepreneurship" (Walter, 2015, p. xvii). Walter goes on to state, "its audiences are students who are not business majors," and the textbook is designed "for fulfilling the prerequisite survey course in graduate arts management and entrepreneurship or the capstone undergraduate course" (p. xvii). As this reviewer is fluent in non-business majors studying for a career in arts management, *Arts Management* does fill the fissure of a comprehensive text connecting theory with practice.

Walter opens by differentiating the industry between cultural versus creative, with *Arts Management* siding with the cultural and leaving the text to provide special emphasis on fine, contemporary, and classical performing arts. Provided the coverage of disciplines and regardless of profit motive, there is something for everyone. It is a versatile text to consider adopting in the classroom.

Walter goes on to describe *Arts Management*'s positioning as at the "intersection of a theoretical framework, with practical application and experiential exercises" (p. xvii). Each of the fourteen chapters, grouped into five overarching topics totaling over 400 pages of extensive research and content, begins with a chapter outline and well-defined learning objectives. Each chapter concludes with a brief summary, a spectrum of thought-provoking discussion questions designed for either an extensive in-class dialogue, or essays that exercise both the student's knowledge of the reading as well as the synthesis of such. In addition, chapters finish with some very well thought out experiential exercises allowing the student to apply the content of the textbook in a pragmatic manner, which should only further the student's understanding of the material. The writing, however, could be construed as a little dense, rendering its use primarily to the realm of academia and not necessarily a primer for a non-student or practitioner looking to better understand the industry. Sprinkled throughout *Arts Management* are a fair balance of visual aids presenting the content for better understanding. Though not a requirement, and a rarity among arts management texts, *Arts Management* does not itself provide the benefit of instructor resources, but it does provide the needed readings for the student to understand

thoroughly the industry and enough content for the instructor to keep the conversation lively, active, and engaging.

Walters organizes *Arts Management* through four distinct sections with a fifth dedicated to two separate and in-depth case studies primed for a healthy classroom discussion. First is “Understanding the Cultural Fine Arts,” which provides the pre-requisite survey of the cultural or creative industries and brings students quickly up to speed with the positioning of the arts in our larger economy; a rundown of select cultural disciplines and their inner workings; a firm understanding of the positioning of the arts as a consumable good; and concludes with a simple overview of industry economics. “Entrepreneurial Development” is the second major section. It opens with an overview of the entrepreneurial process, covering financing to market opportunity. Following are more in-depth and detailed chapters discussing consumer behavior and conducting market research. The third section is “Management and Processes,” which positions the arts as a service industry and how that impacts its perception within the marketplace; an overview of management and leadership within arts organizations in both for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises; a brief discussion about intellectual property and cultural policy; and, concludes with a perspective on technology and how it can help to leverage the enterprises operations. Finally, “Growth and Succession” covers fundraising and development; financial management and investing; and the often-ignored and underappreciated topic of succession planning.

Supplementing these first four sections are resources for additional reading, research tools, and appendices to expand upon the subject material more. Many chapters also provide a bonus “Spotlight” that brings into perspective how the “real world” connects with chapter content. Walter also goes beyond the confines of the printed text and supplements the readings with “What’s On?” which is a series of publicly available online video case studies lending themselves to additional in-depth classroom discussions.

Two in-depth and well-researched case studies by Ruth Rentschler of Deakin University constitute the fifth and final section. The first case’s subject material focuses on museum governance while the second provides a detailed story or perspective of a board chair serving a major performing arts company. The latter dives into the discussion about the role of chair and the board as seen through the lens of women in leadership positions. Pulled from the real world and primed for some debate and reflection, both case studies add additional depth to the content.

In conclusion, Walter has provided to higher education arts management programs *Arts Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach* at a time when students studying to take on leadership roles in the cultural industries absolutely need to think more creatively, more strategically, and more entrepreneurially. Maintaining the status quo is no longer an option in this hyper-competitive, overly connected, global market and Walter has provided a tool in this text to bring into focus what today’s students need for tomorrow.