



NEW COLLEAGUE TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

Whether you are an artist, artist manager, presenter or other performing arts professional, you'll find the Western Arts Alliance conference is a place to discover and explore the creative energy and boundless talent our community has to offer. Like all of us, you have much to share and even more to learn. Your active participation is key to your success on both fronts. The Commons, hospitality events, Professional Development Institute, Showcasing, forums and workshops all provide endless opportunity to educate, inform, entertain and, most importantly, to connect with your colleagues at WAA.

This "starter kit" of tips will help you prepare for and participate at the conference. Knowing about your colleagues, as well as what you need to do, will help provide a stronger environment for success for everyone.

THE COMMONS

The Commons is truly a place for sharing and learning. Explore, ask questions, provide information and discover what you and your colleagues have to offer. There is a lot happening in the Commons, but limited time. Because your initial meeting may be quick, it is a good idea for both presenters and artists/managers to practice the main points they would like to communicate to one another.

If you're an artist/manager, you may want to write a short paragraph that describes the uniqueness of your artist, art form, the repertoire, the general technical requirements, the dates you have available, possible block booking or routing for the year ahead, residency activities, and your artist fees. You may also want to put potential presenters in touch with presenters with whom you've worked with in the past.

If you're a presenter, you should discuss the dates you have available, what your audience is, your venue's specifications, what your artist fee ranges are, and when you plan to make a decision on a particular date. You might want to ask artists/managers who you are considering for references of other presenters who are similar to you in size and audience type who have booked a particular artist in the past.

A FEW BASIC RULES:

All WAA members can benefit from a few basic rules of courtesy and respect:

- Be an active listener
- Ask questions
- Be considerate of your colleagues' time constraints
- Respect conversations in progress
- Assume your colleagues want to help you succeed

Say "hello" And....Take Notes! This is probably one of the most important things you can do at a conference. When you get back to your office, you'll want to know the names and organizations of everyone you talked to. You'll also want to know technical requirements/venue specifications, fee ranges, available dates, etc.

For everyone, it's a great idea to study the list of exhibitors and the maps of the Commons included in the conference program to get a feel for the lay of the land. Exhibitors, introduce yourselves to your neighboring exhibitors. Many of WAA's artists/managers have been attending the conference for 25 years or more. They can serve as a tremendous resource for you. Some self-managed artists use the Commons as a place to look for potential representation. Agents are happy to talk with artists when they aren't otherwise engaged in a conversation with a presenter. Please note: Exhibitors, when you leave the Commons each day, be sure to take business cards with you to give to presenters you meet during other conference activities. You will not be able to access your booth during non-accessible hours.

TIPS FOR THE COMMONS:

- Study the list of exhibitors and the hall map. Presenters should make a plan for your time each day in the exhibit hall. Exhibitors might want to greet and network with other exhibitors.
- Presenters, schedule time to visit the booths of artists who may be future considerations.
- Presenters, schedule a good amount of time to visit the booths of artists whose work you are not familiar with.
- Respect that it is neither easy to say nor hear “no”. The art of doing so gracefully is an important skill for presenters and exhibitors alike and a crucial one to develop. If a presenter is not serious about booking an artist, saying “no” is the only appropriate response. This allows both parties to move on and maximize their valuable time at the conference.
- Presenters, take materials like press-kits and business cards. If you would like materials mailed to you, make that clear to the artist/manager. Only take recorded materials like CD’s and videos from artists/managers who are under serious consideration. These publicity materials are not meant for personal collections and are expensive for artist/managers to reproduce.

TIPS FOR EXHIBITORS, ARTISTS, AND MANAGERS

(and what Presenters should know about their colleagues)

Materials: Bring materials to distribute including business cards and press kits. Presenters will often ask you to mail your press kits to them after the conference. Although this will add some cost to you, it also presents another opportunity for you to connect with a presenter after the conference. Suggested press kit inclusions are:

- A business card
- Description of the artists
- Photos or flyers that include quality photos
- Technical requirements
- Information on residency/ workshop possibilities
- A listing of previous bookings
- A roster of artists under your management

Audio/Video Equipment: Many artist representatives use audio and video within their booth so presenters can view or listen to the artists’ work. Per the WAA booth contract, headphones are required with all audio-visual equipment. You can either bring your own equipment or rent it through WAA’s A/V vendor. You will also need to arrange for an electrical hook-up in your exhibit space. Information outlining audio visual and electrical set-up will be included in the exhibitor kit.

Exhibit Décor: Some artists/managers decorate their booth that reflects their personal style and flair. Some collect business cards and do a prize drawing after the conference.

Directory/Website Browsing: It’s a great idea to browse WAA’s membership directory in advance of the conference to find presenters who might be a good match for you or your artists. The directory is also online at the WAA website. Visit the websites of several presenters who you think might be a good fit. Not all venues are right for your artist.

TIPS FOR PRESENTERS

(and what exhibitors, artists, and managers should know about their colleagues)

Prepare Information: Don't assume an exhibitor will know of your venue or organization. You will find exhibitors can best help you when you share information about your venue, audience tastes, budget, needs for residency activities, housing for artists, and your presenting schedule. One of the best ways to do this is to bring copies of your season brochure to be displayed outside the Commons and to share with artists/managers in the Commons.

Not all artists can work in your venue(s). Technical information is critical in helping artists/managers know the strengths and limitations of your space and who often have terrific suggestions for adaptability and creative use. Some of the basics are:

- Width, depth and height of stage flooring
- Wing space
- Number of lighting instruments
- Sound and other available technical equipment (clear com systems, etc)
- Type of stage (thrust, proscenium, etc...)
- Dimensions of apron and/or pit (if any)
- Color of curtains
- Dance floor
- Number of legs and borders
- Number of seats in the hall
- Number of dressing rooms/ green rooms/ showers
- Loading dock and parking

Directory/Website Browsing: Go through the Membership Directory or artists/managers websites prior to the conference and try to find artists/managers who would be a good fit for your venue and season. It is helpful to prepare a list of artists you would like to know about. Bring the WAA directory with you to the conference or browse the directory on-line at the WAA website now.

Prepare a list, but think broadly: It is helpful to prepare a list of artists you know you are interested in presenting. This will help focus your time in the Commons. At the same time, prepare a list of artists/managers you want more information about. But be sure to schedule a portion of your time in the Commons to just explore and visit exhibitors you are not familiar with. (If you are new to the field, this may be all of them!) You will be surprised what you might learn.

Business Cards: Bring a healthy stack of business cards with you to the conference to give to artists/managers with whom you hope to do work.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dress Code

Dress is business casual. Be sure to bring comfortable shoes as you'll be walking and standing for long periods of time. Dress in layers to accommodate the weather as well as the air conditioned exhibit halls and meeting rooms of the hotel.

Showcasing

During the conference there are many opportunities to experience showcase performances by WAA artists and artist groups. This is your chance to be entertained, to discover new talent and to establish relationships with your colleagues by having post showcase discussions. Be sure to allow time in your schedule to accommodate showcase participation.

WAA's showcasing committee and jury panel have selected 12 artists from more than 120 applicants to present to members during the Juried Showcasing sessions.

WAA members organize Affiliated Showcases that occur at various venues in the evenings. Please consult your Conference and Showcasing Guide for dates and times of all showcases.

HOSPITALITY EVENTS

WAA's social events are the best opportunity to meet other colleagues and make connections that will last for the entire conference and conferences to come.

Tuesday, September 1

3:00 pm - 4:15 pm

New Colleagues Orientation: You'll connect with other new colleagues as well as seasoned professionals in the field. Table leaders will guide informal discussions on where to start, and how to maximize your conference experience. The orientation is on Tuesday at 3pm.

4:30 pm - 5:15 pm

Keynote Address – Robert Egger

Robert Egger has a passion for advocacy and an iron-willed determination to fundamentally change the nonprofit sector in the United States. WAA is excited to bring this community activist to Phoenix, as he will energize attendees with ideas on how to bring meaningful change to our communities.

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Opening Reception: Join us as we kick off the conference on Tuesday at 7 pm.

Dine-Arounds: At the conference, there will be sign-up lists on the bulletin board at registration for various local restaurants in town. Dine-Arounds are a "dutch-treat" affair, but are another great way to meet new people. There will be Dine-Arounds on Tuesday and Wednesday, please check the conference schedule for details at www.westarts.org.

Thursday, September 3

11:30 am - 1:15 pm

Annual Awards Luncheon: The luncheon is a great opportunity for networking and learning about the award recipients.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Professional Development Classes: These in-depth, paid classes occur during the two days prior to the main conference activities and are a valuable opportunity for honing your professional skills in a variety of areas.

In-Conference Forums and Workshops: WAA's forums and workshops are complimentary to conference attendees. The wide-range of topics are catered to suit just about everyone in the business.

WAA Membership Meeting: This is your opportunity to give feedback to the WAA staff and board of directors on the organization and the annual conference. As a new colleague it is your chance to tell us about your experience.

NEED YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED NOW?

We hope you will always feel comfortable calling the WAA office at (503) 274-4729. WAA staff is always happy to help.



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CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

WAA abides by the National Association of Performing Arts Managers and Agents' (NAPAMA) Guidelines for Ethical Behavior. Please review the guidelines specific to behavior at a booking conference or convention below. Conference attendees are expected to report any infractions of these guidelines or other inappropriate behavior to the WAA staff.

NAPAMA Guidelines for Ethical Behavior

V. Conventions

Crowded convention schedules and problematic management-presenter ratios create a condition of scarcity as far as contacts with presenters are concerned, a situation which offers possibilities for abuse and offense. The best method of avoiding these is for all concerned to observe the basic rules of politeness and decency which pertain everywhere in civilized life, and in particular, to respect a notion of territoriality in the exhibit hall. Manager colleagues have purchased exhibit space and, with it, a zone of influence which should extend only as far as necessary for two or three people to stand and converse comfortably.

1. Exhibits should not impinge on neighboring spaces nor should they block or obstruct the view of another booth.
2. Audio-visual equipment should be oriented so as to be viewed from within the exhibit space, not from outside.
3. The aisles should be considered a neutral space in which presenters may circulate freely without being accosted.
4. Presenters should never be approached in front of another manager's space.
5. Conversations among presenters or presenters and other managers should not be interrupted.
6. At educational sessions, showcases and hospitality events, presenters should not be importuned with sales-oriented conversations, which distract from the business at hand. Infractions of these guidelines make the exhibit hall a distasteful experience for many presenters. Adherence to them helps assure that all concerned will be better able to profit from what is an expensive investment in our artists' careers.

Although there is not a written guideline for presenter members, some basic rules of courtesy and respect should be applied during the conference.

- Wait your turn to speak with an exhibitor. Interrupting a conversation in progress is difficult for an artist/manager to negotiate. If you can't wait, leave a note with your business card.
- Be clear, direct and honest. If you want to enter a booth and prefer to browse without conversation, say so. If you want more information, ask. And, by the way, it is okay to admit that you don't know something. Use that as an opportunity to learn and become more knowledgeable.
- Approach artists/managers as a learning and sharing opportunity, rather than as a buying and selling transaction. Your conversation will reflect collegiality, not competition.
- Time may not allow you to visit all exhibitors, but nevertheless, say hello as you pass by. Your friendly greeting will be appreciated.



WESTERN ARTS ALLIANCE GLOSSARY

Accessible Hours: The hours that the exhibit hall is unlocked and delegates may access the space, exhibitors are not required to staff their exhibits and are encouraged to participate in other conference activities.

Open Hours: The official business hours for the exhibit hall, exhibitors are expected to staff their exhibits during these times.

The Commons: WAA's exhibit hall, meeting and event spaces combined.

Membership Directory: Detailed contact information for all of WAA's artist/manager, presenter, consultant vendor, and associate members. The printed directory is published once a year in Spring. The online version is live and constantly updated. The online directory can only be accessed by current WAA members.

Participants List: A listing of all WAA conference registrants and their contact information. The online registration links directly to the member profile of each delegate and can be viewed on the WAA website under the "Exhibitors" tab. A printed copy is distributed to all participants at the annual conference. An updated PDF is posted after the conference on the member home page of the WAA website.

Primary Contact: The main contact person of a member organization who receives all WAA's communication.

Secondary Member: The secondary contact person of a member organization; additional staff who receive listings in WAA directories and all communications, free with organizational memberships.

Western Ways: WAA's newsletter distributed three times a year includes conference updates, important deadlines, and information on what is happening with the organization and in the presenting and touring fields.

Member Types

Artist/Manager (Exhibitor): Performing artist of any discipline and/or a person who seeks performance opportunities for a performing artist or artist group.

Associate: Member who is affiliated with a local, state or national arts agency, or any other arts service organization, and who does not present. Associates are eligible to exhibit.

Consultant / Vendor: Member who offers their commercial services to the performing arts field, i.e. organizational consultants, travel agents, ticket service organizations. Consultants and Vendors are eligible to exhibit.

Presenter: (Non-Exhibitor): Individual who facilitates performing arts events, i.e. programming agent for a theatre space, and/or performing arts festival. At the conference, someone who is looking for performing artists or artist groups to include in their program, festival or season.