



3415 Sweet Drive
Lafayette, California 94549
530-792-1114
www.venue.tech.com

Professional Theatre Management

...A Public-Private Partnership

When facing the challenges of developing a truly professional approach to theatre management, many communities have begun exploring the concept of private facility management. Clients of VenueTech Management Group have been excited to discover that this option does not have to result in the loss of the “community feel” of the theatre or the focus of programming on the needs of local residents. VenueTech approaches the private management of performing arts theatres as a “partnership” between the ownership of the venue (typically local government or a nonprofit organization), the local residents (the theatre’s patrons), the users of the theatre and VenueTech’s entire staff.

To accomplish a successful partnership, the business and operating plan of the theatre is developed by balancing the creative, financial and community goals of our client. Critical to the successful operation of our projects is the unique interactive approach VenueTech incorporates with all of its clients. This approach allows us to integrate our professional knowledge and extensive experience with our client’s understanding of local community values to provide both critical information for community decision making and also a roadmap to move the project forward.

Balancing Creative, Community and Financial Visions

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing both government and non-profit organizations is finding the appropriate balance between the creative and community service goals and the need for fiscally responsible management. Community leaders in “people oriented” agencies still recognize their role as serving the community. However, realistic financial limitations now require the implementation of responsible business practices and reasonable fiscal commitments. Our team is particularly sensitive to this issue. VenueTech’s President/CEO not only has a Masters Degree in Public Administration, but also twenty-five years of professional work in the public sector and an extensive background in the community decision making process.

Filtering Through Practical, Hands-on, Industry Knowledge

By remaining active in the management of public arts and entertainment facilities, VenueTech is at the forefront of industry trends and responsive to its continuously changing nature. VenueTech has developed a successful planning and management philosophy which recognizes the need for carefully balancing the financial and creative elements of a community-based organization by utilizing traditional “private sector” tools. This has been consistently demonstrated by our team through the development and management of entertainment facilities that have achieved both creative and financial success while also supporting the needs of diverse communities.

Fund Development Expertise

Our team recognizes the critical nature of economic decisions as well as the difficult financial position of many local government and nonprofit organizations. To address these issues, VenueTech often integrates a fund development element into the operation of community theatres. VenueTech is a licensed Fundraising Counsel by the State of California and has assisted our clients in raising tens of millions of dollars to build, restore and operate arts facilities. In addition to theatre management, VenueTech has extensive experience consulting and managing capital campaigns for arts projects, including historic restoration, performing arts theatres, museums, arts centers, multi-generational community centers and other public assembly facilities.

As a core belief of our firm, the VenueTech team believes that local government can not be the “sole provider” of financial resources to build and operate arts facilities. Building partnership in the community is a central theme of our management approach.

Programming Model

Ultimately to find community success, the management team must develop an appropriate programming strategy to excite the patrons, builds the audience base and increases potential donor support. Perhaps equally important, when performing arts venues are subsidized by public funds, community leaders want to know that the money has been well spent. In short, they want to know that the money spent created valuable services for the residents.

Performing arts facilities generally elect to operate under one of three business philosophies: **"Community Rental Facility"** (four walls), **"Producing Facility"** or **"Presenting Facility"**.

As a *community rental facility*, a theatre is used by individual promoters, businesses and organizations to promote their events and the facility receives a rental fee for the usage time. While there is little risk in operating a facility under this philosophy, there is also minimal financial potential. Virtually all four wall facilities operate with a financial deficit that requires subsidy from other sources of income. In addition, organizations using this management approach cannot effectively take an active leadership role in the cultural development of their community because the facility's creative decisions are made by outside businesses and organizations.

A *producing facility* is generally in the business of staging theatrical, musical and other creative events. This approach to facility management provides an extremely effective way to stimulate the collective creative expression of the local arts community. However, it is unlikely that productions with profit potential can be consistently produced in small and mid-sized markets. Producing facilities generally require financial backing from investors in each production. A major weakness of this approach is the amount of stage time required to produce each show. This time not only increases operating expenses but also reduces the number of dates available in the venue for other community events and profitable endeavors, greatly under-utilizing the buildings potential.

As a *presenting facility*, a theatre is used for the presentation of live entertainment and cultural events typically featuring touring artists. In contrast to the rental of the facility by promoters, a presenting theatre promotes these events on their own. The risk, as well as the potential profit, is assumed by the organization. By presenting commercially viable shows presenting theatres have the greatest potential of decreasing the level of operating subsidy. More importantly, organizations using the “presenting theatre” business model have an enhanced ability to positively impact their creative and programming missions.

VenueTech has extensive experience in all areas of programming and currently produces more than 500 events each year. The firm has relationships (many spanning decades) with the nations leading talent agencies. In addition, VenueTech specializes in working with local community groups to ensure that events run smoothly, professionally and cost effectively. Our management staff is trained to mentor new theatre clients to help them learn the “ins and outs” of the event production business.

VenueTech’s Team Produces Events in the Following Areas:

- Dance including ballet, jazz, ethnic and modern
- Symphonic and chamber music
- Youth and family programming
- School programs including master classes for music and drama students
- Choral
- Opera
- Live theatre including musicals, drama and comedy
- Commercially popular headliner acts
- Jazz and big band music
- Comedy
- Culturally diverse and ethnic programming
- Speakers, workshops, conferences, etc.
- Cinema arts (classic, art and foreign film)
- Fundraising activities for regional organizations
- Business and civic meetings, workshops and seminars
- Programs that integrate performing and visual arts
- Programs oriented toward education

VenueTech Management Group, LLC – Resource Paper

“PROFESSIONAL THEATRE MANAGEMENT”

©2006 VenueTech Management Group, LLC

While it is difficult to project the specific artists that may be presented at any one performing arts facility, VenueTech has extensive experience producing professional shows. Just some of the artists produced by VenueTech, for our clients, in the past have included:

Tommy Tune	Dennis Miller	Sinbad
Al Jarreau	Anne Murray	Smothers Brothers
Lou Rawls	Debbie Reynolds	The Rippingtons
Keiko Matsui	Tower of Power	Crystal Gayle
The Temptations	America	Joan Rivers
David Sandborn	Boys Choir or Harlem	Dave Brubeck
Gordon Lightfoot	Taj Majal	Ladysmith Black Mambazo
Ottmar Liebert	Dave Koz	Diane Schuur
Joan Baez	Kenny Loggins	Bela Fleck
Ann-Margret	Jackson Browne	Natalie Cole
Hiroshima	Glen Yarbrough	Leahey
Glenn Miller Orchestra	Vienna Boys Choir	Gallagher
Preservation Hall Jazz Band	Kingston Trio	Duke Ellington Orchestra
Gladys Knight	Kenny Rogers	Steve Miller Band
Julio Iglesias	Olivia Newton John	Jewel
Third Eye Blind	Doobie Brothers	Beach Boys
Hall and Oates	Lyle Lovett	Johnny Mathis
Wayne Newton	Debbie Reynolds	Chris Isaak
Ray Charles	Howie Mandell	Seven Brides for Seven Brothers