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CONSULTING GROUP

ACT Contemporary Theatre
Managing Director
Position Profile

March 2024

Managing Director Position Profile



About the Opportunity

ACT Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, Washington seeks its next **Managing Director (MD)** to partner with **Artistic Director John Langs** in leading the city's premier company for developing and producing new work. ACT has been an integral part of building Seattle's reputation as a first-tier theatre city, occupying a unique role in the theatre ecology as a mid-sized company that has in its history helped develop the careers of many of our leading playwrights, many of whom consider ACT an artistic home. Likewise, its commitment to local artists – actors, designers, directors, as well as writers – has had a major impact on creating the significant community of theatre professionals who call Seattle home. The next MD will be a key partner to Langs, with both reporting to the Board of Trustees, to lead the theatre's team through this challenging era of emergence from pandemic closures to help ensure that ACT continues to make its significant contributions to the city and to the field.

The **ideal candidate for Managing Director** will bring expertise in the non-profit performing arts field, from financial acumen to creative strategic thinking to a human centric leadership ethos and a commitment to advocacy and civic connection. This individual will be able to work in a fast-paced environment, prioritizing tasks and responding to the needs of others with critical thinking, tenacity, and resiliency. A decisive leader, the Managing Director will be receptive to new ideas, opportunities, and innovation while effectively leveraging organizational human, financial, and technological resources. This individual will have the capacity to discern competing priorities, embracing opportunities in a timely manner while quickly adapting during periods of uncertainty.

The Managing Director joins a company that has made a **significant commitment to equity and inclusion** and will be excited to co-lead the theatre as it continues to grow and **use that commitment as a foundational touchstone**. [Learn more about our commitments to equity and actions taken to date here.](#)

About ACT

Here in the region around the city of Seattle, we acknowledge that we live and reside on the ancestral homelands of the Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie and Tulalip peoples, along the waterways of the Salish Sea. We honor their descendants, who were the original caretakers of this land, keeping balance and cultivating the beauty for thousands of years with intricate cultures, customs and lifeways that honored and took care of this home. The Seattle area is also home to many more Native, First Nations, and Indigenous people from our region and continent. We also honor the 29 federally recognized sovereign tribal nations within the state of Washington.

ACT Contemporary Theatre is a groundbreaking artistic incubator where artistic ambition and civic engagement unite. ACT envisions a world where the power of theatre expands our collective understanding of community and our own humanity. ACT is a Seattle landmark. Since its founding in 1965, the theatre has continuously made a significant contribution to the vitality of Seattle's downtown neighborhood and arts community. ACT was Seattle's first theatre dedicated to producing contemporary plays - and in this commitment, ACT made a unique and essential contribution to Seattle's theatre scene. It has valued and elevated the work of local theatre artists for almost 60 years, and it has transformed individual lives through the power of storytelling. ACT is committed to making authentic connections with new audiences, partners, and people, bringing them insights into our shared contemporary culture. We are committed to making theatre as an act of citizenship to engage audiences in understanding the issues of our time.

ACT is dedicated to the creation of New Works and the development of new art. ACT supports these mission-critical endeavors in multiple ways, primarily through commissions of new plays - including the production of 48 World Premieres in its history. ACT's MainStage, Education Program, Young Core Company Program, and Core Company also invest in the mission to engage audiences, develop new works, and keep the art accessible. Read more about the scope of ACT's programs [on our website](#).

The Eagles Auditorium Building is a 13-story historic building located in downtown Seattle. On the Registry of National Historic Places, the building has been the home of ACT since 1996. Completed in 1925, the building now has three primary stages, The Allen Theatre which accommodates 434 seats in the round, The Falls Theatre which seats 409, and The Eulalie Scandiuzzi Space which accommodates 75 seated patrons; the multi-purpose Bullitt Cabaret which seats up to 150 theatre patrons; and several other elegant event spaces which ACT counts among its earned revenue opportunities. ACT shares the building with Bellwether Housing, a nonprofit affordable housing entity; ACT owns and occupies 80% of the building.

ACT is governed by an elected Board of Trustees; there are currently eight members led by Cynthia Huffman. ACT operates under LORT C & D contracts. [Learn more about our history and mission here](#).

Job Description

ACT's Managing Director is a future-thinking and inspirational arts administrator, who has demonstrable achievements connected to their arts nonprofit leadership. A strong collaborative partner of Artistic Director John Langs who has served ACT for the past decade, this person will be catalytic in building the future of ACT. The person in this role has a sense of adventure, excels at overcoming challenges and thrives in building both collegial and collaborative internal relationships while also serving as one of ACT's primary external ambassadors. A transformative leader with a passion for theatre and art in all its forms, the Managing Director understands the importance of financial stability and transparency while ensuring that the artistic product and the ACT team are supported and nurtured. In partnership with a dedicated and skilled staff team and guided by the company's mission, vision and values, the person in this role will execute critical decision-making regarding ACT's historic facility, reinvigorate ACT's marketing initiatives with an emphasis on utilizing new technology, and center fundraising strategies to build ACT's contributed revenue, including consideration of a potential capital campaign. The Managing Director must be a values-driven human being whose experience is grounded in equity, diversity, and inclusion and who amplifies and embodies the intentional, playful, transformative, transparent, curious, and utilitarian values of ACT's staff. The person stepping into the Managing Director's role will have extensive experience in transforming an arts organization near the size and complexity of ACT, demonstrable financial acumen, experience in long term strategic planning, hands on experience in marketing and fundraising, and possess a significant working knowledge of facilities management.

Roles and Responsibilities

Strategic Vision and Leadership

- Serve as a committed, visionary, and accessible leader for ACT with a true connection to the organization's members, staff, board, and community.
- Embrace the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access to ensure an artistic and organizational culture that respects different perspectives and nurtures the environment of goodwill, inclusion, and empowerment at all levels of constituents through consistent practice of professionalism, courtesy, integrity, respect, and active listening.
- Understand and champion the risks that are involved in creating ambitious new work.
- Continue a commitment to strengthen and educate our community about the brand of ACT theatre. Guide and support marketing and public relations plans to enhance audience growth and engagement.
- Provide an inspiring and clear vision for the ACT building and lead the staff and board in creating a strategy regarding the long- and short-term options and goals for the facility.
- Serve as the organization's principal fundraiser, cultivate and nurture relationships with individual and institutional funders, and expand the network of supporters to realize the organization's mission.

- Demonstrate a collaborative leadership style in a wide range of communities and settings that inspires internal and external stakeholders to participate in ACT's vibrant and exciting future.
- Be an informed, engaging, and active primary spokesperson and champion for ACT.
- Communicate openly, consistently, effectively, and collaboratively with staff, artists, board, and other stakeholders.
- Tend consciously to company culture and collaborative practices, in a time of rebuilding and reimagining staff productivity, health and structures.
- Prioritize investment in staff in long term thinking, including professional development, equitable compensation practices, and individual growth.
- Utilize the input of audiences, staff, Board, artists, and other stakeholders to fulfill the strategic goals and action plans for ACT.
- Partner with the Artistic Director to ensure eclectic and diverse program offerings that create sustainable pathways for new relationships and revenue opportunities while staying loyal to ACT's values and principles.
- Engage and motivate board members, leverage their skills and networks, and collaborate with board leadership on strengthening board governance in support of the organization.

Relationship Building and Community Engagement

- Lead efforts to embrace diversity and inclusion as a key element of community engagement including but not limited to the areas of audience development, workforce vitality, board participation, vendor access, and programmatic vibrancy.
- Represent the organization throughout the many diverse parts of the community, engaging actively with residents, civic and organizational partners, elected officials, media, and other external stakeholders.
- Maintain and enhance the relationship ACT has built with IATSE and other labor unions and collectives.
- Create and maintain strong ties with community decision makers, government leaders, audiences, and the arts community and find collaborative ways to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Affirm and grow ACT's role in the ecosystem of a vital regional arts community with multiple constituents and develop relationships that enhance the goals of that larger community.
- Be a strategic leader in optimizing the excitement around our upcoming celebration of several milestones in the 25-26 season, including the 100th anniversary of the building, the 60th anniversary of the founding of ACT, and the 50th anniversary of the great Seattle tradition of *A Christmas Carol* at ACT.

Administrative and Organizational Management

- Supervise a diverse staff to ensure patrons, artists, and community members have a welcoming and high-quality experience.
- Maintain and expand an efficient, effective organizational structure for fundraising, programming, organizational management, fiduciary excellence, and project leadership.

- Foster collaboration to engage and align diverse constituents while being decisive and able to communicate decisions with diplomacy, empathy, and respect.
- Provide organization-wide opportunities for staff to access the tools, resources, and training to create and sustain a culture of equity, inclusion, and justice.
- Build self-sufficient teams through training, goal-setting and planned delegation.
- Partner with the Artistic Director to provide inspirational leadership and direction to ACT staff in a period of organizational transition.
- Hire, train, mentor, evaluate, and create accountability measures for staff and volunteers while actively addressing their concerns in creating a safe work environment.
- Assess current technology resources and practices to ensure maximum efficiency and results.
- Assess current systems of communication, business policies, and operational practices with staff to explore and implement efficiencies and innovations in these areas.

Other key competencies of this role include:

Personal Accountability – The willingness to self-evaluate, learn from mistakes, take responsibility for personal actions and decisions, accept setbacks, look for ways to progress, and understand how obstacles impact results.

Diplomacy and Leadership – The capacity to listen to and understand different perspectives, handle difficult issues with sensitivity and respect, and communicate effectively with people across hierarchical and functional borders.

Resiliency – The recognition that criticism is an opportunity to improve, quickly recovering from adversity and accepting setbacks and looking for ways to progress and overcome setbacks and remaining optimistic in working through obstacles and challenges.

Flexibility - The ability to respond promptly to shifts in priorities and tasks with minimal resistance, as well as agility in accepting new ideas and approaches.

Experience and Qualifications

Seven + years of leadership experience in an innovative arts-based, cultural, educational, nonprofit organization is required. Experience in daily operations and management of a multi-venue public events facility is necessary. Experience with co-leadership (the MD and the AD are co-equals in the company, both reporting to the board of trustees), or a genuine desire to lead in that model will be important. A demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access are required, as well as experience navigating change and inspiring a high-achieving team of creative professionals and administrators. Experience in community relationship building is needed. The ideal candidate will possess exceptional interpersonal skills, creativity, and will be committed to collaboration. Proven results in fundraising and comprehensive contributed and earned revenue skills are highly desirable, along with a knowledge and passion for innovative technology. A broad range of life experience is welcome.

Not sure you meet 100% of our qualifications? Research shows that men apply for jobs when they fulfill an average of 60% of the criteria. Yet women and other people who are systematically marginalized tend only to apply if they meet every requirement. **If you believe that you could excel in this role, we encourage you to apply.**

We are dedicated to considering a broad array of candidates, including those with diverse workplace experiences and backgrounds in the performing arts or non-profit space. So, whether you're returning to work after a gap in employment, simply looking to transition, or taking the next step in your career path, we will be glad to have you on our radar.

Compensation

ACT offers competitive compensation, with a salary range expected between \$155,000 - 165,000 and a generous benefits package that includes health, dental, life, and short-term disability insurance; a 403(b)-retirement plan with matching contributions upon one year of employment; paid-time-off and holidays.

Application Instructions

The search for the Managing Director is being conducted on behalf of ACT by Tom O'Connor Consulting Group, a New York-based executive search and consulting firm specializing in the arts and culture industries. Cynthia Fuhrman, Vice President/Executive Search, is leading the search process, reporting to a search committee made up of members of the ACT Board of Trustees, Staff, and other community stakeholders.

Please use your cover letter to tell us about what you hope to bring to this role, and how your background and experience responds to the desired skills and qualities. To apply, visit the [online application](#) and submit your materials. Your cover letter should include relevant experience, including any direct experience you've had with similar roles and institutions. For best consideration, please apply by March 28. No phone calls, please.

ACT commits to creating a more racially representative and equitable community so that we may continue to build bridges between diverse members of our community through high-quality programming.