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**New Tools for Cultural Policy and Music Education in Southeastern
Europe:
Creating Strategic Partnerships**

“The co-operative development of successful, long-term, strategic relationships, based on mutual trust, world class and sustainable competitive advantage for all the partners; relationships which have a further separate and positive impact outside the partnership/alliance.”

Tony Lendrum *The Strategic partnering handbook*, 2000.

1. What is a strategih partnerships (sp’s)

Cooperative relationships with organizations that operate in totally different environments and relationships even with one's competitors can lead to long-term strategic alliances which create sustainable competitive advantage for all partners. Genuine partnerships and alliances are about generating stakeholder wealth (i.e. customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, community, and environment) as opposed to shareholder wealth alone (Lendrum, 2000, p. 150).

By our definition, a strategic partnership is a long-term, win-win commitment between two organizations for the purpose of achieving specific business objectives by maximizing the effectiveness of each participant’s resources (Haddad, Carol Joyce, 2002)

Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition (1993) provides the following definition of Partnership, “*A partnership is a formal relationship usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified joint rights and responsibilities.*” Effective strategic partnerships harness the benefits of partnering while meeting the partnership challenges.

A key factor of a strategic partnership is openness to possibilities. **Partnership development is an art.** There is no right way for every situation. If a specific goal or objective is desired, and help is wanted to achieve it, a traditional partnership might be the path to follow. If real sustainable change is sought, and the enabling environment is conducive, a strategic partnership surfaces as the desired approach.

Some of the characteristics of successful partnerships are reflected in the following I's of Partnering (Kanter, Rosabeth Moss, 1994):

- Individual Excellence: Competency - Each partner should be competent and have something to offer the other partner(s)
- Importance: Shared Vision/Goals - The goal or vision is shared and important to each of the partners. The relationship should play a key role in the achievement of the goal or vision.
- Interdependence: Complementary Skills and Resources - Partners have complimentary skills and resources that they are willing to share. By working together they can achieve more than either could individually.
- Investment: Commitment, Pooled Resources and Shared Responsibility/Liability
Partners make a commitment to each other by investing in the partnership in some way.
- The investment need not be financial. Investment implies that risk and liability are shared although it might not always be equal.
- Information: Communication Mechanism and Openness to Sharing Information.
Partners should have a clear and open communication system in which information and ideas are shared openly and regularly.
- Integration: Flexible Structure and Linkages – Partners should have a flexible structure and linkages. Integration may be strategic (goals and objectives), tactical (plan, project or specific activities), operational (day-to-day activities), interpersonal (personal connections between people) and cultural (norms, values and styles).
- Integrity: Trust - Honesty and integrity are critical to the success of any partnership.
Partners must be able to trust each other for the partnership to survive and thrive.

- **Institutionalization:** Formal Status of the Relationship - Formal partnership status comes with clear responsibilities and decision-making processes. It extends beyond the individuals who formed the partnership to the organizations involved.

Partnerships come in several types and the various types have different purposes and applications (Loden, Connie Loley, 2002, p. 2)

| | Traditional Partnership | Strategic Partnership |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Motivation | Specific Goal | Shared Vision |
| Resources | Sameness | Diversity |
| Working Model | Achievement: Desire, Cooperation | Entrepreneurial: Courage, Risk |
| Duration | Until Goal is Achieved | Until new goals evolve |

Often Traditional Partnerships will be informal without written agreements. Strategic Partnerships should be formal partnerships with rights and responsibilities clearly spelled out. Strategic partnerships tend to:

- Be intersectorial
- Have diverse stakeholders
- Exercise diffuse leadership
- Have transparent, participatory structures
- Develop open communication systems
- Make decisions based on consensus
- Be open to outcome and change
- Rely on trust among the partners and in the process
- Be willing to suspend personal/hidden agendas
- Be reliant on shared or complementary vision

Some partnerships also evolve and change. They can evolve

Readiness to Partner

To determine the readiness of an organization to partner and the resulting mutual benefits the following questions should be asked.

- Who are the Partners?
- What are the benefits in partnering with these partners?
- What will be the partnership structure?
- What are the obstacles?
- What are the strengths?
- What results can be created?

Evaluating the answers to these questions, helps to determine universities' readiness to partner.

Expected long-term benefits include:

- Improved efficiency and cost effectiveness
- Investment opportunities for business growth
- Increased opportunity for innovation
- Collaboration
- Appropriately skilled and motivated pool of labor
- and the continuous improvement of quality and services

Local strategic partnerships are an ideal forum for universities' music departments to work at improving their local community at a strategic level, on issues that impact on their ability to do business effectively, aiming at improving quality of all stakeholders: student satisfaction, access, learning effectiveness, faculty satisfaction and institutional cost effectiveness (Lawton, Smith H., 2003).

2. WHY TO CREATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS. MEETING NEW CHALLENGES WITH PARTNERSHIPS

Universities are organizations and thus they need to be able to diagnose the enabling environment, and also build competence to both influence and adapt to it as that environment evolves (Savedoff, 1998). Universities are now operating in an environment that consists of complex relationships with a variety of other organizations. This environment provides multiple contexts that affect universities and their performance, what they produce, and how they operate (Nabli and Nugent, 1989). A measurement of organizational performance needs to involve the perceptions of the organization's multiple constituencies or stakeholders, including those who work within the organization (Hassard and Parker, 1993). The economic and social challenges confronting the universities may appear to be major obstacles. Alternatively, these - same challenges can present opportunities for creativity and innovation - opportunities to reflect and develop and implement new strategies in achieving desired goals and outcomes: involving students in research and evaluation, connecting developmental theory to after university program practice and evaluation, and including communities as agents in positive educational development.

One way of addressing the challenge is to form strategic partnerships with other universities and organizations, domestically or in other markets (Zineldin, Mosad 2004). Strategic partnerships in the context of this paper are not based on co-operative rhetoric, involving only minor contractual matters. Many universities have traditionally provided a range of services including training programs, research and consultancies to local and regional companies. It has been recognized for sometime now that university-business/industry relationship cannot be one-sided.

- Music business and industry can assist universities' music departments in remaining viable in the midst of economic and cultural turmoil and unable to respond to their ever-changing needs (Millar, Carla, C. J. M., Choi, Chong Ju and Chen, Stephen, 2004)
- Universities' music departments can learn a great deal from the corporate sector, particularly at a time when the role of and need for higher education is frequently questioned (Hughey, 1997).

3. WHY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Southeastern European countries have formed national strategies aiming harmonizing to EU norms. Some years ago, Balkan countries have started to form national strategies that set out the fundamental aims, policies and priorities in the process of acquiring a membership in the EU, because:

- these strategies are a sign of maturity to recognize the way to EU
- domestic public - to get acquainted with the directions for harmonizing the national with EU policies
- public abroad - a prove for the strategic goal - joining then EU.

Main objectives of these strategies (Developing Administrative Capacity, 2001) are:

- To be a summary of priorities and directions in the process of EI for the Government, ministries, involved institutions;
- To help in preparation and implementation of various programs in new areas and related researches;
- To be a tool for public administration reform and its harmonization with the EU requirements, as well as coordination of sectoral priorities;
- To ensure that fiscal policy and budget planning are closely following the requirements of the process of EU integration;
- To ensure the accesses to the knowledge and priorities on EU by regular communication and open dialogue between the Government and citizens.

The sufficient administrative capacity is not a luxury for governments: its deficiencies can have substantial legal and financial consequences for the state concerned (Moxon-Browne, E., 2002).

4. HOW TO CREATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE SE EUROPE IN THE FIELD OF MUSIC

The starting point of the analysis has to be the predominance of the process takes a university mandate for a strategic partnership and translates into a strategy for the

university. Typically known as the strategic planning process, it focuses on concepts of objectives, intervention logic, prioritization and risks, which can be framed as the following questions:

1. Assessment of the current level of the university performance and compare to university stated goals. Identification of gaps that need to be addressed by the university and work. Prioritization and quantification of the impact of each initiative in the framework of the strategic partnership.

2. What are the goals of the strategic partnership and why it is this university that is involved in fulfilling those objectives? Goal definition, thus, has to be a key exercise and one that is done on a very regular basis. Experience showed that organizations did not serve a singular goal, but rather had multiple goals and sub-goals (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983).

3. How is the university going to fulfill this mandate? The program logic shows how the university aims to use inputs to produce outputs and how strategic partnerships will help achieve outcomes. In the private sector, the marketing function evaluates an organization's image or position in the marketplace and reaches strategic decisions concerning the music industry, target markets, services and products (Beesley, 1995).

4. Given the university may not have sufficient capacity to be involved in all areas, what are its priorities and how are they set? Once again, for purposes of ascertaining organizational capability, resolution of this question determines the extent to which the university will be able to fulfill the mandate of strategic partnership.

5. Development of a detailed plan of action that moves the university's performance toward its goals, measures the progress and brings the strategic partnership closer towards the desired state.

6. Ensure the changes implemented are being assimilated into daily behavior changes and monitor the critical success factors required to insure a successful implementation of the strategic partnership.

7. Finally, what risks does the university faces in its work and how will they be managed? Management of the risks can include avoidance, minimization, transfer and/or internalization to the production process (Allen, D.K., 2003).

8. Report on the return on investment, evaluation of the changes that have been implemented and identification of additional areas for improvement.

The basis of finding answers to these queries lies in examining the sequential and rather straightforward relationship between results, strategy and capability. The relevant question is “strategic partnership capability for what?” and the “what” is the implementation of a specific strategy intended to produce specific results. Obviously, the assumption of linearity in the relationship is false because just as available capability constraints results and strategy, capability too may have to evolve to allow the proper implementation strategic partnership.

Neither do these concepts exist in a vacuum. The university’s environment shapes perceptions of the desirability of specific results, tends to impose constraints on capability and may limit options for strategy (or open up new ones) that, in turn, can change the capability needed.

5. OUR PROPOSAL: BUSINESS ORIENTATED STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (TWO UNIVERSITY MUSIC DEPARTMENTS AND ONE LOCAL COMPANY FROM THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Our action plan is incorporating a range of initiatives covering:

1. undergraduate education,

a. The first step will be that a European university music department, a university music department from Southeastern Europe and a private company from the music industry have to examine the issues of preparing students with graduate attributes desired by a specific industry. New graduates are often described by the music industry as not well rounded and needing to develop such attributes as practical application of theoretical knowledge and 'people skills'. Our proposal is to provide a structured learning environment for undergraduate students by integrating university studies with authentic work experiences in the music industry. The program will involve sending undergraduate students to music industry sites for a period of up to twelve weeks during the University semester. While they are on-site, they will complete professional tasks and will study their University courses in an integrated and innovative way.

b. A chair of a special Education will be created as result of the strategic partnership agreement with the music industry and funding allocated. A university Professor could be appointed as the Chair of industry Education. The position will involve extensive liaison between the company and two Universities as a whole. This Professor will have offices both at the company and at the University.

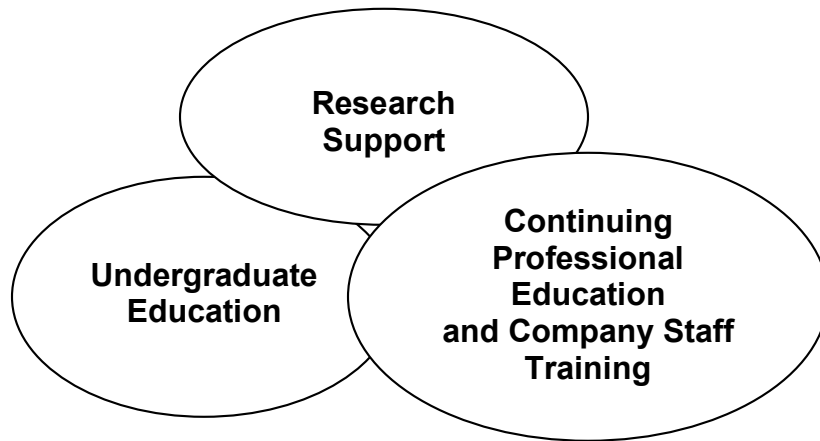
2. company staff training and continuing professional education

The two Universities will offer several programs, some leading to a degree, others, short term designed specifically to assist professionals to upgrade their skills and knowledge or to learn new techniques. The short-term courses will range from music theory, musicology, music engineering, the music industry related techniques, such as use of marketing tools, management of distribution channels, adds business plans, etc. Training and education available through the two Universities will help the specific company and other companies remain competitive in today's highly volatile international marketplace. All company's employees will enroll at the Universities to upgrade their qualifications and education is entitled to benefit from their vast resources and services.

3. and Research support

Efficient business in the music industry in the S/E Europe has to rely on up-to-date reliable and accurate information. The company that participates to this partnership has to develop its own Management Information System which will be also its knowledge

management system. It will be designed to assist employees access a wide range of resources as a one-stop shop. The company's managers will quick to realize the benefits of linking their knowledge management system to the two Universities MIS.



6. BENEFITS OF OUR PROPOSAL

Benefits of our Action Plan to the stakeholders can be summarized in the following way:

For the students of Music

- ❖ Learning in context
- ❖ Connecting 'theory' with 'practice'
- ❖ Developing all round skills (teamwork, leadership, communications etc.)
- ❖ Developing self-managed learning skills, the basis of life long learning
- ❖ Acquiring an appreciation of business imperatives

For the two Universities

- Leverage the experience of top corporate university leaders and develop strategies that impact performance in today's volatile economy

- Improved courses and learning materials
- Universities' programs become more marketable to prospective students
- Cultural change in university education
- Collaboration between academic staff and industry staff in preparation and execution phases, leading to opportunities for consulting and collaborative research projects
- Academic staff becomes more experienced in preparing flexible learning materials

For the music industry partner

- Talent spotting/extended assessment program for potential recruits
- Valuable on-site project work, especially through thesis project
- Intellectual stimulus to young employees on site; boost for staff
- Good young brains looking at thorny problems
- Opportunities for the younger staff to manage and lead junior professionals

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As music industry and universities look for improvement in their relationships through an increasing number of strategic partnerships, inclusion of university libraries, archives and information centers as active participants seems both inevitable and necessary. The role these information sites play in its parent organization's partnership activities can and will benefit all parties concerned, the corporation, the University and these sites. The benefits resulting from university-company strategic partnership are:

- Enhanced information center-faculty alliances,
- Perception of the information center new role as an active partner by the university administrators and academics,
- Use of the information center's role by the university administration to provide a competitive edge and increase the university's market share,
- New opportunities and new perspectives for information staff in dealing with corporations to respond to their information needs and requirements,
- Information staff perceptions of themselves as active participants in the university's external activities,

- Opportunities for information staff to undertake consultancy activities in corporations,
- Financial gains.

The information involvement in the proposed strategic partnership will open the way to form new partnerships with other business in the music industry.

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