

SECTION 1

REVIEWING THE BASICS
— THE *WHO? WHAT? WHEN?*
AND *WHY?* OF MARKETING



1.1

THE WHO? – ARTS MARKETING IN AUSTRALIA

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides background information on the arts in Australia. It provides some basic discussion on the wide variety of arts activities undertaken in Australia and concludes that arts marketing — and planning — is essential for success in this very rewarding, but challenging and competitive field.

IS THERE REALLY AN ARTS 'INDUSTRY'?

The term 'industry' is a little misleading. When we think of an industry we usually think in terms of big business, such as the motor vehicle industry or the mining industry. The arts and cultural industry however is unusual for its variety of large and small segments.

It includes people working together, as in the communications sector (radio and television), publishing (newspapers and magazines) and performing arts (orchestras and theatre companies).

There are also large numbers of people who are self-employed and who work on their own, or have only limited contact with others. Artists, writers, craftspeople may work together, but more often work alone.

WORKING FOR LOVE OR MONEY (OR BOTH!)

Unfortunately research data doesn't paint a very rosy picture of life in the arts — in financial terms. An Australia Council study identified about 40,000 serious practising professional artists in Australia in 1993. The study collected income information which showed that professional artists generally earn about two-thirds of their total income from the pursuit of their primary creative activity, i.e. painting, writing, composing, etc., but still need to take on other work to make ends meet.

On average, artists' income from their arts work is about \$18,000 per year. However, averages can be really misleading. If two musicians are earning \$100 per performance, and one superstar is earning \$10,000, the **average** earnings of the three is \$3,400 each. But the reality is, obviously, very different. The median income is a better guide, and for all artists the median income for the arts component of their work is \$9,400 per year — so they are not earning a fortune from their work.

MARKETING, PLANNING AND THE ARTS

Most creative people and arts organisations want to find a way to combine their commitment to art (whether it's painting, music, writing, photography or acting) with a stable, reasonable income — to have both creative fulfilment **and** money. It's not an unreasonable expectation, but ...

Clearly today's arts professionals (both individuals and organisations) need to think carefully about the goals and the challenges they face. Talent is essential, and so too is commitment, but on their own they are not enough. There are many, many talented people whose dream to become a successful full-time artist or performer will remain that – a dream. And many groups who, despite the talent and commitment of members, will not achieve the level of success they deserve.

But it **is** possible to map out a path which will maximise opportunities. It requires some careful self-analysis and a commitment to planning. Which is, of course, what this guide is all about. It's designed to help you think about what you'd like to do, and develop a planned program to ensure you do everything you possibly can to achieve your goals.

When you have read through the guide and completed the worksheets, you will have gathered together the information you need to complete a detailed, and very strategic, marketing/business plan to help you to define and achieve your goals.

Your final plan will look something like this:

- Current situation (situation analysis):
 - mission and vision;
 - description of your arts activity;
 - analysis of operating environment;
 - market analysis;
 - SWOT;
 - product analysis;
 - competition analysis and competition strategy;
 - networking and people skills analysis.
- Marketing goals, objectives and strategies.
- Action program:
 - resource requirements;
 - timeframe;
 - staffing;
 - activities.
- Evaluation and contingency plans.

If it looks complicated, don't worry. That's what this Guide is for – to help you through the planning maze and bring you safely through the process with your confidence and your enthusiasm intact and your stress levels under control.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The arts industry includes people working in a wide spectrum of the arts, from individuals artists and craftspeople working independently to large performing arts companies, publishing houses and film production companies.
- Not everyone working in the arts earns their full income from arts related activities. Many artists supplement their income through other types of employment. Even 'professional' artists frequently have to subsidise their arts income from other sources such as teaching.
- Today's professionals, both in terms of individuals and organisations, need to think carefully about the challenges they face, and to take the time to plan, set goals, and implement programs to achieve their targets.

1.2

THE *WHAT?* — REVIEWING THE PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter introduces the concept of marketing: defining the term, and highlighting the need to understand your customers and audiences. It explains the basic elements of marketing and finishes with a brief quiz you can take to assess your current marketing focus.

WHAT IS MARKETING?

What is marketing? Basically, it can be defined as *a process of exchange in which we exchange something of value for something we want*. It sounds simple, but it's more complex than it sounds.

You have something of value — your skill as a writer, a musician, a dancer, your paintings, your craft work. You want to exchange it for something of equal value. Generally, we think in terms of money, but that needn't be the case. It could be for other items (food, skills training, furniture, computer equipment) or it could be for recognition (a major award, a trophy, a scholarship). It might even be an exchange of your labour for someone else's time (both of which have value). For example, you may be prepared to perform free if an audience will come and give up their time to watch your performance, or you may contribute to a festival program if recognised professionals will be there to provide feedback on your work.

We think of marketing in terms of exchange and we think in terms of people coming together who both have something of value. Creative people, when first starting out, sometimes have trouble putting a value on their work.

If you love doing something, the opportunity to do it can seem exciting enough just on its own. The idea of actually getting *paid* to do something you enjoy can seem almost greedy. But if your work is valued by others, then an exchange is appropriate, and the most common form of exchange is money. Someone likes your sculpture, and they are prepared to buy it. They like your jewellery, so they want to own it; they appreciate your talent so they pay to hear you play the piano or sing. Getting paid gives you confidence in your abilities and your work.

consider this

What are the key things you have to exchange in the marketing process? What makes them special or valuable? For example, do you have a strong gift for making people laugh? Are you able to create beautiful but useful craft items?



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What are the things you want in return? Is money the most important exchange, or are there other things that also interest you? What are they?

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IDENTIFYING YOUR MARKET(S)

In order to make exchanges you have to identify the people who are involved in the exchange process.

Many people tend to think of marketing in terms of mass marketing – selling to the largest number of people possible. For many creative people this concept of catering to mass-market tastes can seem demeaning.

In some cases there may well be a lot of people interested in what you do, especially if you have been working in the arts for a while and people already know you and your work. But someone just starting out will not immediately have an audience or group of customers queuing up, ready and waiting. In some cases the potential market will always be fairly small and specialised (what we call a niche market).

If you hope to earn a living with your art, you need to consider your markets, and how you can match what you do to potential buyers. It may mean you need to accept that you will never make your fortune in the arts. It may also mean that by doing some simple research on audiences you can reach markets which will be both profitable and creatively satisfying.

life scenes

Martyn is a potter. Much of his work has been fairly traditional, and like most potters he has done his fair share of coffee mugs, fruit bowls and jugs. Although sales were reasonable he was never in serious danger of becoming rich. Several years ago (and with the arrival of twins!) he decided to reconsider his options.

Located in Queensland, he's near major tourist centres. He approached a number of shops enquiring about what types of pottery might sell to Asian tourists. The reply was that there was demand for small items of high quality which could be carried in a suitcase without fear of breakage and which had a distinct Australian theme.

Although he couldn't bring himself to create anything with koalas or kangaroos, he's now doing a range of miniature vases with Australian wildflower motifs. He discovered he really likes the challenge of producing very small items, and is developing his touch. He's also very happy with the artistic quality. They are selling very well indeed.

In his book, *The Art of Self-Promotion, Successful Promotion by Musicians*, Richard Letts put it this way:

At an arts conference a couple of years ago, a helpful businessman put the proposal (forward) that if we wanted to sell our arts to a particular foreign market, we should analyse the preferences of people there and develop our arts products to appeal to them. For many in the room, this must have seemed a radical and subversive proposal. For them, their art is the expression of their highest aesthetic or personal truths. Its integrity must be maintained, not manipulated to build sales to some audience that doesn't begin to understand. Their product is already decided. It is the marketer's job to persuade audiences to want it.

And yet...Do not the bastions of our classical musical cultures, such as the orchestras and opera companies, already match their programs to audience tastes?

They may not be rewriting Mozart to have greater appeal, but they fill their programs with Mozart and Beethoven rather than Stockhausen and Xenakis. They have figured out that there is a Mozart audience, and a Mahler audience, an audience for Baroque music and another for twentieth-century music, and they run separate programs to appeal to each.¹

¹ Richard Letts, *The Art of Self-Promotion, Successful Promotion by Musicians*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Australia Council, 1996, p. 17–18.

If your main reason for involvement in the arts is to fulfil personal aims and self-expression, then commercial viability (at any level) may not be an issue. If you have produced something which you have no desire to share with others, but it gives you personal pleasure, then there will be no exchange process, and no marketing is required.

Most people interested in the arts, however, would like to share their creative output and be recognised and rewarded for their talent.

consider this

Take a moment to describe your ideal customer. If you could pick anyone — or any group of people — to buy your products or attend your performances, who would you like it to be? Don't just say 'anyone' — really think about it. What would make you really pleased or happy?

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THE ELEMENTS OF MARKETING

If you want to share what you do with others, and if you would actually like to earn a living from your creative abilities, then marketing will be an important part of your future. Marketing requires:

- 1. An understanding of your particular skills and products.
- 2. An understanding of what the public (either at mass market or niche level) wants.
- 3. An understanding that you need to communicate what you have to the appropriate markets.

Marketing is all about analysing what you do and defining your skills and your goals. It's about finding out what people want and looking for ways to identify people who might be interested in the things you're doing. Finally, marketing is all about making sure people know about you and what you do.

Marketing is also all about expanding the overall number of people who are aware of, and interested in the arts, who attend performances, and take an interest in new approaches and interpretation of art, as well as support traditional art and cultural activities.

life scenes

Club Wild, an initiative of Community Music Victoria (CMV), is Melbourne's first disability-friendly club. Many people with disabilities are participating in the performing arts as musicians, songwriters and singers, and CMV provides office space and assistance in the development of a Melbourne event. Disability-friendly clubs have also met in Geelong and Adelaide.

Club Wild held its first, very successful, meeting in May 1998 at Melbourne's Lower Melbourne Town Hall. The Club is an opportunity to bring artists together and to provide a platform for their work within their own communities and for the wider public. More events are in the pipeline.

THE SIX PS OF ARTS MARKETING

Many people use the terms 'marketing' and 'selling' or 'advertising' as though they were interchangeable. They're not.

Arts marketing is often described in terms of six Ps:

- product – what you offer;
- price – the cost of the item, or the ticket price;
- place – where the product is made available;
- positioning – the public's image and perception of the product;
- promotion – the way in which the public is made aware of the product;
- people – the providers of the product.

Although we will be discussing these in more detail in Chapter 9, it is important to briefly explain them here.

Marketing involves more than just advertising or selling. It actually means thinking about the person who will buy, use or see your art, as well as the product itself. If you have been invited to entertain a group of elderly citizens at a nursing home during the Christmas season you would probably decide on a very different performance than if you were invited to a lunchtime cabaret at a university student union during orientation week. That's just logical. It's also basic marketing in terms of understanding your audience.

A visual artist asked to create an installation for the multi-story main entry foyer of a modern capital city gallery will probably create a very different piece than they would if asked to create something for the handkerchief-sized garden of a restored National Trust classified Town Hall of a small provincial city. The artist in this case is considering the venue, audience and space, and then developing a product which will be suitable.

Similarly, setting the right price for a product is also important. If it is too high people will not be able to access your work. If it is too low you may not recoup your costs, or be able to earn enough to make a living.

Knowing where to make your products available is also important. For example, some craft products sell well at markets, others appeal to international visitors shopping at major city hotels and department stores. Some performances require the technology and equipment

which can only be found in a modern sound stage, others can be performed in the open air at a park or garden.

Positioning refers to the image you create for yourself and your product. Do you want to be seen as a popular, easy to access and understand artist? Do you want to create craft items that are at home in country environments amidst cottage gardens? Or do you want to focus on the contemporary scene, highlighting materials, surfaces, finishes and lines? Do you want to create Australiana which will appeal to international tourists? Are you into high energy performances or intellectual challenges? Positioning is the way you define your products and your work in relation to competition, and in relation to the types of people you think will be interested.

'People', of course, refers to you and your organisation. Your skills are important, of course, but so too is your attitude and your willingness to get involved in marketing and promotional activities. As a writer are you prepared to read your work at writers' festivals or poetry workshops? As an artist are you prepared to enter competitions, or work as an artist-in-residence? Are you happy to perform at schools and share your experiences with students? Will you make yourself available for interviews? Are you prepared to put effort into developing a media kit, and quality photos of your work — and then develop a schedule for approaching booking agents, venues, talent agents or the media?

life scenes

'I'm fine singing and joking in front of a crowd. I have absolutely no problem handling a big group of people at all, but what turns my knees to jelly is returning a telephone call from a professional conference organiser,' says Sandy, part of an a cappella quartet that specialises in corporate functions work.

The bulk of their work comes from meetings and conventions where their combination of classic 50s and 60s music gains maximum audience involvement and makes them extremely popular.

A lot of the group's work comes from referrals and recommendations — and people who have seen them perform — so it's not uncommon for someone to call with a query about their work, fees and schedules.

'Returning a call from someone I don't know is really hard for me,' says Sandy. 'I get nervous about what they will ask, and I start to imagine all sorts of problems — it's a potential booking for a night we're already working, they want to haggle about the fee, they want us to do material we don't do. I just imagine everything that could go wrong.

'But it's how we get work, so I just take a deep breath, hope for the best, and pick up the phone. I'll never enjoy it, but it's part of the job and it has to be done.'

There is an old saying that the greatest advertising campaign will only persuade someone to buy a product once. If they are not happy with the purchase, or feel they have been misled or didn't receive value for money, they won't make a second purchase.

So, it's best to have everything right — the right product, the right price, the right place, the right customers — before starting on the promotions.

consider this

Think about the work you do in the arts and write one sentence that would describe each of the six Ps as they relate to you or your organisation:

My product is

My price is

My place/distribution is

My promotion is

My positioning is

My/our organisation's people skills are



Marketing planning covers the whole process from product creation and development through to the customer's purchase. Learning how to manage that process is the difference between success and uncertainty.

ASSESSING YOUR CURRENT MARKETING POSITION

Here is a short checklist to find out where you currently stand in terms of your marketing planning.

	YES	NO
• Do you have a marketing plan or business plan for yourself/your organisation?		
• Is the plan written down?		
• Do you review the plan at least every six months?		
• Does it include goals and objectives for the next 12 months?		
•for the next two years?		
•for the next five years?		
• Have you undertaken research on your audience/target market?		
• Have you consulted with others in the arts about defining audiences/target markets?		
• Do you undertake regular, ongoing research on your audience/target markets?		
• Do you have a clear understanding of what your target audiences are seeking in your products?		
• Have you considered ways in which you could increase your appeal to target audiences?		
• Did you undertake formal analysis or research before establishing your prices?		
• Do you regularly review your prices?		
• Have you considered changes to where you work or how your products are distributed?		
• Can you accurately describe your product positioning in terms of your target audiences?		
• Can you accurately describe your product positioning in terms of your competitors?		
• Does your promotional activity include both paid and non-paid promotions (advertising, publicity)?		
• Do you keep track of how your customers have heard about you?		
• Do you monitor the success of your promotional activities?		
• Do you have a written promotional program as part of your marketing plan?		

If you have answered 'yes' to all these questions, then you're already doing well, and this guide will assist you to check that you are on track and provide you with some useful resources.

If you answered 'yes' to more than half the questions, you have a good grasp of marketing, but perhaps need to spend a bit more time planning and organising your activities.

If you answered 'yes' to less than half the questions, you'll find this guide especially helpful in assisting you to set priorities and make the best use of your time.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Marketing is the process of exchange in which we exchange something of value for something we want. You have an arts product – your theatre production, a painting – and you share it with others (or sell it to them) in return for money, or recognition, or advice.
- Because you need to identify the people who are interested in your arts products it is important to identify and understand your target markets.
- If it is your intention to earn a living or make money from your art you need to consider your markets and how you can match what you do to potential buyers. You need to:
 - understand your particular skills;
 - understand what the public (either at mass market level or niche market level) is looking for/wants;
 - understand that you need to communicate what you have to the appropriate markets.
- The six essential elements of marketing can be explained in terms of the six Ps:
 - product (what you offer);
 - price (the costs of the item or the ticket price);
 - place (where the product is available);
 - positioning (the public image or perception of the product);
 - promotion (the way in which the public finds out about the product);
 - people (the providers of the product).

THE WHEN? — PLANNING WHEN TO PLAN

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter highlights the importance of formal planning, how to organise a planning day, and how to set goals to ensure your planning is fruitful.

FINDING THE TIME TO PLAN

John Lennon once wrote, 'Life is just what happens while you're busy making other plans'.

It's easier to plan our week to ensure we complete the current workload than it is to find time to stop and think about where we want to be next year or in five years' time.

Setting aside specific time to plan requires commitment. It means actually writing in your diary that on a specific date and time you are going to find someplace where you can think — and plan.

life scenes

Rob, a photographer, and his wife Anne have a successful business which they have developed over five years of hard work and long hours. They now do photography, framing and other services, and recently opened a small gallery.

Prior to Rob leaving his public service job they took several small business courses, and set aside a full weekend to talk through what they wanted to do. But, as they discovered, it can be even harder to find time to plan when you're successful.

Now they find that regular 'time out' for planning is essential, so every six months they have a friend mind the gallery while they go to the local golf club on a weekday morning when it's quiet. They take a table in the corner and spend half a day with paper, pens, business plans and a regular supply of coffee and muffins.

'Getting away from the gallery helps us concentrate', says Rob, 'and regularly talking about what we are doing helps us to see new opportunities and get refocused'.

CHANGING THE SCENE

Many people say that the best way to do formal planning is to change their environment. In the same way that big businesses take their key staff away for 'think tank' sessions at corporate retreats, a change of location can be a refreshing way to set the mood.

But if you're not disciplined, the day away will be nothing more than a mini-vacation. Most people need someplace where they feel relaxed and can concentrate — not be distracted by other things they should be doing. Find out what works best for you.

life scenes

'I know it doesn't sound very practical, but I do my best thinking and planning at McDonald's,' says illustrator Carol.

'Even though there is a lot of noise, and people are coming and going, I like the background rush, the sounds and the activity. No one minds if you stay there for a couple of hours and I just get coffee and get out my notebook. I can really focus, and it's very different from my usual environment at home.'

Organisations also need to make time for planning, and it generally works best if people can leave their normal work environment, the telephones and the mail, and gather staff, board members and volunteers together to think about future goals and directions.

life scenes

The Gallery Society of a major Victorian art gallery employs a Director and support staff, but the Board members are all volunteers. Once a year they hold a full day planning meeting, planned by a paid facilitator. They take a mini-coach to a rural venue — one year they used Dromkeen, a specialist gallery outside Melbourne, another year they used a member's holiday house at Mt. Macedon.

They review the previous year's activities (focusing on what worked and what didn't), update their SWOT analysis (see Chapter 7), set priorities and review budgets. It's a full day, starting at 8:00 a.m.

There's a simple working lunch, and in the afternoon they break into small groups to workshop next year's activity plans. But by 5:30 in the afternoon they feel they deserve a real break so they have drinks and 'very nice' nibbles, before taking the coach back to the city. The facilitator supplies a written report of the day, with recommendations and a list of key issues which need to be followed up after the workshop.

PLANNING FOR YOUR PLANNING DAY

It's best to be well organised, so you make the most of your planning day. Usually this means you need to get a few things together, and make a few lists beforehand:

- Collect any previous plans, budgets, schedules, etc. you've prepared.
- Put together a list of the things you want to cover (see the information below in terms of planning issues and important questions).
- Have the supplies you need (paper, pens, coffee, herbal tea, a calculator).
- Take the day seriously; let people know this is important and you're not to be disturbed unless it's really important.

WHAT DOES PLANNING INVOLVE?

Planning means taking the time to think about six basic, but important, concepts. Although most people try to avoid using jargon, it is important to know when to use it, and to understand that it is a way of indicating to others that you understand the commercial world.

The six basic elements of marketing planning are:

FOR PERSONAL PLANNING PURPOSES	TECHNICAL MARKETING TERMINOLOGY
Stage 1. Where am I (are we) now?	Situation analysis
Stage 2. Where would I (we) like to go?	Strategic aims and objectives
Stage 3. How will I (we) get there?	Action plan
Stage 4. What happens if there are problems?	Contingency plans
Stage 5. How will I (we) measure success?	Monitoring and evaluation
Stage 6. When will I (we) get there?	Timeframe for achieving objectives

Stage One involves evaluating your current activity, including your income, the types of work you do and your current level of success. We'll go into more detail on this in Chapter 7, *Understanding Your Own Situation*.

Stage Two is deciding what you would like to achieve. Trying to visualise the future can be difficult, but unless you have a clear idea of where you want to go, you'll have a hard time setting goals and developing an action plan to help you achieve your dreams.

According to Barbara Sher in her book *I Could Do Anything if Only I Knew What It Was*,² one way to think about your aims and objectives in Stage Two is to consider these three questions:

1. What do you want to do?
2. Where do you want to do it?
3. Who do you want to do it with?

² Adapted from: *I Could Do Anything if Only I Knew What It Was* — Barbara Sher, Hodder & Stoughton, Australia, 1994.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

Do you want to earn a full-time living from your art? Do you want to be rich, or will you be happy with a modest, but regular income? Do you want to be recognised for 'setting new boundaries', or your contribution to the development of your craft? Do you want your arts organisation to tour internationally, or are you more interested in giving local performances and the opportunity to gain self-confidence and practical experience?

The more clearly you can identify what you want to do, the better you'll be able to develop a marketing plan that moves you in the right direction.

These questions may be difficult to answer at first, but they need to be considered. How do you envision your ideal life in the future?

life scenes

Karl spent most of his professional life as a secondary school languages teacher. It was fulfilling work, but he also knew it wasn't what he really dreamed of doing — he wanted to write and to meet people who shared his specific field of interest, the collective unconscious.

Collecting information, case studies and data occupied him for many years (most of his friends considered it a pretty strange hobby). When restructuring in the education department offered the opportunity for early retirement Karl jumped at the opportunity. He carefully assessed his dreams, his goals, the money he had available, and decided on a plan of action. He sold his city home, moved to a miner's cottage in the countryside, upgraded his computer and set to work.

His first book, self-published (as he intended it to be), resulted in a number of invitations to speak at seminars around the world (again as he had intended). However, as an unexpected bonus, a publisher has now expressed interest in a second book.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?

As well as deciding what you want to do, it is also important to think about where you want to work. Do you want to work from home? Do you find it stimulating to work with others in a co-operative environment sharing space with others? Do you want your organisation to have its own purpose built performing or exhibition space?

Do you see yourself living and working in the country? Or would you prefer a converted warehouse in the heart of the city?

If you want to work from home, your costs (and consequently your prices) will be very different than if your plan is to have a large, specially designed studio in the heart of a major city. If you want to travel, then developing work schedules will be important, and so will exploring special grants, awards and scholarships.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO DO IT WITH?

Do you do your best work in splendid isolation, or do you get inspiration from being near other creative people, interacting and sharing ideas, techniques and general advice?

Do you want to be in a performing environment, an academic environment, a creative environment, in regular, daily contact with other professionals? Does your organisation want to work with guest artists or develop a program of masterclasses?

Knowing your preferences will help you develop the right marketing plan. If you want to work alone you'll need to consider your networking activities, and how you'll reach your potential markets.

If you want to be around others, how will this impact on the time you allocate to your creative work? (And will there be any issues of collaboration, copyright or plagiarism which might come up and cause problems in the future?)

life scenes

Leanne, a graphic artist, lived and worked in Ballarat. But her dream was to illustrate children's books. She found it hard to keep in touch with editors and publishers and they kept 'forgetting' about her when assignments were available.

In the days before fax machines and e-mail her schedule involved countless late night runs to the post office to get a sketch into the mail before the last collection. She even learned which postboxes along the route were cleared when, so last minute runs could be perfected.

She realised that if she were an established illustrator she could probably work in Ballarat, but while she was trying to break into the market, it would be difficult. She also felt it would be important to have a 'good address' in Melbourne, to give the impression to editors and agents that she was already successful. After a careful search she found an affordable unit with an upmarket address and a small but well-lit second bedroom which could be used as a studio.

She found it easier to make regular calls, and deliver work on time. She also was able to attend launches and literary lunches (increasing her visibility), and even spend more time in local libraries looking at what was happening in the marketplace.

While she was waiting to break into full-time illustrating she was able to find work in a small advertising agency, a big improvement on the office work she had done in Ballarat.

Six years down the track she's illustrating on a regular basis, and although she still does ad agency work part-time, the balance is shifting more towards full-time illustrating. Deciding what she wanted to do, where and with whom, was the basis for her strategic career planning.

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION

Planning is the thinking part. After we've considered what we want to achieve, we have to develop a program for attaining those goals. Then we have to move from ideas to actions.

Later sections in this Guide will look at ways to decide what to do, set up a schedule for doing it and handle any problems which arise along the way.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- It is important to take time to prepare formal plans. Both individuals and organisations will benefit from setting time aside to think about goals, directions, challenges and problems and to set a course for the future.
- Planning involves six stages:
 - situation analysis;
 - strategic aims and objectives;
 - action plans;
 - contingency plans;
 - monitoring and evaluations;
 - timeframe for achieving objectives;
- One effective way of determining directions and goals is to think in terms of three things:
 - What do you want to do?
 - Where do you want to do it?
 - Who do you want to do it with?
- It is important to think about what will work best for you in organising an effective planning day. Setting aside time, going to a different location, having a facilitator to assist in organising discussions and making written notes of the results may all contribute to a successful planning day.

THE WHY? — THE BENEFITS OF PLANNING

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses short and long term planning, and the differences between goals and objectives. It includes advice from others about how to assess your wants and needs, and to conceptualise your dreams, turning them into mission statements, goals and practical activities.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO PLAN?

'Time is life,' said Alan Lakein in his best-selling book, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*.³ Lakein called himself an 'effectiveness expert' rather than an 'efficiency' expert because, he said, 'Effectiveness means selecting the best task to do from all the possibilities available and then doing it the best way. Making the right choices about how you'll use your time is more important than doing efficiently whatever job happens to be around'.

Setting priorities and doing what needs to be done is not always easy.

And, of course, for a busy person it is relatively easy to put off big or unpleasant tasks. There are always other things that need to be done.

Sometimes it's a lot easier to continue doing something we know we do well, rather than take a chance and go off in a new direction. If we know that we work well with a particular medium, it can be tempting to stick with it, even though others are extending their boundaries, trying new techniques or new styles.

Planning helps us focus on how we spend our time, define what is really important and where we want to go in future.

³ Alan Lakein, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, Signet, USA, 1973.

life scenes

When Carolyn was a highly paid financial controller at a major organisation her life was busy, filled with activities, high fashion clothes and a full schedule of professional memberships. Most of her friends assumed she was happy with her mega-level success.

But what she really wanted to do was paint. Practical enough to plan carefully (that's the advantage of being a financial controller!) she saved enough money to be certain she could support herself for at least three years, and took lessons while still working.

Carolyn identified the type of work she wanted to do, and thought carefully about where she wanted to live. Then she leased a brand new four-wheel drive vehicle, resigned her job and spent three months travelling around the outback before settling in a relatively remote part of Western Australia.

Today she's a successful artist, with commissions waiting, several major art awards to her credit and a wardrobe so limited it all fits into one suitcase. She supplements her income from time to time as a casual staff member at a resort where they have no idea of her 'previous existence' as a corporate high flyer.

THERE'S MORE TO PLANNING THAN BEING ORGANISED

Some people are so organised that every minute of every day is planned. They do a lot of things each day, but are so busy with the daily tasks they don't have time to consider the future or the 'big picture'.

Other people are firmly convinced that no matter what they plan, things rarely turn out that way. They start a dozen tasks, but one thing after another comes along, and nothing actually gets completely finished. Unfortunately, although they have managed to 'stay loose' to ensure all the distraction can be handled, the day just flies by and not a lot seems to get accomplished.

Most of us have more options than hours. It can be so easy to get caught up in the daily grind of 'have to' activities that we never get the chance to do the big things we've dreamed about.

In business terms this is often referred to as the difference between 'doing the right things' and 'doing things right'. It can be a real challenge to reassess what you're doing and set new priorities rather than just check things off your current 'to do' list. There's no escaping the fact that planning for the big things requires commitment and discipline.

LONG-TERM GOALS AND SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES

Your life is the result of dozens, hundreds, thousands of decisions, made day in and day out, about short-term and long-term goals, and how to spend your time. Often, however, short-term goals are more visible and easier to accomplish (the weeds in the garden are taking over – major landscaping can wait for another day; you'd better write that thank you note today – the outline for a new novel can wait).

However, if we never get around to long-term goals, then a major part of what we want to achieve will never happen.

It is especially important if you are juggling paid employment outside the arts and an interest in the arts. Already faced with limited time and a variety of interests, if you add family, work commitments and friends into the equation it can be very hard to balance your life so that you are meeting everyone's needs, achieving your short-term goals, but not losing sight of those long-term dreams and plans. And if they are to become more than dreams, planning is critical.

MAKING A LIST — THE START OF PLANNING

In the last chapter we talked about the importance of thinking carefully about what you want to do, where you want to do it and who you want to do it with — now it is important to add another factor — when do you want to do it?

Lifetime goals vary. It is unlikely that you will have the same goals when you're 50 that you had when you were 15. It is also unlikely you'll have the same goals when you have a family that you had when you were single. It is important to start with where you are right now.

Lakein⁴ recommends you answer three basic but very important questions:

- What are your lifetime goals?
Include both specific and abstract ideas, if you like, and take time to think about personal, family, social, career, financial, community, artistic, creative and spiritual goals.
- How would you like to spend the next three years?
Think about what you would do if money commitments were not an issue.
- If you knew now you would be struck by lightning six months from today, how would you live until then?
If you only had six months to live, what would you do with your time? Assume all the practical things that need to be done are completed — the point of the exercise is to discuss what you would actually do with your time.

consider this

Do the three Lakein exercises. You will need a kitchen timer or watch. Allow yourself three minutes for each question.

List your answers quickly, and write whatever comes into your head.

1. *What are your lifetime goals?*

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continued

⁴ Alan Lakein, *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, Signet, USA, 1973, p. 30.

continued

2. *How would you like to spend the next three years?*

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3. *If you knew you would be struck by lightning in six months' time how would you live until then?*

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Now, for the next stage. Take your Lifetime Goals list and select the top three goals — the ones most important to you. These goals should fit roughly with your comments on how you'd like to spend the next three years. If question 3 indicates that you would totally change the last six months of your life, then you may need to think carefully about your current lifestyle.

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IDENTIFYING GOAL-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

Long-term goal statements help you bridge the gap between long-term and short-term goals and activities. When you have defined your long-term goals, you will be able to identify short-term activities which will help you to achieve your goals.

For example, if your long-term goal is to write a historical novel, you will need to set a timeframe, then look at various activities which will need to be undertaken to achieve that goal, such as undertaking research, setting up your writing environment (which may involve a work space, or a computer), outlining the basic plot and characters, and identifying areas in which you feel you need additional training (writing dialogue, perhaps, or love scenes).

You may need to estimate how long you think the project will take and decide whether you work best with daily targets, or whether it will be more productive to allocate larger blocks of time (weekends or week-long sessions).

Do you need to make changes in your schedule to make these blocks of time available?

Once you break down a major goal, such as writing a novel, into these various activities it becomes a less awesome task. Finding time to write a historical novel is one thing, finding a few minutes each day to research the time period is a far more achievable activity.

SETTING PRIORITIES

You may not have time to do everything you'd like to do, and everything you need to do, but setting priorities will help you accomplish the most important things in your schedule.

Even if it is difficult to plan your day/week/month in detail, it is still important to decide which things absolutely have to be done, which things should be done and which things you would like to do. Just be sure that activities geared towards your major lifetime goals are considered as much a part of your daily have to list as the short-term activities.

If your schedule looks hectic, remember this rule: each day identify the six most important things you have to do. Write them down. Then, no matter what happens during the day, no matter how many things distract you, you can always refocus quickly on those absolutely essential tasks.

When you've completed them, select the next six things. What if you can't get all six completed? Well, at least you know the one or two things you did achieve were the most important things you could have done and were the best use of your time.

WHAT DO MY PERSONAL PRIORITIES HAVE TO DO WITH MARKETING PLANNING?

If all this talk of setting lifetime goals is making you feel a little uncomfortable, don't worry. Planning is a complex process. Whether it is the direction you want to go in personally, or the direction you set for your arts organisation, the basic processes are identical. It does require some soul-searching, and it can be a demanding exercise both for individuals and for organisations.

In business terms we talk about life goals and corporate goals using the terms 'vision statements' and 'mission statements'. We'll look at that in more detail in Chapter 8, Setting Your Sights and Direction, but you should start thinking now about your long term goals. You can't make the best use of your time – and resources – if you haven't really thought about what you want to do, and set some goals. Looking at the 'big picture' helps us set priorities, and setting priorities takes us from where we are now to where we want to be.

consider this

Think about your vision and some of your goals. You'll need to prepare a mission/vision statement in Chapter 8. What are the important things you want to include?

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KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Planning helps us focus on how we spend our time, define what is really important and where we want to go in the future. It is important to think in terms of long-term goals as well as day-to-day activities.
- Goals are the long term things you'd like to achieve (success, wealth, recognition, etc.). Objectives are the practical things you do to achieve your goals (studies, auditions, grant applications).
- It is important to set goals for yourself and your organisation. Once there is agreement on the goals it is possible to set priorities for activities to achieve the goals. Identifying goals will assist you in developing a mission or vision statement.