Pelican Bomb: Planning for Growth (An Internship Academic Report)

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Pelican Bomb: Planning for Growth

An Internship Academic Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Arts Administration

by

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B.A. Kenyon College, 2006
December 2015
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Abstract

This report documents my experience as a graduate arts administration intern at Pelican Bomb, a New Orleans contemporary visual art nonprofit. The internship was completed over the course of seven (7) months from January to July 2015. Starting with an overview of the organizational structure, mission, and programming, this report analyzes the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The report concludes with best practices and recommendations with a focus on board development, strategic planning, staff retention, and membership. The insights provided in this report are designed to enhance Pelican Bomb’s operations as it prepares for organizational growth.

Keywords:
Arts administration, visual art, nonprofit, board development, strategic planning, staff retention, membership
Chapter 1: Overview

Introduction

Between 2003 and 2013, the United States saw a 35% increase in the number of 501(c)(3) Public Charities. In the state of Louisiana, the number of 501(c)(3) public charities increased by 24.2% in the same amount of time.\(^1\) The city of New Orleans, however, has seen a decrease of 32.1% in the number of nonprofit visual arts organizations and since 2010.\(^2\) Nascent nonprofit visual arts organizations face unprecedented competition for resources within the nonprofit sector, as well as a growing number of competitors in the burgeoning sector of social venture. Visual arts nonprofit start-ups deal with a number of internal and external challenges as they grow out of the incubation stage into a mature organization. In order to compete for funds, qualified staff, dedicated board leadership, and stewardship from constituents an organization must exhibit extraordinary resilience, vision and proficiency in administration, operations, management, and financial practices.

This report documents my graduate internship at Pelican Bomb, a contemporary visual art organization founded in New Orleans in 2011. By taking an in-depth look at the organization’s mission, history, programs, and management structure, this report aims to provide insights and recommendations to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the organization.

Mission & History

Curator Miranda Lash, programmer Rami Sharkey, designer Erik Kiesewetter, and editor Cameron Shaw launched Pelican Bomb in February 2011 as an online publication for arts writing and criticism. The publication’s goals centered around a desire to provide the New Orleans artistic community with a source for thoughtful, informed, and diverse responses to their work by connecting their practice to regional, national, and global movements in contemporary art.

Pelican Bomb grew from an editorial project into an organization when co-founder Cameron Shaw met Amanda Brinkman while working at the now defunct Contemporary Visual Arts Association of New Orleans (CVAANO). Together, they began to develop the framework that serves as the foundation for a number of Pelican Bomb’s current programs. Over time, Pelican Bomb’s programming has expanded to respond to the evolving needs of the New Orleans art community.

While continuing to develop the online publication, Shaw and Brinkman grew Pelican Bomb’s programming to include a variety of platforms to engage and connect the local art community with national and global voices in critical discourse and draw attention to New Orleans as a regional contemporary arts hub. The current mission reads as follows:

Pelican Bomb is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing New Orleans’ cultural capital and sustainability by cultivating multiple platforms for contemporary art discourse, engagement, and education. Through a range of public programs including publications, exhibitions, panels, and curatorial projects, Pelican Bomb seeks to make New Orleans a viable and supportive place for artists to live and work.³


Pelican Bomb’s programs were created as a response to feedback from the local artist community. The organization’s directors found that artists, in particular, expressed a need for consistent and reliable critical discourse to thrive in their practice. Over time, Pelican Bomb’s programming expanded to connect artist to collectors and to provide artists with a number of opportunities for recognition and professional development. Pelican Bomb’s organizational goals are:

1. To create places for artist to exhibit their work
2. To connect artists to people to buy their work
3. To engage writers and thinkers in dialogue with artists’ work to promote it and propel it forward

In response to the dearth of competitive compensation for arts workers, Pelican Bomb’s secondary goals include a commitment to pay artists, writers, and arts professionals fairly. Between its founding in 2011 and March 2015, Pelican Bomb paid about $125,000 to artists, arts workers, and contributors to the online publication.

Organizational Structure

Pelican Bomb is a small organization currently comprised of two (2) full-time co-directors and two (2) part-time staff members. Cameron Shaw, the founding editor, acts as the Executive Director. Shaw graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in Art History and has gone on to write and edit for publications like the Los Angeles Review of Books, BOMB Magazine, and Art Forum. Her writing can be found in books about

nationally and internationally acclaimed artists such as Chris Ofili, Marcel Dzama, and Keith Duncan. In August 2015, Shaw was commissioned to write an article reviewing the exhibitions commemorating the ten-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina at the New Orleans Museum of Art and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art.

Shaw has over ten (10) years of professional experience in contemporary art, including a position as the research manager at David Zwirner Gallery in New York. Shaw was a recipient of the 2009 Creative Capital/Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for Short Form Writing and was selected to participate in the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) Leadership Institute in 2013.

Amanda Brinkman, Pelican Bomb’s co-director and Creative and Operations Director, received a B.A. in Art History from the University of California, San Diego and earned her M.A. in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her professional experience in contemporary art includes positions at the International House of Blues Foundation in San Diego, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, and the Sullivan Galleries in Chicago.

Maggie McWilliams joined the Pelican Bomb staff in July 2015 on a part-time basis. A recent graduate of Tulane University, she now acts as the Project Coordinator. McWilliams oversees the management of Pelican’s Bomb’s Collections Management contract with the Arts Council of New Orleans. Her main responsibilities are the documentation and installation of works in the City of New Orleans’ Percent for Art collection.
I completed the M.A. Graduate Internship from January to July 2015. Although Pelican Bomb hosted some interns prior to my arrival, this was the organization’s first time creating a job description for a structured academic internship. My core responsibilities were in the areas of social media, programmatic support, and office management.

In September 2014, Pelican Bomb hired Rosemary Reyes to serve as the full-time Editorial Manager. Reyes resigned during the course of my internship.

Pelican Bomb’s board of directors is comprised of five (5) members. Kevin Wilkins, the Board President, has extensive experience in business development and management. After winning the “Downtown NOLA Arts Business Pitch” at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week in 2013, Pelican Bomb applied to the competitive entrepreneurial fellowship offered through Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation’s Social Venture Accelerator program and was one of fifteen participants selected. The year-long fellowship paired Pelican Bomb with Wilkins, who served as the Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Chief Operating Officer at The Idea Village at the time. Over the course of the fellowship, Wilkins mentored the directors in building the organization’s effectiveness, sustainability, and growth. When Pelican Bomb’s fellowship ended, Wilkins joined Pelican Bomb as the President of the Board of Directors.

The remaining board members are Speed Art Museum curator Miranda Lash; New Orleans-based artist Willie Birch; attorney and Executive Director of the Louisiana Civil Justice Center Jonathan Rhodes; and Camille Hill-Prewitt, the Residency Coordinator of Tulane University’s A Studio in the Woods.
While Pelican Bomb’s board members bring expertise in business management, law, and arts management, it is a priority of Pelican Bomb’s to expand, diversify, and activate its board in the coming year. Most of the current board members fulfill the roles a board executive committee and finance committee might serve, but the board lacks a formal committee structure to support the other operations of an effective board. This report will make recommendations to clarify board roles, create a board committee structure, and present important considerations for the board recruitment process.

**Organizational Chart**

- **Board of Directors**
  - Kevin Wilkins, President
  - Miranda Lash, Vice President
  - Jonathan Rhodes, Treasurer
  - Camille Hill-Prewitt, Secretary
  - Willie Birch, Officer

- **Executive Director & Founding Editor**
  - Cameron Shaw

- **Creative & Operations Director**
  - Amanda Brinkman

- **MA in Arts Administration Intern**
  - Noni Clemens

- **Project Coordinator**
  - Maggie McWilliams

**Legal Status**

Pelican Bomb is in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status. The organization is currently a project of the New Orleans Local Network of the National Performance
Network (NPN), which serves as its fiscal sponsor. The benefits of this agreement are numerous for Pelican Bomb. NPN provides technical assistance in the areas of fiscal management, legal compliance, and effective organizational planning. As a part of the local network of seventeen (17) organizations, Pelican Bomb can participate in local and national partner meetings to take part in an exchange of ideas, industry practices and foster potential collaborations and partnerships with peer organizations.

In return for the support NPN provides, Pelican Bomb agrees to pay their fiscal sponsor a 5% fee for all funds received for Pelican Bomb. Additionally, there is 2% fee for any contributions under $500 from an individual. To assure projects are managed properly, NPN withholds a small percentage of funds raised by Pelican Bomb until all final reporting requirements are met.

Fiscal sponsorship provides small organizations with assistance and the necessary structures to implement programming. For this reason, many small nonprofits seek fiscal sponsorship while they apply for tax-exempt status, form their board of directors, and build their capacity.

**Budget**

Pelican Bomb has been successful in securing grants and developing earned income streams to sustain the organization. Because I was asked not to share any financial documents by the directors of Pelican Bomb, the following information is based on my knowledge of the budget from discussion, observation, proposals, and grant reports.
Pelican Bomb’s current annual budget is approximately $300,000. The largest source of income is foundation grants, which account for 42% of all revenue. In FY15, Pelican Bomb received grants from the Lambent Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the Keller Family Foundation.

Earned Income makes up 30% of total funding. Earned income is raised through art sales from the Community Supported Art (CSA) programs and a Collections Management contract with the Arts Council of New Orleans.

In-kind donations account for 25% of the annual budget. Most of the donations are legal, accounting, and organizational consulting services. Additionally, Pelican Bomb receives in-kind donations in the form exhibition spaces for the Roving Exhibitions program and event production.
Government grants are 3% of the budget. In FY15, Pelican Bomb received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for its Critic-in-Residence program as well as a programming grant from the Arts Council of New Orleans.

Individual giving accounts for less than 1% of the total budget. Most individual donations were received during the Give NOLA Day campaign in May 2015. Developing a strategy to increase individual giving is one of the organization’s priorities in the coming year.

**Expenses**

Pelican Bomb’s annual expenses for FY15 were approximately $280,000. About 40% of Pelican Bomb’s FY15 expenses went to pay for staff salaries and benefits and contract personnel. Programming expenses, which include artist fees, materials, travel, and marketing expenses for exhibition and curatorial projects account for 36% of the
total expenses. Legal and accounting services, organizational consultants, and other professional fees make up 18% of expenses. The remaining 6% is spent on administrative expenses, including fiscal agent fees, professional development, printing & reproduction, and office rental costs.

**Development**

With no formal development department or dedicated staff position, most of the fundraising, grant writing, and donor cultivation falls on the shoulders of the co-directors. Most of the grants Pelican Bomb currently receives come from national foundations and the organization is cultivating relationships with foundations based in the New Orleans region. The organization has a small individual donor base. In NPN’s 2014-2015 Annual Report & Directory, Pelican Bomb only has two individual donors listed. In my time at Pelican Bomb, the only individual giving campaign I observed was around GiveNOLADay 2015, which raised about $2,500.

The directors have been successful at raising funds through grants, but clearly need to create a position or delegate some of the tasks associated with development to other staff or contracted personnel to effectively pursue new grant prospects, diversify the current grant sources, and cultivate relationships with individual donors.

**Marketing**

There is currently no overall marketing plan or communications strategy in place. As is the case with development, Pelican Bomb does not have a dedicated marketing
staff position. Amanda Brinkman, the Creative & Operations Director, handles most of the organizations’ marketing needs with some support from public relations contractors and part-time contracted personnel. The organization currently markets its events and programming through Social Media, press releases, marketing collateral (mostly in the form of postcards), and some paid advertising in local publications like The Gambit.

Most marketing efforts are focused on social media, which was a core responsibility of my internship. Pelican Bomb is currently active on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. As might be expected from a visual art organization, Pelican Bomb has the most followers on Instagram, where it shares content about the organization’s programs and highlights relevant content from local, regional and international artists, exhibitions, publications, and cultural institutions.

**Programs**

**Art Review**

The Art Review publishes reviews, essays, interviews, critical writing, and artist projects that highlight and examine the contemporary art practices of artists working in Louisiana, with an emphasis on the burgeoning art community of New Orleans. Contributors to the Art Review come from a variety of backgrounds and locations, ensuring that a diversity of voices are represented in the discourse surrounding local, regional, and international contemporary art practices.

The Art Review’s primary goal is to engage critical voices in dialogue with artists to provide informed and reliable feedback that spurs creative and professional
development. In this way, Pelican Bomb increases exposure to the practices of local and regional artists to wider audiences outside of New Orleans.

Since its inception, Pelican Bomb’s Art Review has commissioned more than eighty (80) contributors, who are compensated with a monthly budget of $2,000. Since July 2014, it has featured over seventy-five (75) artists, and reviewed over forty-five (45) exhibitions.

**Community Supported Art (CSA)**

Pelican Bomb launched the Community Supported Art (CSA) program in 2012. The Community Supported Art (CSA) program works with emerging and mid-career artists working in New Orleans to create limited edition works of art that are sold at an affordable price point. The commissions are designed to cover the cost of materials and artist studio rental for approximately two (2) months. Commissioned artists are selected to appeal to a wide variety of patrons, and the CSA connects artists with the city’s seasoned and novice collectors alike.

Occupying a place in a national movement to create sustainable models to highlight and serve local artist communities, Pelican Bomb’s Community Supported Art (CSA) program was one of six (6) Community Supported Art (CSA) and Flat File programs around the country selected to participate in “Locally Sourced,” an exhibition at American University’s Museum at the Katzen Arts Center in Washington, D.C. from January 24 to March 15 2015.
The Community Supported Art (CSA) program acts as a sustainable source of earned income, generating over $55,000 in sales from artwork commissioned by seventeen (17) local artists. Ten (10) pop-up exhibitions at events or displays in stores have served to drive sales and introduce the work of artists to audiences that may not habitually engage with New Orleans’ visual art community.

**Roving Exhibitions**

The Roving Exhibitions program was launched in 2013, after Pelican Bomb won the “Downtown NOLA Arts Business Pitch” contest at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. Roving Exhibitions are planned around a theme of historical and cultural relevance to New Orleans and produced in underutilized, transitional, or unconventional spaces.

The activation of these spaces draws attention to otherwise unused spaces, provides local and regional artists with a place to exhibit their work, and engages visitors with contemporary art practices. Because of the nature of the spaces utilized, community involvement and strategic partnerships, Pelican Bomb is able to create professional-quality shows at the fraction of the cost of a typical museum exhibition.

Through its Roving Exhibitions program, Pelican Bomb has hosted over a dozen free public programs that engage audiences in film screenings, panels, storytelling, and intergenerational activities. To date, Roving Exhibitions have attracted close to 2,000 visitors.
Critic-in-Residence Program

In 2015, Pelican Bomb partnered with the Atlanta-based arts nonprofit Burnaway to develop and fundraise for a dual city Critic-in-Residence program with the goal of connecting diverse critical voices with the local communities of artists and arts professionals. With seed funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Pelican Bomb and Burnaway were able to issue a national call to curators and arts writers to launch the program in New Orleans and Atlanta.

Selected through an open application process, visiting critics are fully funded (travel, lodging, and stipend) on their one-week visits to New Orleans and Atlanta. In its pilot year, the Critic-in-Residence program selected three (3) critics from a pool of national applicants to conduct studio visits, give lectures, lead workshops, and connect with local artists and curators in one-on-one meetings.

In New Orleans alone, the inaugural cohort of visiting critics conducted over forty (40) studio visits, walk-throughs at galleries and museums, and site visits with local visual arts organizations. In a survey of participating New Orleans artists and art professionals, 100% of respondents stated they would meet with or host critics-in-residence again.

Platforms Fund

In 2015, Pelican Bomb entered a collaboration with Press Street and Ashe Cultural Center to launch a regional re-granting program in New Orleans. Supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation, the Platforms Fund awards a total of $30,000 in funding to artist-led projects. In the program’s first year, nine grants ranging from $1,500 to $5,000
were awarded to artist-driven projects in New Orleans and neighboring parishes based on an ambitious approach to creativity, collaboration, and experimentation.
Chapter 2: Duties of the Internship

For this internship, Pelican Bomb developed a job description to capture the core responsibilities of the M.A. in Arts Administration intern.\(^5\) I completed the 480 hours required of the internship from January to July 2015, working 18-22 hours each week. Most weeks, those hours were distributed over two (2) full workdays (Monday and Wednesday) and a half-day on Fridays. When events and programs required additional or weekend hours, I adjusted my schedule accordingly.

Although Cameron Shaw, the Executive Director, was designed as my supervisor during the internship, I reported to the co-director, Amanda Brinkman with equal frequency. I regularly attended staff meetings, which I eventually started scheduling, planning, and leading on a weekly basis over the course of the internship. After the conclusion of the internship in July 2015, I continued to work for Pelican Bomb on a part-time basis.

**Social Media**

When my internship began, Pelican Bomb was lacking the capacity to activate its Social Media accounts to market its program and events, engage the public and potential donors, and drive sales of its Community Support Art (CSA) program. Consequently, part of the internship required the curation of relevant content to drive website traffic and the implementation and maintenance of a Social Media posting program.

\(^5\) Appendix A
calendar for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Since the internship was completed on a part-time basis, Social Media posts were scheduled in advance through Hootsuite. Additionally, I compiled periodic snapshots of social media engagement to inform growth strategies.

**Programmatic Support**

The duties associated with programmatic support largely involved tasks associated with the Critic-in-Residence program and Roving Exhibitions. For the Critic-in-Residence program, I was expected to draft itineraries for three (3) visiting critics that included travel, studio visits with local artists, visits to museums and cultural institutions, one-on-one meetings with curators, directors, and other arts professionals, public lectures, and writing workshops. After the Executive Director approved itineraries, I scheduled all commitments for the duration of the program (January – February 2015). At the conclusion of the program, I was required to document and log all expenses for accounting and grant reporting purposes.

The internship also required project management and event coordination for the Roving Exhibitions program. During the “Foodways” Exhibition, which was on view at the New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute (NOCHI) from October 25 2014 – January 25 2015, my duties included the coordination of a series of seven (7) public events. Events included panels, film screenings, and children’s programs. Other duties included the documentation of several pieces on loan from the High Museum of Art (Atlanta) and private collections before their return.
For the Roving Exhibition “(De)Tangled: A Living Salon,” which was on view at the UNO St. Claude Gallery from May 9 to June 7 2015, I was tasked with canvassing local barbershops and hair salons with postcards to reach audiences outside of the existing local art community. I was also responsible for drafting and placing an ad for the exhibition in The Gambit’s May e-blast.⁶

For the Roving Exhibition “What Lifts You,” an interactive mural that was unveiled on Whitney White Linen Night on August 1, 2015, my duties included project management for the production of the White Linen unveiling and supporting programming at the Contemporary Arts Center.

**Office Management & other duties**

During the internship, I was charged with a number of miscellaneous cross-departmental tasks. Tasks related to development included the collection and presentation of metrics to demonstrate impact in all areas of programming to existing and potential donors.⁷ Tasks related to office management included the collection and submission of staff timesheets to the fiscal sponsor, the National Performance Network (NPN); the preparation of invoices and reimbursement for the Critic-in-Residence program; and the purchase of office and programmatic supplies. In addition, I was tasked with scheduling, planning, and leading the agenda for staff meetings to ensure that all staff, particularly part-time staff, were kept informed of all programs, project updates and organizational activities.

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⁶ Appendix B
⁷ Appendix C
Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis

SWOT

Innovative and high quality programming
Sustainable earned income revenue stream
Success in securing foundation grants
Cross-sector partnerships

Turnover in staff & contract personnel
Small individual donor base
Small & inconsistently active board
Strategic Planning & operational structures

Growing local arts and culture community
New audiences
New personnel can increase capacity
Increase visibility & supporter base with membership program

Lack of visibility
Competitive funding landscape
Potential conflicts with for-profit endeavor
**Strengths**

**Innovative and High Quality Programming**

Pelican Bomb has a wide variety of programs for an organization of its size and age. Designed to engage a wide variety of constituents including arts writers, artists, arts appreciators, and collectors; Pelican Bomb’s programs have been recognized for their innovative approaches and responses to the New Orleans art community’s needs.

In 2013, Pelican Bomb won the “Downtown NOLA Arts Business Pitch” at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week with their pitch for the Roving Exhibitions program. In 2013-14, they were selected for a yearlong fellowship with Propeller: A Source for Social Innovation Accelerator program. In 2015, the Community Supported Art (CSA) program was selected to participate in a national exhibition of Community Supported Art and Flat File programs at American University’s Museum at the Katzen Arts Center in Washington, D.C. Pelican Bomb’s Roving Exhibitions program and its online publication, Art Review, have also garnered praise from media outlets like the Huffington Post and ARTNews.

Pelican Bomb’s programs reflect a commitment to innovative artist-centered approaches that are responsive and adaptive to the needs of the New Orleans artistic community. These traits have attracted the support of major funders like the Joan Mitchell and the Lambent Foundations, who support projects that are artist-driven, collaborative, and intentionally diverse. According to a recent article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, a number of funders like the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and a number of prominent funders of the arts are seeking to
fund projects that may have a higher risk of failure, but show potential to have a transformative effect on communities.\textsuperscript{8} The traits that make Pelican Bomb’s programming appealing to current funders may attract potential funders looking for experimental, innovative, diverse, adaptive, and artist-centered initiatives.

**Sustainable Earned Income Revenue Stream**

Pelican Bomb’s earned income revenue accounts for roughly 30% of its funding. The organization has been successful in generating this revenue stream through art sales from the Community Supported Art (CSA) program and a Collections Management contract with the Arts Council of New Orleans.

In the last couple of decades, nonprofit organizations have sought out ways to generate earned income to escape total financial reliance on funders. Earned Income is essential for the sustainability of the organization when other funding sources are not as stable or diversified, as is the case with Pelican Bomb. Whereas grants usually restrict the use of funds to a specific use or purpose, earned income is especially valuable to nonprofits because it is unrestricted income that the organization can use as they wish, free of any the constraints that can come from donors.

Earned income can also make an organization “appear more disciplined, innovative, and businesslike to stakeholders.”\textsuperscript{9} Therefore, if an organization develops a


significant source of revenue from earned income, as is the case with Pelican Bomb, it may be attractive to current and prospective funders. Current funders will gain confidence in the organization’s ability to sustain its operations in the event that a major funding source disappears. Similarly, potential funders may be more attracted to organizations whose funding models include earned income because it indicates the nonprofit’s potential for sustainability.

**Success in securing foundation grants**

Revenue from independent foundation grants accounts for over 40% of Pelican Bomb’s budget. Pelican Bomb’s success in raising funds from foundation grants can be attributed in large part to the directors’ persistence in relation-building with current funders and the organization’s alignment with funding priorities.

When I spoke with Cameron Shaw, the Executive Director, about Pelican’s Bomb relationship to current foundation grantors, she explained that many of the current funders had rejected proposals in previous years. By continuing to pursue funds over the course of two (2) or three (3) years, the organization started to develop a relationship with foundation officers; was able to fine-tune its proposals; and demonstrated persistence and tenacity, traits funders respond to favorably.

One of the factors responsible for Pelican Bomb’s success in securing grants from foundation lies in the ability to find funders whose priorities align closely with Pelican Bomb’s programmatic design. By creating programs that are artist-centered and address the intersection of art, culture, and social justice, the organization was able to
appeal to funders with similar priorities such as the Joan Mitchell Foundation and the Lambent Foundation.

As Pelican Bomb continues to grow, it will need to continue to cultivate relationships with current foundation grantors while focusing on developing other streams of revenue. Because the funding climate is influenced by uncontrollable factors such as the economy and shifting public attitudes, it is essential that Pelican Bomb avoid becoming dependent on any one source of revenue and continues to develop mixed income streams.\(^\text{10}\)

**Cross-sector partnerships**

Pelican Bomb has developed several cross-sector partnerships for its programming, especially the Roving Exhibitions program. Through partnerships with developers, local firms, and entities like the Downtown Development District, Pelican Bomb is able to mount exhibitions in under-utilized spaces free-of-charge. Partnerships with organizations like the New Orleans Film Society (NOFS) and the Southern Food & Beverage Museum have allowed Pelican Bomb to expand program offerings to include panels, film screenings, and cultural tours. Because of its strategic partnerships, Pelican Bomb is able to present exhibitions and curatorial projects to the public for a fraction of the cost of a typical museum or gallery exhibition.

A strong partnership with other agencies can help an organization deepen its engagement with communities; gain access to a greater scope of expertise, credibility,

and funding.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, many nonprofit arts organizations have formed collaborations that increase impact, create sustainability, and pool collective resources in order to meet constantly evolving challenges of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

**Weaknesses**

**Turnover in staff and contract personnel**

Pelican Bomb employs a number of part-time staff members and contracted personnel to ensure program delivery and to provide operational support. However, it has struggled to retain personnel for a significant amount of time. Most staff and contracted personnel have left within a year of joining the organization. As the organization continues to grow, it is essential that the organization develop the necessary operational structures, compensation & benefit packages, and professional development to retain a qualified and dedicated staff.

Nonprofit organizations face many challenges when it comes to retaining staff. Across the country, nonprofits are experiencing a higher rate of turnover than other sector. Research shows that “nonprofits have higher employee turnover than government and business; 3.1 percent, compared to 2.7 percent in the business sector and 1 percent in the government sector.”\textsuperscript{12} Employee turnover should be of particular concern to nonprofit organizations like Pelican Bomb because of its impact on the


overall effectiveness of the organization and the associated direct (i.e. temporary workers, advertising, separation costs) and indirect costs (i.e. loss of productivity, overburdening of the staff, decreased ability to provide programming). In the case of an organization like Pelican Bomb with a limited budget and resources, keeping these costs low is preferable.

As a result of its successful fundraising efforts, Pelican Bomb is now poised to increase capacity to execute the ambitious long-term goals and projects that attract support from funders. The turnover I observed in my time at Pelican Bomb resulted in loss of institutional memory, files, and contacts. For an organization that lacks formal structures to capture the scope of its staff workload and processes, these losses present setbacks in delivering programming, completing administrative tasks, and ultimately achieving organizational goals.

**Small Individual Donor Base**

In NPN’s 2014-2015 Annual Report, Pelican Bomb only has two (2) individual donors listed. While the organization was able to attract more individual donors on GiveNOLADay 2015, it is imperative that they grow their individual donor base aggressively to diversify their revenue streams. 

Cultivating a strong base of individual donors is beneficial to arts organization in a number of ways. Unlike foundations and corporate donors, individual donors are loyal and tend to give even during economic downturns. Individual donors constitute the biggest pool of potential funders and are responsible for over sixty percent of the
donations made to the arts each year in the United States. Pelican Bomb is missing an opportunity to increase unrestricted income and diversify its funding mix through a larger individual donor base. The cultivation of individual donors and supporters will also increase visibility and build stewardship among Pelican Bomb’s constituents as supporters take on the role of ambassadors to the organization.

**Small & Inconsistently Activated Board Members**

It is one of the organization’s priorities to focus on board development in the coming year. Although some board members are active in providing in-kind services, the board is not organized and activated consistently. The board is currently comprised of just five (5) members and currently lacks a formal structure. Now that Pelican Bomb has applied for 501(c)(3) status, it seeks to grow its board, as well as formalize its structure and meetings.

Since the board provides the oversight and foresight for the organization, its effectiveness and engagement is directly related to the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. As Pelican Bomb continues to grow, so should its board’s size, scope of engagement, and infrastructure.

During the GiveNOLADay 2015 campaign, only two (2) of its board members donated and attempted to recruit additional donors. As a result of the board’s inactivity, the co-directors take on the entirety of tasks related to fundraising, developing policies, and fiscal oversight. Considering the limited capacity of the organization, this presents

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a considerable burden on the co-directors, which competes with their ability to tend to staff, planning, and promotion of the organization. With an active board, Pelican Bomb could enhance its fundraising efforts and receive the necessary support to develop the policies it needs to grow capacity and organizational effectiveness.

**Strategic Planning & Operational Structures**

Research indicates that “organizations that build robust infrastructures—which includes […] financial systems, skills training, fundraising processes, and other essential overhead—are more likely to succeed than those that do not.”¹⁴ Pelican Bomb lacks some of the infrastructure needed to clarify and articulate its goals, strategies, resources, and governance effectively.

Since the strategic planning document contains the organization’s vision and goals for the next few years, it is an important tool to clarify the organization’s purpose, strategies, and operations. Strategic planning is integral to an organization’s operations because it sets the vision, direction, and sets the goals that will be measured to determine how effective the organization is in carrying out its mission. It can benefit the directors and staff by providing a footprint for operational procedures, help guide day-to-day decisions, and aid in evaluating current operational or programming approaches.

Pelican Bomb has yet to develop a formal strategic plan and some of the organizational structures Pelican Bomb lacks for board governance and the management of employees. While Pelican Bomb does provide job description to staff

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and contract personnel, it lacks clearly defined personnel policies and procedures, hiring processes, and staff performance reviews.

During my internship at Pelican Bomb, I repeatedly observed instances in which the lack of planning negatively impacted the work of the staff. This lack of planning sometimes resulted in delayed and unfocused implementation of a program since the staff had to learn everything about the project under significant time constraints. This perceived lack of direction proved detrimental to staff morale, productivity, and engagement at times. Without a clear snapshot of long-term goals and vision, staff felt insecure in their roles and the organization’s ability to adjust to changing environments without a guiding set of principles.

In addition to its impact in guiding internal operations, an up-to-date strategic plan may be favored and, in some cases, required from funders. The strategic plan indicates to funders that the organization’s leadership is intentional about its works and has “taken the trouble to engage its constituencies meaningfully in the broader vision and strategy.”\(^\text{15}\) For Pelican Bomb, a strategic plan has the potential to be a powerful internal tool to maximize organizational effectiveness, communicate the organization’s vision to funders, and mediate low staff morale.

**Opportunities**

**Growing local arts and culture community & new audiences**

Pelican Bomb’s programming is focused on creating professional development opportunities for artists and to engage audiences and collectors with their work. Pelican Bomb audiences include artists, collectors, and arts and culture consumers. According to the Mayor’s 2014 Creative Economy snapshot, the cultural industry has surpassed the healthcare, private education, and retail sectors in the number of people it employs in New Orleans. Of the 34,000 New Orleans residents working the creative industry, a significant number work in design and visual arts and, therefore, represent important target segments. Overall, the city’s population has grown by approximately 12% in the last five (5) years. Predictions are for continued growth over the next decade.

Steady population growth in the city of New Orleans and growth in the arts and culture sector create the potential for Pelican Bomb to grow its constituent base of artists, collectors, and supporters. Identifying and appealing to new audiences presents Pelican Bomb with the opportunity to expand programming and attract more resources. As the organization’s target segments grow, so will its potential base of supporters, donors, and collaborators.

**New Personnel can increase capacity**

Pelican Bomb is growing and poised to expand its full-time and part-time staff beyond the co-directors’ positions. As the scope and scale of programming continues to grow, the organization will need to recruit and retain qualified employees to carry out the

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mission. As previously mentioned, improved operational structures, a current strategic plan, and clearly defined policies to hire, train, and delegate to employees will be critical to shepherd the organization’s growth and effectiveness.

Successful organizations, especially nonprofits, recognize that the engagement of its staff is integral to organizational success. In preparation for staff growth and a programmatic expansion, Pelican Bomb should develop a strategy for hiring, training, and retaining staff. In hiring people whose skills, experience, and motivation align with the mission, the senior leadership can be unburdened of day-to-day operations and focus on visioning, planning, and fundraising for the future. Now that it has the budget to support more staff members, Pelican Bomb can add personnel to streamline current operations and plan strategically to meet organizational goals.

Increase outreach and visibility with membership program

Membership programs can be beneficial for nonprofit organizations in a number of ways. They engage supporters outside of the organizations to advocate for the organization and convert those advocates into loyal donors. Pelican Bomb is currently developing a membership program for collectors and artists. A membership program could be a good way to identify and develop relationships with potential individual donors and engage Pelican Bomb’s constituency in ways that foster stewardship and loyalty to the organization. This report will offer best practices and recommendations for building and maintaining a membership program.
Threats

Lack of visibility

As a fairly new organization, Pelican Bomb struggles to gain the visibility and public awareness of the organization’s breath of programming. Although Pelican Bomb is recognized in the contemporary art community in New Orleans, it is not well known to many within and outside the arts and culture sector. Visibility and public trust are precious to nonprofits, because their reputation is key in attracting constituents, partners, and donors.

As Pelican Bomb continues to grow, it’s likely that it will come under increased scrutiny. Because nonprofits operate for the public good, the organization’s deployment of resources and accountability to stakeholders will become increasingly important. Loss of interest or loss of public trust can be a serious threat to a nonprofit organization. Transparency and visibility are the first steps to creating stewardship, attracting new donors, cultivating loyal advocates, and establishing sustainability.

Competitive Funding Landscape

In the current funding climate, nonprofit organizations are in steep competition with each other, as well as social ventures and for-profit businesses to find funding. As government grants continue to dwindle, nonprofits find themselves in competition to raise funds from foundations and individuals who receive a very high volume of proposals and appeals. Pelican Bomb has established some stability in revenue with its earned income revenue stream and success in securing independent foundation grants,
but it must continue to cultivate relationships with funders and increase its donor base to diversify long-term funding sources.

    It is predicted that nonprofit organizations will continue to feel a “resource squeeze” in the near future. In the New Orleans funding ecosystem, the philanthropic community is fairly small. Local granting agencies distribute a significant number of grants, but they tend to be small. For this reason, a diverse funding mix is integral to withstand funding insecurities.

**Potential Conflicts with for-profit endeavor**

    The directors of Pelican Bomb also run PB Activation, a for-profit art consulting business. There must be great care to keep the operations of the nonprofit arm, Pelican Bomb, from those of the for-profit endeavor, PB Activation. Special attention should be paid to the allocation of staff time, keeping finances separate, and addressing any conflict of interest. Failing to do so may have very serious implications, including the loss of tax-exempt status. Additionally, if artists and funders perceive that a conflict of interest arises between the two organizations, it may be damaging to Pelican Bomb’s reputation.

    Although the directors have exhibited great care not to mix the operations and staff time of the nonprofit entity with the for-profit business, their time is divided between the two businesses. As Pelican Bomb begins to grow, they will need to find strategies to ensure an equitable and sustainable investment of time in both endeavors.
Chapter 4: Best Practices

Introduction

Considering Pelican Bomb was founded less than five (5) years ago, its variety and breadth of programming is ambitious and impressive. As an organization that is emerging from the incubation phase of its life cycle to the growing phase, it is now confronted with a number of programmatic and operational challenges. By looking at the best practices of industry leaders and the available research, Pelican Bomb can glean some of the information needed to design and adapt its operations, monitor trends, and identify competitors, collaborators, and supporters in the visual arts landscape.

In this chapter, I will present best practices supported by research and the practices of leading and peer arts organizations. I’ll pay special attention to some of the topics addressed in the SWOT analysis and will shape the recommendations included in the last chapter of this report:

- Board Composition
- Strategic Planning
- Staff Retention
- Engaging new supporters with a membership program

Best Practices will serve to contextualize some of the weaknesses and opportunities the organization faces. These practices will serve as the basis for manageable and realistic recommendations.
Board Composition

The Board of Directors is the central governing body of a nonprofit organization. In addition to their mandated responsibilities to the organization, board members develop policies, lead and approve financial & strategic planning, develop resources, and serve as the organization’s ambassadors in the community.

One of the most important considerations Pelican Bomb should keep in mind when preparing to recruit board members is board composition. Board composition is an important factor in determining organizational effectiveness. A board with a diversity of experience, capital, and networks is integral to cultivating relationships with stakeholders, supporters, and partners.

In Leading Roles: 50 Questions Every Arts Board Should Ask, noted arts administrator Michael Kaiser reports that one of the questions most frequently asked in the board development process relates to the number of board members an organization should have. Generally, it is preferable to have a large board since more members results in more reach, resource development, and visibility. However, it is always preferable to have a small board of highly engaged members than a large board of inactive members.

When considering board composition, Pelican Bomb should continue to look beyond the number of board seats to fill and focus on the diversity of resources and networks board members offer. Even with a small board, the organization has been successful in achieving diversity of industry representatives among its members. When

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members of the board represent more industries, it creates a wider field of prospective sponsors since members of a particular sector tend to surround themselves with the same potential donors. Balancing board composition across a number of industries is wise since an organization could be vulnerable if that field is hit with hard times, as the financial world was in 2008, and it has a high concentration of board members from that sector.19

Board diversity takes many shapes. Whether it represents a diversity of professions, genders, ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, the board should aim to employ the necessary skill sets and reflect the constituents it serves.

As a case study for board composition at a similar organization in a Southern arts and culture hub, I looked at one of Pelican Bomb’s partners, Burnaway in Atlanta. The organizations share a similar mission, structure, program, and budget. Burnaway partners with Pelican Bomb in developing and implementing the Critic-in-Residence program. A look at Burnaway’s 990 reveals that its board of directors is comprised of fourteen (14) members who represent diverse professional backgrounds in the industries of media/communications, education, law, banking, and arts and culture management industries. BURNAWAY’s board composition reflects a diversity of professions and access to a variety of industry networks and resources that prove to be beneficial for a small arts organization. Additionally, Burnaway’s board includes three (3) Atlanta-based practicing visual artists who serve on an advisory board.

An advisory board can be a powerful way for an organization to tap into communities of potential supporters and audiences. Like Burnaway, the Kennedy

19 Kaiser, 25.
Center in Washington, D.C. has an advisory board made up of community members who live and work in a wide variety of the city’s neighborhoods. The members of this community advisory board don’t make large financial donations to the organization, but they provide valuable information the Kennedy Center can use to better market its programming.\(^{20}\)

Burnaway’s board includes their Executive Director as an *ex-officio* member. Some organizations elect to have the Executive Director on the board because it strengthens the working relationship between board members and the organization’s leadership. On the other hand, some believe that having the executive on the board makes it difficult for the board to evaluate the Executive Director’s performance objectively.\(^{21}\) Whether or not the Executive Directors occupies a seat on the board of directors, their roles are symbiotic. The executive’s insights into the daily operations and staffing of the organizations are crucial to the decisions made by the board. The decision to have the Executive Director on the board of directors should be made carefully and be based on the needs, capacity, and culture of the organization.

**Strategic Planning**

One of the challenges I faced in during my internship was access to information about upcoming projects and the long-term goals and direction of the organization. That ambiguity, coupled with an occasional lack of clarity about timelines and my own

\(^{20}\) Kaiser, 25.
responsibilities sometimes made it difficult to execute tasks. Some of Pelican Bomb’s problems with internal communication could be mediated by developing, revising, and sharing their strategic plan. Since a strategic plan is essentially a road map to the goals and vision of the organization, it has the potential to be a useful tool in structuring operations and informing staff of the strategies, vision, and programming on the horizon. By including staff in project planning and organizational goal setting, the organization may see an improvement in employee engagement and efficiency.

The nonprofit strategic planning process is adapted from a common practice in the business world. In for-profit businesses, strategic plans determine how much time and money are allocated to sell that firm’s product or service. Similarly, for nonprofits, strategic planning determines the allocation of staff time and how the organization’s resources are leveraged.\(^2\) The benefits of strategic planning for a nonprofit, however, are much greater in scope than just deciding how to invest human resources and capital. Despite its value as an essential decision-making tool, many nonprofits don’t engage in a formal strategic planning process or operate with plans that no longer reflect the organizational priorities. Because the process can be lengthy and expensive (if consultants are hired), some nonprofits underestimate the importance a comprehensive strategic plan plays in managing finances, time, and human resources. Strategic planning is crucial in the way the organization determines and presents who they are and guides new directions in programming. In essence, the strategic plan


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provides the framework that determines how the organization responds to all internal and external threats and opportunities.

In a nationwide survey of arts and culture nonprofit leaders conducted by the Nonprofit Finance Fund in 2014, the number one strategy employed by respondents to meet financial challenges was to conduct long-term strategic planning. These findings make it clear that strategic planning is integral to an organization’s sustainability since it requires the organization’s policymakers to come to consensus on the organization’s direction, vision, program implementation, and evaluation of its goals.

While the process to draft a strategic plan is different for every organization, there are some benchmarks every strategic plan should include to function as a useful and adaptable tool. In their 2014-2019 strategic plan, the San Francisco Arts Commission illustrates these key concepts in a manner that is clear and concise, yet comprehensive. The plan begins with key findings from an assessment that involved the review of organizational documents, interviews with key stakeholders and staff, and a benchmark study of five other Bay area arts organization before any strategies were developed. An organizational analysis, as well as a scan for external opportunities and threats helps an organization determine if it has the factors needed to address any internal or external issues.

The next two (2) sections of the San Francisco Arts Commission strategic plan begin with a clear articulation of its vision, mission, and values, followed by the

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organizational goals and objectives over five (5) years. These goals and objectives clearly outline the resources, timeframe, and accountable staff members. Creating a system to monitor and track progress of the organization’s activities is crucial. Many plans are not fully realized because the necessary structure to ensure the goals are met is nonexistent.25

Finally, a strategic plan should be bookended with a financial plan. This plan should forecast the impact of these strategies on the organizational budget.26 A financial plan will help determine whether these strategies will yield enough revenue to maintain operations over the course of the strategic plan’s implementation.

**Staff Retention**

In my time at Pelican Bomb, several part-time staffers and one full-time employee left the organization. Some of the departures were unavoidable—one staff member left to pursue a higher education degree. However, the other departures seem to have been caused by dissatisfaction with working conditions. In the case of the full-time employee, she expressed that a lack of proper onboarding and training, a loosely defined position, unsatisfactory pay, and the absence of opportunities to telecommute were some of the factors that led to her resignation. Although the leadership of Pelican Bomb lacks the capacity and resources to improve some of the conditions that lead to employee satisfaction, there are a number of solutions at their disposable to reduce staff turnover.

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25 Rumohr, 8.
26 Kaiser, 89.
A dedicated and experienced staff to carry out the mission is key to the success and longevity of an arts organization, yet staff retention remains one of the biggest human resources challenges in the sector. High staff turnover has several negative implications for an arts organization. First, it can affect the quality of programming provided to constituents. Without the expertise and institutional memory necessary to meet the programmatic goals, an organization can harm its effectiveness and reputation. Secondly, the cost to replace a staff vacancy can be significant. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the potential cost of a departing hire can be between 75% to 150% of the position’s salary.\(^{27}\) Since capacity and expenses are pervasive concerns in the industry, staff retention is an important, yet overlooked issue organizations must attempt to resolve.

In 2013, arts and culture nonprofits invested less in hiring, giving raises, and professional development than the greater nonprofit sector.\(^ {28}\) Research also shows that despite a yearly turnover rate that approaches 20%, only 17% on nonprofit organizations have formal retention strategies.\(^ {29}\) While the greatest barrier to retention continues to be the inability to pay competitively, there are a number of strategies nonprofits can employ to address the sector’s retention problem.

The procedures to retain employees begin before the first candidate is interviewed. To optimize staff capacity and organizational resources, an organization

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should have formal strategies in place for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding employees. A focused staffing plan will increase the chance that staff with the right qualifications, dedication to the mission, and organizational fit are hired, trained, and retained properly.

Once an employee has been hired and becomes a high-performing member of the team, an organization should always strive to provide the best salary and benefits it can. However, if compensation is still not sufficient, there are a number of non-monetary benefits that can help keep staff engaged, motivated, and committed. The pay rate Pelican Bomb provides staff members is commensurate with the rest of the industry, but no group insurance policy, telecommuting, and non-monetary benefits are currently in place.

While nonprofits still lag behind the private sector in allowing telecommuting, they are instituting virtual work policies in an unprecedented way. Out of the nonprofits polled for NonprofitHR’s 2014 Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey, 40% now have some telecommuting policy in place. Out of those organizations, 65% report that having flexible work policies have positively impacted their recruitment and retention efforts.\(^3\)

Some nonprofits approach turnover rates even more aggressively. In an attempt to reduce turnover among a young staff, made up 84% of workers under the age of 30, the CEO of the nonprofit Do Something, Nancy Lublin, came up with an innovative job employment structure that involves creating a “tour of duty” for new employees. As she explains it, Lublin gives every new employee a choice between one of two paths at her organization. The first mirrors the traditional employment structure. An employee ideally commits to a long-time tenure at the organization and the hope is that she will be

\(^3\) 2014 Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey, 3.
provided with enough opportunities to grow and advance that she will want to spend a significant part of her career at the organization.

The other option is experimental and somewhat unconventional. Dubbed a “tour of duty,” this option lays out an agreement between the employee and Do Something that she will complete clearly defined goal in a short period of time (usually two years). Lublin found that employees who chose this option respected their agreed-upon commitment and exhibited high levels of engagement and investment in the organization. While some employees remained at the organization beyond their “tour of duty,” some moved on to other institutions. However, the organization was aware of the departure well in advance to plan for the transition intentionally and strategically. The success of the strategy, Lublin ultimately found, lies in its flexibility, transparency, and customization.

While it may not be possible for organizations to offer such unconventional employment structures or even pay its employees competitively, there are a number of strategies and organizational structures Pelican Bomb can use to mediate the impact of employee turnover.

**Engaging new supporters with a membership program**

A successful membership program brings an organization a wealth of benefits including credibility, influence, volunteers, and financial stability. Usually, the longer a

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member is invested in an organization, the larger her contributions grow over time. Members are much more likely to give than a foundation or corporation and their giving is not as affected by the economic climate. Pelican Bomb has recently begun to think through different models to unroll a membership program for artists and collectors. To gather information on membership at a similarly sized arts organization, I looked at the membership structure offered by Fresh Arts.

Located in Houston, Fresh Arts supports the city’s artists, arts professionals, and small to mid-size arts organizations with programming that focuses on audience engagement, professional development for individuals and organizations, resource sharing, and event production. Like Pelican Bomb, Fresh Arts provides professional development opportunities and distinguishes itself as a connector between its local creative community, collectors, and audiences.

Fresh Arts offers tiered options for membership at the artist, patron, and organizational level. One of the compelling features of Fresh Arts’ patron membership page is that it explains what each membership level means to the organization. For instance, a contribution at the lowest patron membership level (Enthusiast) allows Fresh Arts to provide web resources like listings for professional opportunities free of charge to artists. The highest membership level (Devotee) funds one exhibition in their annual series. By matching the organization’s increased capacity to contribution levels, Fresh Arts provides a compelling incentive for members to join. Knowing how their money

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might be spent fosters a sense of trust in the organization and buy-in to the mission and vision from potential donors.

By creating multi-tiered membership options that cater to diverse audiences and constituents, Fresh Arts has developed a program that engages supporters and creates a revenue stream that brings in almost $6,000 annually. Since Pelican Bomb lacks an individual donor base, a membership program with a similar structure could serve to cultivate donors, build the organization’s reputation, and provide more opportunities to engage volunteers.
Chapter 5: Recommendations

Nonprofit organizations operate in a climate of intense competition for resources to implement programming and pursue their missions. As an organization that is just emerging out of its incubation period, Pelican Bomb is particularly susceptible to these challenges when it competes with other nonprofits with established reputation, longer track records, and sustained donor loyalty. As would be the case for any organizations of its size and capacity, Pelican Bomb lacks some of the organizational frameworks necessary for optimal organizational effectiveness. With that in mind, the recommendations included in this report are by no means exhaustive, but are designed to initiate the creation and implementation of some of these frameworks.

Recommendations are designed to be easily adaptable and manageable for Pelican Bomb to adopt now or in the near future.

**Determine Board Structure**

From what can be gleaned from research and the practices of peer organizations, it is clear that Pelican needs to expand its board to more than five (5) members to include members from a diversity of sectors that can contribute the necessary skills and support in fundraising the organization needs to grow and establish sustainability. Once new board members have been recruited and oriented, Pelican Bomb should consider forming a small advisory board that includes local artists,
collectors, and stakeholders to gather more information from its constituent communities.

It’s undeniable that several of Pelican Bomb’s board members contributed valuable resources to the organization in its infancy. However, the board is not currently properly activated and engaged. The board of directors is the main governing body of an arts nonprofit and it contributes a wide breath of skills, resources, and connections to that organization. Since Pelican Bomb is currently looking to grow its board and create clearly defined roles, it should begin by drafting an effective board structure and recruitment plan. We’ve already determined that diversity is key to board composition. A carefully constructed board structure will help leverage the skills and resources of the board members.

I recommend Pelican Bomb begin drafting a committee structure in the bylaws to focus the work of board members to strategically benefit the organization. A committee functions to handle a task that requires a certain set of expertise or to provide insight and advice to the rest of the board. According to Board Source, the most common standing committees are finance, development, and executive. However, a number of boards form ad hoc committees that are tasked with addressing pressing issues. The bylaws should allow for the formation of ad hoc committees.

Some boards operate under a “zero-based committee structure.” In an effort to prevent stagnation, weed out unnecessary committees, and foster leadership in all

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34 Board Source, *Do We Need Committees?*, 2013,
members, these boards reform their committees each year. This necessitates both flexibility and a robust evaluation process that analyzes the previous year’s accomplishments. Despite its clear advantages, this may not be the most suitable structure for all boards, as it requires that all board members be very adaptable, engaged, and self-reflexive. If Pelican Bomb choses this structure, they need to recruit for board members who exhibit these qualities.

However the board is structured, some policies must be in place to streamline the board’s activities. Effective committees have clear job descriptions and goals; select a committee chair to facilitate the involvement of all members; exhibit a sensitivity to deadlines and timelines; are aware of their responsibility to advise the rest of the board; and are engaged in a constant process of evaluating their work. The Executive Director and the board should work together to establish and monitor committees, as well as facilitate communication to the rest of the board.

As previously mentioned in Best Practices, some organizations invite nonvoting board members to serve in advisory roles. Members of these committees aren’t bound by the same liabilities and duties of care and they usually don’t make significant financial contributions to the organization. This can be an excellent way for Pelican Bomb to bring more expertise to the board without changing its structure. Additionally, it can serve as a recruitment tool to cultivate future board members.

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35 Do We Need Committees? 2.
36 Do We Need Committees? 2.
Develop a Strategic Planning Framework

Strategic planning doesn’t require that an organization hire an expensive consultant to lead the process, but it always requires a serious investment of time and thought from the board and senior leadership. We’ve looked at some of the elements a successful strategic planning documents should contain to clearly communicate the vision, direction, and goals of the organization. Ironically, strategic planning requires a “plan for planning” to reach consensus and successful implement the organization’s strategies. Before any planning begins, I recommend Pelican Bomb’s board agree on a framework that allows the discussion of strategies to unfold in a focused and organized manner.\(^{37}\) This framework will vary based on the needs and goals of the organization, but it should always be rooted in the mission. The mission provides the foundation for the organization’s goals and guides the way the organization measures its success in reaching its objectives.

A successful planning framework will help eliminate the typical pitfalls of the strategic planning process. As I outlined in the Best Practices chapter, an organization needs to collect data on its internal resources, strengths, and weaknesses as well as some information about its competitors, threats, and opportunities before it determines its strategies. A thoughtful and organized planning framework\(^ {38}\) will help focus the collection of data to provide insight into the factors needed to achieve the mission and strategic goals.

\(^{37}\) Kaiser, 88.
\(^{38}\) Appendix F
Since Pelican Bomb is ready to rotate current board positions and recruit new members, the strategic planning process is an opportunity to get “everyone on the same page” and activate new members. As new board positions are added, Pelican Bomb should recruit members who can contribute their expertise to strategic planning and serve on a committee that advises and monitors its progress.

The organization should consider sharing the strategic plan with new staff, board members, and the public. Since the document contains the organization’s vision and goals for the next few years, it is an important tool to clarify the organization’s purpose, strategies, and operations.

**Onboarding Plan**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the process of onboarding new employees is one of the most crucial yet overlooked aspects of hiring. We’ve seen that turnover is one of the most common challenges facing the nonprofit sector and the employees’ experience in the first few months in a new position is crucial to retention. In my time at Pelican Bomb, I observed the absence of a formal or informal onboarding process. As is typical of many arts nonprofits, the approach to onboarding seemed to be “sink or swim.” Throwing new employees into the fray with limited support or coaching is a common, yet damaging mistake.\(^3^9\) This approach not only increases the chance a new

\(^3^9\) David Lee, *Successful Onboarding: How To Get Your New Employees Started Off Right*, Human Nature@Work, 23 September 2015

hire will leave, but it also sends a message that the organization doesn't prioritize its employees.

Pelican Bomb’s costs associated with turnover are a financial liability and the effects have rippled to affect programming quality and organizational effectiveness. I recommend the organization protect itself from costly consequences by devising a hiring and retention strategy that includes an onboarding plan. High job satisfaction, organizational commitment, high levels of performance, and lower turnover are just some of the rewards of a well-executed onboarding program.\textsuperscript{40}

I recommend Pelican Bomb design its process to begin the minute an employee accepts a job offer. Before the first day, the employee should receive a packet (hardcopy or digital) to familiarize herself with Pelican Bomb. It should include the mission and vision statements, information and names of leadership and staff, strategic goals, branding documents, and any other relevant items. When it's time to welcome the new hire at Pelican Bomb on the first day, there should be an incremental learning process that includes compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. These are the building blocks of the onboarding process.\textsuperscript{41} When all four (4) of these areas are addressed, an organization not only has a better chance of retaining an employee, but the employee is also more likely to become a high-performing employee faster.

An orientation will usually cover some most of the compliance policies, but the onboarding process is still not complete after this stage. For the employee to gain more

\textsuperscript{40}Rumohr, 14.
clarity on her role and to embed herself in the organization’s culture, Pelican Bomb’s managers should invest time in developing the new hire by checking in at the thirty (30), sixty (60), and ninety (90) day mark. One of these meetings should be a formal assessment of the employee’s progress and allow for some time for the manager and the staff member to set reasonable performance goals together. Check-ins should also include time for the manager to formally or informally introduce the employee to the organizational culture. Pelican Bomb’s management should also take this opportunity to solicit feedback from the employee to address any problems and to continue to improve the hiring and onboarding process.

**Membership Program**

Pelican Bomb is in the initial stages of developing a membership program for artists and collectors. As previously discussed, a membership program can be very valuable to an organization in fostering long-time supporters and donors. Pelican Bomb has already completed one of the integral steps of the process by surveying a sample group of constituents and stakeholders. The survey included questions about the kinds of membership benefits potential members would like to see and the costs they are willing to pay for them.

Now that Pelican Bomb has gathered the necessary information to start developing the membership strategy and structure, it should plan ahead for all aspects of implementation. Before it confirms its membership levels and benefits, Pelican Bomb

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should establish a way to set up donor records in a database. To successfully raise money from donors, an organization must be committed to cultivating those relationships. Therefore, it’s crucial that Pelican Bomb plan for a system of record-keeping that allows them to organize very detailed information about each member interaction.

Once the membership is launched, it is important that Pelican Bomb monitor progress diligently. Because it’s imperative that membership programs both retain and recruit members simultaneously, the membership program must be evaluated frequently to prevent the loss of members and continue to engage more prospects. Research suggests that membership benchmarks should be set and evaluated at least every six (6) months.  

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43 Robinson, 45.
Pelican Bomb is a vibrant organization with a wide variety of innovative programs that serve the growing art community of New Orleans. Considering its size and capacity, Pelican Bomb has already established a strong track record with funders from private foundations. After four (4) years of building programming and capacity, the organization is poised to grow its staff, programming, and donor base. In order to successfully attain its goals, Pelican Bomb needs to build the infrastructure to support its expansion. By formalizing frameworks and processes for the board, strategic planning, staff recruitment and retention, and its membership program, the organization can build the foundations of a sustainable future.
Bibliography


Vita

Nobuhle Clemens was born in Harare, Zimbabwe and grew up in France and Philadelphia. After earning her B.A. in Art History from Kenyon College, Clemens worked in the nonprofit arts sector in Philadelphia for seven years. She moved to New Orleans in 2013 to enroll in the University of New Orleans’ M.A. in Arts Administration program. In New Orleans, she has continued to develop her professional experience, working as a project manager for the Arts Council of New Orleans and a graduate intern at Pelican Bomb.
Appendix A: UNO Master’s in Arts Administration Intern
Job Description

Noni Clemens: UNO Master’s in Arts Administration Intern

The Arts Administration Internship provides hands-on experience in a growing contemporary visual arts organization for fulfillment of graduate studies at the University of New Orleans. The Arts Administration Intern will focus on three key areas: social media implementation, programmatic support, and office management. The role includes incorporating learnings from graduate-level university courses to develop administrative systems, while also ensuring that all work aligns with Pelican Bomb’s mission.

Core Responsibilities (Social Media): estimated ~8 hours/week
- Curate relevant content to drive website traffic, generate sales, and engage donors
- Compile links and write posts related to Pelican Bomb programming
- Create calendar of social media posts for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- Proofread and edit all social media posts before publishing with the goal of providing accurate information before presenting to the executive team
- Upload content into Hootsuite with technical proficiency and accuracy
- Helps devise protocols for promotion of events and other activities
- Compile monthly report for executive team showing results from all social media strategies
- Monitor trends in social media tools, applications, channels, design, and strategy
- Analyze campaigns and translate anecdotal or qualitative data into recommendations and plans for revisiting social media campaigns

Core Responsibilities (Programmatic Support): estimated ~8 hours/week
- Recommend systems for implementation in organization, including human resources, project management, communication, and office management
- Oversee implementation of systems after executive team approval
- Oversee Critic-In-Residence scheduling, including itineraries, accommodations, appointments, reimbursements, and updating program budget to reflect each residency
- Oversee Platforms Fund email, respond to individual grantee questions in a timely manner, develop social media presence
- Oversees day of coordination planning for events
- Manages volunteers as needed
- Answers all volunteer and internship inquiries

Core Responsibilities (Business & Office Management): estimated ~4 hours/week on Fridays
- Inventory of office supplies (paper, pens, stamps, envelopes, etc.) making sure all materials are organized on a weekly basis
- Check PO Box and drop off outgoing mail, organize mail for recipients
- All invoices and check requests for internal reimbursements and CIR program
- Collect timesheets from all full-time staff members and submit to NPN by 2pm on Fridays (bi-weekly)
- Inventory of collective pantry, replenish as-needed (if Project Coordinator is not available)
• Special projects related to graduate level studies in business management and arts administration (i.e. reconciling exhibition shipment expenditures against loan agreements, creating check requests and invoices, registrarial oversight of shipment and return schedules, etc.)
Appendix B: (De)Tangled: A Living Salon Gambit proof for advertisement in The Gambit’s e-blast (May 2015)

BONO GO| Promotion

(De)Tangled: A Living Salon
2429 St. Claude Ave.
Opening reception with DJ Bouffant
Bouffant: Sat., May 9 | 6-9pm
Every Sat. & Sun. | 12 - 5pm
May 10 - June 7

Pelican Bomb presents "(De)Tangled," a multi-platform exhibition where you are the work of art. Have your hairstyle photographed, drawn live by a cartoonist & name your do. All drawings will be added to the wall to create a growing, living archive of current hairstyles in New Orleans.
Appendix C: Donor-Tailored Metrics

Pelican Bomb builds the infrastructure to support local artists and connect people with their work.

Since its founding in February 2011, Pelican Bomb has become the leading voice in contemporary art in New Orleans. Pelican Bomb is wholly dedicated to sustaining the visual arts in New Orleans and the artists who live here. Our programs build greater awareness of contemporary art in the city, create professional development opportunities for artists, and make artists’ practices more accessible to audiences.

### PROGRAMS
- Art Review
- Critic-in-Residence Program
- Roving Exhibitions
- Community Supported Art (CSA)

### IMPACT
- $75,000+ paid to artists & arts workers
- $50,000+ paid to Art Review contributors
- 33 artists exhibited
- ~ 4,000 visitors to website each month

### THE PELICAN BOMB TEAM
- Cameron Shaw  
  Executive Director and Founding Editor
- Amanda Brinkman  
  Creative and Operations Director
- Rosemary Reyes  
  Editorial and Development Manager

### Cross-sector & cross-industry partners include:
- New Orleans Culinary & Hospitality Institute
- Southern Food & Beverage Museum
- Wisznia | Architecture+Development
- Burnaway (Atlanta)
- Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation
- Dinner Lab
- New Orleans Film Society (NOFS)
The Platforms Fund is a collaborative effort of Press Street, Ashé Cultural Art Center, and Pelican Bomb to provide support for the development and presentation of a diverse array of artist-driven projects that are ambitious, accessible, and experimental in nature. The Platforms Fund seeks to emphasize New Orleans' historical characteristics of creativity, collaboration, and resiliency, while pushing the boundaries of where community engagement and the dissemination of creative ideas can intersect. Grants ranging from $1,500 to $5,000 were distributed to nine artist-led projects in 2015.

The Platforms Fund is part of a growing national network of regional re-granting programs supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation.
Press for Art Review


“A thoroughly amusing contemporary-art tale that strikes me as pregnant with meaning about… something: Houston artist Zachary Moser decides to use his Creative Capital grant to become a shrimp fisherman as a multi-pronged performance/artwork; he ends up just becoming a shrimp fisherman.”

CRITIC-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

With the Critic-in-Residence program, Pelican Bomb hosts arts writers in New Orleans for one-week stays, which include artist studio visits, as well as museum, gallery, and private collection tours.

15 Studio visits conducted
20 New Orleans galleries and museums visited
6 Site visits to New Orleans arts organizations
36 New Orleans artists, curators, writers & arts Professionals engaged
85 Total Attendance at Lectures
4 Writing workshops offered to high school students & Art Review contributors
100% of participants surveyed would meet with or host critics

“Pelican Bomb’s art review is the only venue in New Orleans I feel seriously supports discussion of art not only in terms of its aesthetic merits but also its place in—and impact on—the broader community. It is an indispensable resource and an exemplar to which arts communities in every mid-sized American city should pay heed.”

— Nate Martin, writer

ART REVIEW

Sharing our stories. Each week, Pelican Bomb brings you exhibition reviews, great features, intelligent interviews, and more.

80+ contributors since February 2011
~ $2,000 is the monthly budget for contributors
75+ artists featured in Art Review since July 2014
45+ exhibitions featured since July 2014
25+ artists with full features or reviews since July 2014

“My experience as a critic in residence with Pelican Bomb was amazing. This small organization has clearly had an enormous impact on the cultural landscape of New Orleans and I was deeply impressed by the thoughtful and nuanced insight that they had on a famously unique art community. Pelican Bomb has developed relationships with a diverse range of cultural workers and institutions and I felt privileged to learn from them and with them through the task of developing a heightened level of local discourse.”

— Noah Simblist, Critic-in-Residence December 2014
ROVING EXHIBITIONS

Pelican Bomb’s creative thematic exhibitions feature local artists while exploring the intersection of New Orleans social history and contemporary art. Because roving exhibitions are hosted in underutilized spaces and encourage community involvement, Pelican Bomb is able to create professional-quality exhibitions at a fraction of the cost of a typical museum exhibition.

813 visitors to “Foodways”  
(October 25, 2014 - January 25, 2015)

700 visitors to MovieHouse NOLA (November 8, 2013 - February 8, 2014)

11 events open to the public*  
Foodways: 7  
MovieHouseNOLA: 4

* ALL events are free (or donation-based) & open to the public

23 artists exhibited  
Foodways: 14

Foodways photo by Dale Gunnoe
Press for Foodways


“One of the highlights of New Orleans’ ongoing biennial "Prospect.3: Notes for Now," is "Foodways," a pop-up, multimedia exhibition curated by local arts blog and community organizers Pelican Bomb. The exhibition explores the many ways food has honored unique heritages and stories throughout American history, particularly in a place as diverse -- and spicy -- as New Orleans.”

“Playful and profound, a real visual buffet, "Foodways" tickles the senses and warms the soul just like a perfectly prepared home-cooked meal. The small show is one of the gems of P.3, truly a must-see for foodies, NOLA natives and anyone who's ever craved fried chicken.”

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED ART (CSA)

Pelican Bomb works with the city’s most exciting artists to create limited edition works of art that are made available to the public for just $80. Whether you're a seasoned art collector or just starting your collection, the Community Supported Art program is a unique opportunity to affordably access high-quality, limited edition works made exclusively for us by New Orleans-based artists.

17 artists commissioned
$55,000+ in sales
10 CSA pop-up exhibitions, events or displays in stores

“Pelican Bomb has been an incredible source of support and guidance for me as an artist. My work has received exposure all over the country as a result of their outreach to art enthusiasts, collectors, and arts organizations.”

— Artemis Antippas, Pelican Bomb CSA
Appendix D: San Francisco Art Commission Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (Abridged)
introduction
ABOUT THE SFAC STRATEGIC PLAN

It is our great pleasure to share with you our 2014-2019 Strategic Plan—the most thorough and comprehensive plan that the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) has undertaken in its eighty-year history.

The agency began 2012 with new leadership at both the staff and Commission levels. The Commission hired a new Director of Cultural Affairs, Tom DeCaigny, and elected a new President, JD Beltran. As a new leadership team, we recognized an opportunity to assess and reexamine the SFAC’s vision, mission and values as well as to establish shared goals that will guide the agency over the next five years. In examining deeply and critically how the SFAC serves the City and County of San Francisco, the year-long process involved: (1) choosing the most qualified team to assist the agency in authoring the plan; (2) conducting a comparative benchmark study of other major U.S. cities’ municipal arts agencies; (3) soliciting extensive input, discussion, and dialogue from SFAC
stakeholders including grantees, artists, arts educators, peer City agencies, staff and
Commissioners, and (q) engaging the general public through two community town halls and
a broad community survey in order to provide multiple opportunities for those we serve to
contribute their feedback.

The SFAC plays an important role in the San Francisco arts ecosystem, as the key municipal
agency responsible for establishing cultural policy and making high quality art and cultural
experiences accessible to the general public. Thanks to the participation of a great many
who took the time to share their valuable insights, we are confident that the goals and policy
priorities outlined in this plan fulfill the public need and desires appropriate to our unique
role. We believe that this plan sets the right course for the important work ahead.

This is a critical time for the arts in San Francisco. With the cost of living and real estate
steadily on the rise, many in our arts and culture community are facing difficult choices about
long term sustainability in this city. During these dynamic times, it is important for us to
work together toward common goals. With this new strategic plan, the SFAC will do its part
by focusing on providing resources where they are needed most. But we cannot do this work
alone and we look to you, as stewards of this important arts ecosystem, to stay engaged with
us. Together we can ensure that San Francisco continues to be a vibrant place where the arts
and culture flourish.

JD BELTRAN, PRESIDENT,
SAN FRANCISCO ARTS COMMISSION

TOM DECAIGNY, DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS,
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
The first phase of the SFAC strategic planning process was an in-depth assessment conducted by the MIG/MMC consulting team. This section of the Strategic Plan summarizes the key findings from the assessment, which in turn form the basis for the ideas laid out in the goals and objectives in the pages that follow.

**Methodology**

The MIG/MMC team commenced the assessment with a review of organizational documents, such as annual reports, previous strategic plans, legislative mandates, issue briefs and consultant reports. In order to better understand the operations and programmatic offerings of other municipal arts agencies, the MIG/MMC team conducted a benchmark study of five local arts agencies. The benchmark study findings were presented to the Commission and SFAC staff in May 2013 and can be reviewed under separate cover.
Charter Mandate for the San Francisco Arts Commission

As stated in Section 5.03 of the City’s Charter, “The Arts Commission shall consist of fifteen members appointed by the Mayor. Eleven members shall be practicing arts professionals and four members shall be lay members. The Commission shall appoint and may remove a director of the department. The Commission shall encourage artistic awareness, participation and expression; education in the arts; assist independent local groups with the development of their own programs; promote the employment of artists and those skilled in crafts, in the public and private sectors; provide liaison with state and federal agencies to ensure increased funding for the arts from these agencies as well as represent arts issues and policy in the respective governmental bodies; promote the continued availability of living and working space for artists within the City and County; and enlist the aid of all City and County governmental units in the task of ensuring the fullest expression of artistic potential by and among the residents of San Francisco. In addition the Arts Commission will: approve the designs for all public structures; approve the design and location of all works of art before they are acquired, transferred or sold by the City and County; promote a neighborhood arts program to encourage and sustain an active interest in the arts on a local and neighborhood level; and supervise and control the expenditure of all appropriations made by the Board of Supervisors for the advancement of the visual, performing or literary arts.”

One-on-one interviews were conducted with 51 SFAC stakeholders, including Commissioners, senior staff, the Board of Supervisors, City department representatives, peer grantmakers, arts organizations and arts education partners. In addition, four focus groups were held with a total of 52 participants, including three focus groups with SFAC’s Cultural Equity Grants recipients and one focus group with leaders of the six neighborhood Cultural Centers that receive funding from the SFAC. The MIG/MMC team also conducted separate online surveys of the Commissioners and SFAC staff, in order to gather baseline information from those who are closest to the organization.

Topics discussed with interviewees and focus group participants included the strengths of the SFAC, areas in need of improvement, critical issues facing the agency, future vision, leadership and community perceptions.

**FINDINGS**

**Strengths**

The current SFAC leadership and staff were identified by the vast majority of interviewees as key strengths of the SFAC today. The leadership and communication skills of the Director of Cultural Affairs were identified as a key strength. SFAC staff were described as being very knowledgeable on arts issues and were a valuable resource when sharing their expertise.

**Critical Issues**

Interviewees expressed consensus about the key issues facing the SFAC. Those issues include the lack of a unifying vision to guide the agency’s work; the need for more resources to support the breadth of programs at the SFAC; the relevancy of the agency’s programs, which have expanded over time in response to legislative mandates; a lack of clear goals
and related accountability in the programs provided, proper care for the Civic Art Collection; and low visibility and awareness of the SFAC with the general public. These issues were touched upon by the majority of interviewees, across all stakeholder groups. In addition, there were issues particular to each stakeholder group; those issues are detailed below.

Commissioners
Based on the online survey of Commissioners and in-person interviews, the Commissioners’ comments coalesced around three core issues specific to their work. First, they noted a lack of clarity about their roles and responsibilities as members of the SFAC’s governing body. Second, the Commissioners said they work effectively in committees, but the full meetings of the Commission are procedural and serve as a “rubber stamp” on the work done in committee. And third, the majority of Commissioners voiced frustration that full Commission meetings focus too heavily on operational issues and they expressed a desire to spend more time focusing on the SFAC’s vision and mission, as well as policy and legislative issues that are responsive to community need.

Staff
By surveying all SFAC staff and conducting one-on-one interviews with senior staff, the MOG/MMC team was able to glean a breadth of information from staff about the perceived areas of strength and challenge. In addition to the strengths identified by all interviewees, the staff pointed to strengths in the diversity and breadth of SFAC programming, the agency’s ability to bridge sectors and partner effectively, the ability to direct grants and funding, the agency’s support of artists through grants and programs, the expertise and dedication of Commissioners, and the role the agency’s legislative mandates have played in initiating programs.

Staff identified several challenges beyond those mentioned across all interviewees. Those issues include the lack of data-driven decision-making within the SFAC, the agency’s tendency to be reactive to opportunities and political decisions, a lack of strong communication across programs, limited visibility of the SFAC within City government, and a lack of SFAC champions.

External Stakeholders
External stakeholders interviewed included leaders within San Francisco arts organizations, peer grantmakers, Supervisors and City Department representatives. Key issues identified by this group of interviewees focused on perceived “mission creep” at SFAC, meaning that the agency had strayed from its mission with the addition of myriad programs over time. At the same time, this group pointed to the changing demographics of San Francisco and the need to constantly evaluate program relevancy.
Within the SFAC, they felt that programs were siloed, operating much like individual nonprofit entities, instead of one organization with an overarching vision and mission. They also pointed to a fundamental tension between the SFAC’s dual roles as programmer and funder, which often puts the agency in direct competition with its grantees. Finally, a number of City department representatives voiced frustration with the Civic Design review process, which is sometimes seen as causing time delays and budget overruns rather than improving the quality of public infrastructure design as it is intended.

Cultural Equity and Cultural Center Grantees

The MIO/MMC team spoke with SFAC grantees in focus groups that revealed a high level of respect for the Cultural Equity Grants (CEG) program as a national model with an effective panel review process and grants to individual artists, which are a rarity in grantmaking today. Key issues identified by the focus group participants included tensions between the SFAC’s conflicting roles as funder and landlord (in the case of the Cultural Centers), and funder and program provider. A number of grantees noted their experiences applying for funding outside of the SFAC, only to find they were in competition for the grant with the SFAC itself. Representatives of the Cultural Centers said the lack of long-term leases for their facilities, which are owned by the City, poses challenges for their organizations as they try to fundraise for capital improvements from other entities. CEG grantees spoke of an overly complex application process for the size of grants awarded, while the Cultural Centers spoke of overly complex and often changing reporting requirements for their grants. Some CEG grantees worried that grant opportunities are not widely promoted, resulting in a small pool of applicants relative to the need within the arts community. Participants in all of the groups raised concerns about changing demographics and rises in the cost of living in San Francisco that push artists out of the city. Finally, a number of interviewees outside of the focus groups said a key issue in the SFAC’s grantmaking process is that grants to the Cultural Centers are non-competitive and lack an appropriate accountability structure.

FUTURE VISION

With this understanding of the key issues facing the SFAC, interviewees were asked to articulate their vision for the future of the agency. Common themes included making the SFAC more of a “player” in the city’s education sector, economy, and government. Many envisioned a future in which the SFAC breaks its programmatic silos by creating an overarching focus on its roles as a grantmaker, capacity-builder, and resource within San Francisco’s arts ecosystem. In that role as resource and convenor, many interviewees saw an opportunity for the SFAC to reach out to demographic groups who are new to the city and do not currently have ties to the arts community. In order to be effective in this new role, interviewees proposed that the SFAC strengthen its relationships with City departments, policymakers, and other community stakeholders to build its political capital. Interviewees also pointed to a desire for greater efficiency in carrying out the work of the SFAC, bringing a greater sense of focus to their work, securing a funding base, enhancing awareness of the SFAC through marketing and public relations efforts, and highlighting the work of grantees and local artists.

Barriers to achieving this future vision include bureaucracy, resource constraints, a lack of a cohesive vision and clear goals, political realities and the challenges associated with creative risk-taking within the government context.
Ultimately, interviewees felt that the right leadership is in place and the timing is right to embrace an ambitious vision for the future that will bring greater clarity to the work of the SFAC. The goals and objectives detailed in this Strategic Plan articulate the SFAC’s vision for the next five years as derived from these assessment findings and discussed with stakeholders through the strategic planning process.
**chapter two**

**VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

**VISION**
The San Francisco Arts Commission envisions a San Francisco where the transformative power of art is critical to strengthening neighborhoods, building infrastructure and fostering positive social change. We believe the arts create inspiring personal experiences, illuminate the human condition and offer meaningful ways to engage with each other and the world around us. We imagine a vibrant San Francisco where creativity, prosperity and progress go hand in hand. We advance artists’ ideas to improve the quality of life for everyone through a united cultural sector whose contributions are vital and valued.

**MISSION**
The San Francisco Arts Commission is the City agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts community, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy.
VALUES

We value:

• Cultural equity and access to high quality arts experience for all
• The arts as a vehicle for positive social change and prosperity
• Artists as integral to making San Francisco a city where people want to live, work and play
• The arts as critical to a healthy democracy and innovative government
• Responsiveness to community needs
• Collaboration and partnerships
• Accountability and data-driven decision-making
goal 1:
Invest in a vibrant arts community

With an annual grantmaking budget of over $4 million, the SFAC makes substantial resource investments in the arts community through grant funding and technical expertise to local artists and arts organizations. SFAC’s Cultural Equity Grants program awards $1.8 million each year to artists and arts organizations working within the City and County of San Francisco. The SFAC also provides $2.2 million in non-competitive operating grants to the City’s six Cultural Centers, two of which are virtual, and provides support to an array of programs within the Community Arts and Education program. SFAC resources are distributed in a manner that achieves both depth and breadth of support to the arts sector. The total grant dollars and staff hours do not tell the full story of the impact of SFAC investments in San Francisco, and while studies have quantified the economic impact of the arts in San Francisco, staff, stakeholders, and Commissioners agree that more work needs to be done to communicate the impact and benefits of these community investments to policymakers and the general public.

The SFAC’s capital assets include the four City-owned facilities operated by nonprofit Cultural Centers. Each of the Cultural Centers has an annual one-dollar lease for its facility in addition to the non-competitive general operating grant from the SFAC. A key priority for the Cultural Centers will include ongoing facility improvements and securing the related funding, as well as creating a separation between facility management and grant management.
In 2019, the SFAC is slated to move into the Veterans War Memorial building, greatly enhancing the agency’s visibility and accessibility. Given the decreasing availability of affordable space for non-profit arts organizations in the city, the larger space will provide the SFAC with a new resource with which to respond to the growing affordability crisis the arts community faces. A key priority over the next year will be to determine the future role for the Gallery program to ensure that the SFAC’s expanded programming space is utilized in full alignment with the goals and priorities of a municipal department and in partnership with the community.

In addition to its grantmaking and capital facility investments, the SFAC has an opportunity to re-envision its investment in the community through arts education. Today, the SFAC focuses on its role as a resource for the arts education community through partnerships with the San Francisco Unified School District, the Arts Providers Alliance of San Francisco and the Department of Public Works, including management of the Department of Public Works-funded StreetSmARTS and Where Art Lives programs. In addition, the SFAC manages the WritersCorps program, one of its only direct service programs. With changes in SFAC leadership, the upcoming renewal of the Public Education and Enrichment Fund, which supports implementation of the Arts Education Master Plan, and new opportunities on the horizon, there is a strong commitment to continue supporting arts education. The next five years provides the right timing to reassess and redefine the SFAC’s role in arts education.

Key priorities will include aligning the Cultural Equity Grants and Community Arts and Education program activities; establishing a consistent, ongoing evaluation program to monitor SFAC grantmaking to ensure its flexibility and relevancy; working with private philanthropic partners, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Grants for the Arts to continually re-evaluate SFAC’s place within the funding ecosystem; revising funding strategies over time to remain accountable to shifting needs in the arts sector; investing in opportunities for artists to make a living in San Francisco through Individual Artist Commissions and Street Artist licensing; and establishing arts education policy leadership as a priority within the agency to better invest in the future.
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<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Review and evaluate SFAC grantmaking strategy on an annual basis to determine:</td>
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<td>1.2 Alignment with SFAC vision, values and mission</td>
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<td>Quarter 4 FY 13/14</td>
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<td>1.3 Efficiency and effectiveness of application, selection and reporting processes</td>
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<td>1.4 Technical assistance needs and best mechanisms for offering technical assistance</td>
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<td>1.5 Achievement of grant outcomes and appropriate accountability</td>
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<td>Quarter 4 FY 13/14</td>
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<td>1.6 Demographic profile of artists and organizations reached</td>
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<td>Quarter 4 FY 13/14</td>
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<td>1.7 Impact of general operating support compared to capacity-building or project/program support</td>
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<td>1.2 Facilitate improved interactions between other City agencies (e.g., Grants for the Arts, Office of Economic and Workforce Development, etc.), private philanthropy and corporate sponsors to ensure coordination of investments within the arts community</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Director of Cultural Affairs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>1.3 Continue to build strategic partnerships with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and arts providers to identify gaps in arts education service delivery, renew the Public Education and Enrichment Fund, support development of the next phase of an SFUSD Arts Education Master Plan and connect arts education resources</td>
<td>Filling vacant position/hiring new Arts Education Program Manager/Youth Arts Funding</td>
<td>Director of Community Arts and Education</td>
<td>Quarter 4 FY 13/14</td>
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<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Provide leadership to develop projects and initiatives that are competitive for large-scale grants from state and national funders for high-impact projects that benefit the San Francisco arts community</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Development Director</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>Work with Cultural Centers to identify indicators of quality (e.g., quality of life benefits, economic impact, community-building outcomes, youth development) to better convey the impact of the Centers to the public, policymakers and sub-tenants</td>
<td>Existing/ACLS Fellow</td>
<td>Director of Community Arts and Education</td>
<td>Quarter 1 FY 14/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Review lease structure for Cultural Centers and explore possibilities for separating SFAC’s grantmaking and landlord functions, determine staffing needs for managing facilities</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Director of Community Arts and Education</td>
<td>Quarter 3 FY 14/15</td>
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<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Director of SFAC Galleries</td>
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## Appendix E: Fresh Arts Membership Structure

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<th>Fresh Arts Organization Membership</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$50/year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$250/year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discounts on fees for Fresh Arts workshops and Office Hours</td>
<td>Discounts on fees for Fresh Arts workshops and Office Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discount of facility rental rate and partner businesses</td>
<td>Discount of facility rental rate and partner businesses</td>
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<td>Discounted entry to special events</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured profile/event placement on Fresh Arts’ homepage and major landing pages and weekly email newsletter</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to add multiple portfolios to online profile</td>
<td>Ability to add multiple portfolios to online profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Associate Membership with Fractured Atlas due to Fresh Arts’ participation in an Open Arts Network. (Benefits include: Access to low-cost liability Insurance &amp; Healthcare, Online Professional development courses, Special offers and discounts)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to apply for Pilot Fiscal Sponsorship program</td>
<td>Ability to schedule a &quot;Free Day to Play&quot; in the Fresh Arts Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority features in weekly newsletter</td>
<td>Monthly call for event listings for potential placement with our media partner, Local Houston Magazine, a lifestyle magazine that reaches 70,000+ readers in the Greater Houston area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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44 “Artist Membership.” *Fresh Arts*, n.d. Web 3 September 2015. [https://www.fresharts.org/content/artist-membership](https://www.fresharts.org/content/artist-membership).

45 “Membership for Organizations.” *Fresh Arts*, n.d. Web 3 September 2015. [https://www.fresharts.org/content/membership-organizations](https://www.fresharts.org/content/membership-organizations).
## Fresh Arts Patron Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Level</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enthusiast</strong></td>
<td>Listing on Fresh Arts supporter page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership $65</td>
<td>Discounts on tickets to select Special Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enthusiast Membership (For 2)</strong></td>
<td>Special offers &amp; discounts from Fresh Arts' network of artists/arts organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Fresh Arts T-shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocate Membership</strong></td>
<td>Listing on Fresh Arts supporter page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Discounts on tickets to select Special Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborator Membership</strong></td>
<td>Special offers &amp; discounts from Fresh Arts' network of artists/arts organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500</td>
<td>Invitation to private VIP receptions associated with the Exhibition &amp; CSA programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Devotee Membership</strong></td>
<td>Listing on Fresh Arts supporter page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>Discounts on tickets to select Special Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special offers &amp; discounts from Fresh Arts' network of artists/arts organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh Arts T-shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invitation to private VIP receptions associated with the Exhibition &amp; CSA programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.fresharts.org/content/membership-patrons.
Appendix F: Strategic Planning Framework

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Appendix G: Membership Strategy

Worksheet 1.1

Membership Strategy = Program Strategy

This worksheet is designed to help your organization document how members help accomplish your mission, what your needs and expectations of members are, and ways to create an organizational culture that attracts and retains these members. Please complete this form independently, then share it with your staff and/or board colleagues to develop a common understanding and commitment to members.

List upcoming program milestones and anticipated accomplishment dates:

Year ____:  ________________________________________________________________
Year ____:  ________________________________________________________________
Year ____:  ________________________________________________________________
Year ____:  ________________________________________________________________
Year ____:  ________________________________________________________________

How could members help you successfully accomplish these milestones?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

What characteristics, talents, or skills will be most valuable for these members to have?

Location? __________________________________________________________________
Knowledge? ________________________________________________________________
Skills? _____________________________________________________________________
Other? _____________________________________________________________________

What specific tasks and activities would you like members to perform and when?

Define the value and benefit of each contribution to both your group and the member.

Time: __________  Task: _____________________________________________________
Value: ____________________________________________________________________
______________________________________

Time: __________  Task: _____________________________________________________
Value: ____________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Time: __________  Task: _____________________________________________________
Value: ____________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Consdering the culture of your organization, list the values and attitudes that your organization will extend to members in recognition of their involvement.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Our Membership Partnership: Draft a statement that links the success of your organization’s mission with your hoped-for roles, responsibilities, and involvement of members. Share these among your colleagues and develop an organization-wide promise to guide your recruitment of and treatment of members within your group.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

The Nonprofit Membership Toolkit, by Ellis M. M. Robinson. Copyright © 2003 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Appendix H: Pelican Bomb Non-Disclosure Agreement

Pelican Bomb Non-Disclosure Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is made on January, 16 2015

BETWEEN

1. Pelican Bomb, ("Party A"); and
2. Nobuhle Clemens, ("Party B"), collectively referred to as the "Parties".

RECITALS

Each undersigned party (the "Receiving Party") understands and acknowledges that the other party (the "Disclosing Party") has disclosed or may disclose information relating to Pelican Bomb's programs, activities, plan, insights, financials, and other business-related items, which to the extent previously, presently, or subsequently disclosed to the Receiving Party is hereinafter referred to as "Proprietary Information" of the Disclosing Party.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

1. In consideration of the disclosure of Proprietary Information by the Disclosing Party, the Receiving Party hereby agrees: (i) to hold the Proprietary Information in strict confidence and to take all reasonable precautions to protect such Proprietary Information (including, without limitation, all precautions the Receiving Party employs with respect to its own confidential materials), (ii) not to disclose any such Proprietary Information or any information derived therefrom to any third person, (iii) not to make any use whatsoever at any time of such Proprietary Information except to evaluate internally its relationship with the Disclosing Party, and (iv) not to copy or reverse engineer any such Proprietary Information. The Receiving Party shall procure that its employees, agents and sub-contractors to whom Proprietary Information is disclosed or who have access to Proprietary Information sign a nondisclosure or similar agreement in content substantially similar to this Agreement.

2. Without granting any right or license, the Disclosing Party agrees that the foregoing shall not apply with respect to any information after five years following the disclosure thereof or any information that the Receiving Party can document (i) is or becomes (through no improper action or inaction by the Receiving Party or any affiliate, agent, consultant or employee) generally available to the public, or (ii) was in its possession or known by it prior to receipt from the Disclosing Party as evidenced in writing, except to the extent that such information was unlawfully appropriated, or (iii) was rightfully disclosed to it by a third party, or (iv) was independently developed without use of any Proprietary Information of the Disclosing Party. The Receiving Party may make disclosures required by law or court order provided the Receiving Party uses diligent reasonable efforts to limit disclosure and has allowed the Disclosing Party to seek a protective order.

3. Immediately upon the written request by the Disclosing Party at any time, the Receiving Party will return to the Disclosing Party all Proprietary Information and all documents or media containing any such Proprietary Information and any and all copies or extracts thereof, save that where such Proprietary Information is a form incapable of return or has been copied or transcribed into another document, it shall be destroyed or erased, as applicable.

4. The Receiving Party understands that nothing herein (i) requires the disclosure of any Proprietary Information or (ii) requires the Disclosing Party to proceed with any transaction or relationship.

5. Each party further acknowledges and confirms to the other party that no representation or warranty, express or
implied, is or will be made, and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by either party, or by any of its respective directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers, as to, or in relation to, the accuracy of completeness of any Proprietary Information made available to the other party or its advisers; it is responsible for making its own evaluation of such Proprietary Information.

6. The failure of either party to enforce its rights under this Agreement at any time for any period shall not be construed as a waiver of such rights. If any part, term or provision of this Agreement is held to be illegal or unenforceable neither the validity, nor enforceability of the remainder of this Agreement shall be affected. Neither Party shall assign or transfer all or any part of its rights under this Agreement without the consent of the other Party. This Agreement may not be amended for any other reason without the prior written agreement of both Parties. This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the Parties relating to the subject matter hereof unless any representation or warranty made about this Agreement was made fraudulently and, save as may be expressly referred to or referenced herein, supersedes all prior presentations, writings, negotiations or understandings with respect hereto.

7. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the jurisdiction in which the Disclosing Party is located (or if the Disclosing Party is based in more than one country, the country in which its headquarters are located) (the "Territory") and the parties agree to submit disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement to the non-exclusive of the courts in the Territory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pelican Bomb</th>
<th>Nobuhle Clemens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By:</td>
<td>By:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Signature]

Amanda Brinkman
Executive Operations Director
2259 W. Haley Blvd., 4013
12/5/15

[Signature]

Nobuhle Clemens
HR in Arts Administration Intern
3030 Tulane Ave, New Orleans 70119
12/5/15