

12-1987

A report of an Arts Administration internship with Elizabeth Ireland McCann productions, New York City, Fall, 1986 : a report

Lisa Riley
University of New Orleans

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uno.edu/aa_rpts

Recommended Citation

Riley, Lisa, "A report of an Arts Administration internship with Elizabeth Ireland McCann productions, New York City, Fall, 1986 : a report" (1987). *Arts Administration Master's Reports*. 92.
https://scholarworks.uno.edu/aa_rpts/92

This Master's Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by ScholarWorks@UNO with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Master's Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Master's Report has been accepted for inclusion in Arts Administration Master's Reports by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

A REPORT ON AN ARTS ADMINISTRATION INTERNSHIP WITH
ELIZABETH IRELAND MCCANN PRODUCTIONS, NEW YORK CITY,
FALL, 1986

A Report

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Arts Administration

by

Lisa Riley

December 1987

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT


MASTERS
REPORT
1987
.R55


Candidate: Lisa Riley

Major Field: Arts Administration

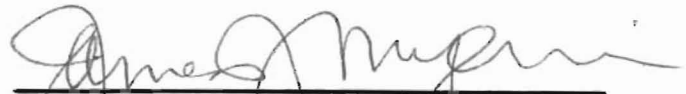
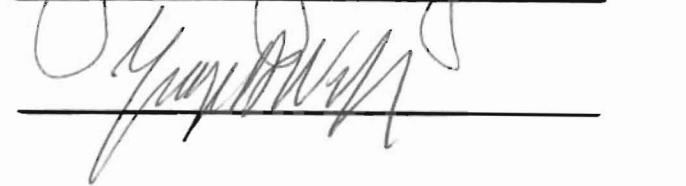
Title of Thesis: A Report on an Arts Administration Internship with
Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions, New York
City, Fall, 1986

Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman


Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

November 12, 1987

5007632

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. A PROFILE OF THE ARTS ORGANIZATION 2

II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP. 5

III. AN ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS 15

IV. THE INTERN'S RECOMMENDATIONS 24

V. THE INTERN'S CONTRIBUTIONS: LONG AND SHORT TERM 31

VI. CONCLUSION 34

BIBLIOGRAPHY 35

INTRODUCTION

This submission is an analytical report that chronicles and evaluates the internship experience of Lisa Riley at the New York producing office of Elizabeth Ireland McCann (EIM). The internship period commenced August 4, 1986 and concluded December 2, 1986.

As required by the University of New Orleans for the fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Arts Administration, this report will describe the organizational structure of Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions. It will then analyze management problems the intern discovered throughout the course of the internship and offer recommendations for the resolution of these managerial problems. Finally, a discussion will ensue to determine the actual long and short-term contributions the intern made towards the organization.

CHAPTER I

A PROFILE OF THE ARTS ORGANIZATION

The original premise of the subject internship was for Ms. Riley (the "Intern") to intern with McCann and Nugent Productions, Incorporated (MNPI) which was a highly respected Broadway producing firm from which such Tony-winning productions as AMADEUS, DRACULA, and THE ELEPHANT MAN had emerged. Upon applying for a position in that company, however, the intern learned that by the time her internship would begin, that company would no longer exist; one of the two founders, Nelle Nugent, would be leaving the partnership and the corporation would restructure under the sole proprietorship of Elizabeth Ireland McCann. Unfortunately, the partnership had dissolved under bitter circumstances primarily because of a failed 1950's-style dance show entitled LEADER OF THE PACK, which left the remaining partner in dire legal and financial straits and the general office structure in turmoil. It was a positive learning experience, however, for the intern to encounter the aftermath of the breakup and participate in the reorganization of the company, as well as lend aid in the reaffirmation of Ms. McCann's self-confidence as a Broadway producer.

The MNPI break-up had occurred prior to the intern's arrival

in New York City. Nelle Nugent had departed for California to pursue a new career as a film producer with Walt Disney Productions; the office had relocated from a suite in the Paramount Building on Broadway to a one-room location in a building owned by the Shubert Organization on 47th Street; and the majority of the staff had been dismissed. All that remained from the MNPI empire was a seemingly insurmountable deficit. Liz McCann was left to continue her work on Broadway with only the help of Lora Wiley, her business manager, Thom Schilling, her personal assistant, and Dan Kearns, her company manager and confidant. Mary Nealon and David Musselman, two former employees and co-founders of a theatrical management company, Next Wave Management, were still loyal to Ms. McCann. They helped her tremendously through the transition period and were contracted regularly as general managers or co-managers for subsequent EIM shows.

Financial resources were limited due to expenses involving the litigation and the dissolution of the partnership. Monies, however, were still being earned from two sources; subsidiary income from past shows such as THE GIN GAME, MORNINGS AT SEVEN, NICHOLAS NICKELBY and CRIMES OF THE HEART, and a substantial General Management fee for the Tony-nominated dance show, TANGO ARGENTINO. TANGO ARGENTINO was and is presently touring throughout the United States, Europe, and the Orient.

Despite the break-up, the intern encountered a productive and enthusiastic staff. Lizz McCann was in the process of planning many projects for the upcoming season. First, EIM had been hired to

general manage a new Off-Broadway production entitled GROUCHO, a show that chronicles the life of Groucho Marx and the Marx brothers. Second, the producers of TANGO ARGENTINO created a second dance show entitled FLAMENCO PURO and hired EIM as the general management company. Third, and most importantly, Ms. McCann was determined to import two successful shows from London, STEPPING OUT and LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES. The imports would be her first attempts as a solo producer. It was necessary to find financial backers for the projects, however this process will be discussed later in this report.

CHAPTER II

A DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP

The intern became an integral member of the four person office staff. As an administrative assistant, various tasks were assigned to the intern whose degrees of creativity and responsibility increased as the internship period progressed. One can divide the internship into three distinct stages: 1) the trial stage; 2) the acceptance stage; and 3) the creativity stage. Each of these three stages will be discussed separately in the following paragraphs.

The responsibilities assigned to the intern during the trial stage can best be described as mundane. The reasoning behind this is obvious; the internship sponsors did not know the extent of the intern's capabilities and trustworthiness, hence, their hesitation of assigning tasks of any importance or magnitude. Conversely, the intern did not know to what extent she could delve into records and financial statements and how many questions she could ask of the staff before she would overstep her boundaries. Initially, this caused the intern to be reserved in her actions and speech. The combination of these factors thwarted many potentially mutually rewarding early endeavors. The intern, however, understood that it would only be a matter of time before she would become an accepted

member of the organization.

The intern, after a brief orientation period, was asked to answer the telephone, post the mail, type labels and envelopes, file bank statements, and photocopy bills, checks and correspondence. The intern also took it upon herself to create projects that she observed needed doing such as, re-organizing and consolidating the contact books from previous shows, updating the "Bible" which was a consolidation of the rules and regulations from the various theatrical unions, and cleaning the office so as to prepare for the upcoming move to the new office space which was to occur in early September.

Also, a major portion of the intern's day was spent running errands throughout the borough of Manhattan. These errands enabled the intern to learn the geography of the city and master the public transportation system. More importantly, the errands often took her to the offices of many influential members of the theater community such as James Nederlander, Gerry Schoenfeld and Susan Smith.

As anticipated by the intern, her independent actions enhanced the quality of her internship. She learned that she was not only allowed, but encouraged, to explore through all and any past records and make as many inquiries of the staff as she needed. Also, her efforts and input were greatly appreciated which, in turn, earned her respect from her co-workers and Liz McCann herself.

As time passed and both parties were becoming more familiar and comfortable with each other's presence, the intern initiated a conversation with the Business Manager, Lora Wiley, requesting that

she be given more responsibilities. This discussion, which coincided with the opening of GROUCHO, marked the beginning of the acceptance stage.

It is the intern's opinion that a sign of one's being actually accepted and becoming a trusted member of an organization is being assigned tasks having to do with financial matters. Thus, the acceptance stage is characterized by the addition of tasks of this nature. The intern was assigned to the task of writing profit-distribution information letters and mailing these, along with checks that she prepared, to investors of past shows. Additionally, the intern was requested to create a ledger recording the activities of the reserve funds which were individual money market accounts designated for each show, as well as make deposits into the appropriate accounts. Next, the intern was required to meet with the banker from Chemical Bank, Mr. Ken Strausse, and working closely with him, opening new accounts, closing defunct ones, obtaining check-cashing signature cards for cast members of shows, depositing checks and withdrawing petty cash and emergency funds.

All of the duties listed above were assigned in addition to the numerous tasks for which the intern was already responsible. This gave the intern a greater sense of responsibility, involvement and, most importantly, belonging. She, however, wanted a creative outlet and brought this to the attention of Ms. Wiley and Mr. Kearns. Three ideas were generated from this discussion and will be described in the following paragraphs. These also mark the beginning of the final

stage, the creativity stage.

The first creative project to which the intern was assigned was to invite the members of the Tony-Voter Board to a performance of their choice of FLAMENCO PURO. This task entailed the designing, writing, and printing of an invitation which was mailed to approximately two hundred-and-fifty of the leading figures in the entertainment industry. These individuals included those such as Jessica Tandy, Christopher Reeve and Irwin Meyer. The intern accommodated these individuals when they responded to the invitation by arranging their tickets with the Box Office Manager at the Mark Hellenger Theater, and also by answering any questions they might have concerning the production. The purpose behind this invitation was to encourage these individuals to nominate the production for a Tony Award, the highest honor in the theater world. Although the production was critically acclaimed, FLAMENCO PURO was not nominated for an award.

Related to this project, the intern was in charge of house seat allocations for GROUCHO. This task required the use of strong public relations and organizational skills by the intern. According to Donald Farber in his book Producing Theater: A Comprehensive Legal and Business Guide, house seats are usually the best and most expensive seats in the theater. The producer of a show may offer these seats to such persons as the author, the director, the public relations director, and the cast members. Each individual is usually allowed two tickets per performance and ten pair for the night of the

official opening.¹

There is usually little controversy involving house seat allocation. The reason for this is that tickets are not free, but they are valuable and anyone who wants them can usually obtain them. It is common practice for individuals to call a producer's office between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to make reservations for house seats. If there are any tickets available for the desired performance and if the requestee is someone to which the producer will extend this privilege, reservations are made for that person. If, however, he or she does not pick the tickets up two hours before the show curtain goes up, the reservations are cancelled and the tickets may be sold to the general public. If the tickets are not sold, the requestee is required to pay for them.

On occasion, the intern declined requests for GROUCHO house seats. Reasons for the declination would either be that the requestee had a reputation for failing to pick up and/or pay for house seat tickets or that he or she was not considered an important enough person by the EIM staff's standards to merit the privilege.

Ms. McCann, in addition to being an independent Broadway producer, was the Executive Director of the only non-profit European-style circus in New York City called The Big Apple Circus. Thus, a second idea that culminated into a creative project for the intern

¹Donald C. Farber, Producing Theatre: A Comprehensive Legal and Business Guide. (New York: Drama Book Publishers, 1981), p. 27.

was assisting the administrative staff of the Circus with their annual fund drive. This project required the intern to write amusing solicitation letters to "Gold Star" patrons in a style imitating Ms. McCann. These letters were sent to Ms. McCann's friends and associates and other potentially large contributors. At the time of the writing of this report, the 1986-87 Annual Fund Drive of The Big Apple Circus was a success, allowing the Circus to survive for yet another season.

The third and most pertinent project with which the intern became involved came about during the intern's on-site inspection by her faculty advisor, Dr. Kevin Graves. Members of the EIM staff, including the intern, were discussing the logistics of financing the upcoming production of STEPPING OUT. STEPPING OUT was a show about the trials and tribulations of the members of a tap dancing class which was set in England. Since it was an impossibility for EIM to finance the entire show by itself, it was decided that it would be necessary to recruit investors and form a Limited Partnership.

According to Stephen Langley in his book entitled, Theatre Management in America, the formation of a single production company for the purpose of producing a single show is the most common method for producing on Broadway. Virtually all commercial productions are organized around a Limited Partnership Agreement because of the legal and tax advantages for both the producer and investor. Such an agreement creates two types of partners: the General Partner, who in the case of STEPPING OUT would be Ms. McCann, and the Limited Partners,

who would be the investors that EIM procured. The General Partner would assume all control over the affairs of the partnership and all legal liabilities and risks. The Limited Partners, on the other hand, would be liable for the dollar amount of their investment plus an additional small percentage referred to as "overcall." Due to the greater risk factor, the General Partner would profit more from the venture, if, indeed, the show was successful.²

Mr. Dan Kearns was named as the Associate Producer of STEPPING OUT and was expected to organize and oversee the bulk of the project. The intern was asked to help Mr. Kearns locate names and contact numbers of potential investors. This was accomplished by delving through past records of investors in previous EIM shows and making judgments as to whether each individual was a qualified candidate. These judgments were based on three criteria; the dollar amount each individual had invested in other productions, the type of production in which they seemed to be most interested, and whether it was with Elizabeth McCann or Nelle Nugent the individual had a liaison.

The next step after gathering a list of names of potential investors was to put together an investor package which contained a manuscript of STEPPING OUT, information about the production's history, confidential financial data, and a blank promissory letter. This package was to be presented to each of those of the aforementioned

²Stephen Langley, Theatre Management in America, (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1974), pp. 90-92.

candidates who had shown interest in the project at an event called a backers' audition. A backers' audition is a frequently used method in which producers raise enthusiasm and ultimately, fundings for their projects by inviting potential investors to a party of sorts. At this event, a staged reading of the production's manuscript is performed by professional actors. Drawings or models of the scenery and the costumes are also presented so that the potential investors, many of them businessmen, can visualize the artistic concepts more easily. Also, food and drink would be served to make the evening festive and memorable. Most importantly, the producer would be available to answer questions and promote the venture personally.³

It is unfortunate that the internship period had concluded before the intern could complete this project. She was able to turn in to Mr. Kearns a long listing of potential investors and aid in the early planning stages of the backers' audition. This experience did, however, teach the intern the processes by which a Broadway show is produced.

What actually happened with the STEPPING OUT project after the internship was completed is an interesting story. Although this occurred after the internship was completed, it merits being disclosed in this report. The backers' audition was unsuccessful. There were not enough investors interested in the project to raise the necessary capital. Ms. McCann had to devise another method by which to raise

³Ibid., p. 93.

the money. She approached her former boss, James Nederlander of the Nederlander Organization, Gerry Schoenfeld and Bernard Jacobs of the Shubert Organization, Jerome Minskoff, an independent Broadway producer, and Bill Kenwright, the London producer of STEPPING OUT, and offered them the co-producership of Broadway's STEPPING OUT. With the exception of Bill Kenwright, the remaining offerees were not enthusiastic about the proposition. The group presented Ms. McCann with a counter-offer; if allowed to co-produce with Ms. McCann the anticipated box office hit, LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES, then they would agree to co-produce STEPPING OUT.

Ms. McCann, anxious to build her reputation as a solo producer, that is, without Ms. Nugent, agreed to their terms. She, however, was rightfully apprehensive about the success of the newly-formed partnership; the Nederlander Organization and the Shubert Organization historically are rivals and have conflicting styles of producing. Although the intern does not know the intimate details, she has learned that Ms. McCann's fears were not unwarranted and the production itself was in jeopardy many times due to partnership disagreements.⁴

At the time of the writing of this report, STEPPING OUT had closed after only a three-month run. It succeeded, however, to earn a Tony nomination in the "Best Leading Actress" category for the performance of Carole Shelley. LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES, which

⁴Interview with Lora Wiley, Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions, New York, 7 January 1987.

opened shortly after the closing of STEPPING OUT, enjoyed a very profitable run until September 1987 when Union problems arose concerning the utilization of foreign actors on an American stage. LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES, nonetheless, was nominated for several Tony awards in various categories, including, "Best Play."⁵

⁵Variety, 10 June 1987.

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

During the course of the internship, the intern encountered three distinct management problems; physical disorganization of the office space, a lack of communication amongst and between members of the EIM and Next Wave Management staffs, and an unclear chain of command. These three problems will be discussed and analyzed in the following paragraphs.

The most obvious and disturbing problem was the physical disorganization of the office space. According to Eleanor Oshry Shatzher in her article entitled, "Save Time and Money by Weeding Out Old Records," disorganization has many detrimental effects on any given business or organization. For example, she states that disorganization decreases the efficiency levels at which staff members are capable of working. Instead of producing, the workers waste valuable time searching for necessary tools. This, in turn, increases their levels of anxiety and frustration.⁶

Locating specific items at the 47th Street location was often a frustrating feat. The numerous transfiles and filing cabinets were

⁶Eleanor Oshry Shatzher, "Save Time and Money By Weeding Out Old Records," in The Arts Management Reader, ed. Alvin H. Russ (New York: Audience Arts Division of Mared Dekher, 1979), p. 9.

generally mislabeled and/or contained superfluous items. Notebooks and files were either not current, incomplete or contained numerous unnecessary duplicates.

Ms. Shatzher notes that although most businesses and organizations recognize the need for written records, too few recognize the need for their destruction.⁷ This observation directly applies to the EIM office in light of the above-mentioned filing system, or lack thereof. A detailed resolution for this problem using Ms. Shatzher's recommendations will be presented in the next chapter.

Ms. Shatzher also states that disorganization can be costly because of the additional expenses involved in wasted clerical time, the purchase cost of extra file cabinets and boxes, plus storage space rental fees.⁸ EIM rented two such costly storage spaces. One was located in a room next to 47th Street office. It was filled literally with hundreds of transfiles, old pieces of furniture, show posters and assorted memorabilia. These items were haphazardly stored among similar items belonging to the Shubert Organization. Due to an inadequate labeling system, it was difficult to discern which items belonged to whom, as well as what was contained in each.

The second space was located on Broadway and 43rd Street which was five blocks south of the office. Retrieving items from this space was nightmarish: not only were the boxes and furniture

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁸Ibid.

pieces piled high to the ceiling, but one had to sneak in and out of the building because EIM had failed to pay rent on the space for several months.

The intern learned through experience the other possible ramifications disorganization can have on a business. As stated earlier in this report, there was a litigation in progress concerning the MNPI production of LEADER OF THE PACK. When involved in a litigation, it is necessary for both the plaintiff and defendant to turn over all pertinent documents, records and correspondence to their respective attorneys to be used as either background material or possibly, evidence. While attempting to organize the office space as to prepare for the upcoming move, the intern found files pertaining to LEADER OF THE PACK. In fact, one of these files was found underneath a radiator in a corner of the office. The significance of these documents is not known to the intern, however, it is possible that they were vital to the outcome of the case. More importantly, it is very probably that other such documents were hidden in or among any of the untouched boxes, transfiles and/or notebooks in either the office or storage spaces. Nonetheless, if the office had an efficient and effective organizational system, these papers would have been filed in such a way they would have been together and ready to be surrendered upon request.

The second and third problems prevalent in the EIM office were a distinct lack of communication among and between EIM and Next Wave Management staff members and, an unclear chain of command.

Although these problems were not immediately evident to the intern, as was the disorganization factor, they existed and were equally as problematic and disturbing.

It is often stated in managerial textbooks that communication is "the transmission of information between two or more parties so that it is understood."⁹ According to Ferdinand F. Fournies in his publication entitled, Coaching For Improved Work Performance, this definition is inadequate. He explains that because the mind receives information six times faster than we speak, speaking is merely a reactive function. Thus, in order to have successful communication, two or more parties must have thought communication. Fournies further explains that for one party to be certain that his thoughts have been successfully communicated, he must find out what the other person is thinking. This can only be accomplished by asking the other party questions that do not require merely a "yes" or "no" answer and wait for a response.¹⁰

Through observation, it became clear to the intern that the staff members of both EIM and Next Wave Management did not communicate well with one another. Often when one member would be speaking to another, either in person or on the telephone, the supposed listener would continue working on an unrelated project and would reply with a "Ya," "Okay" or "I'll get to it later." It is obvious that the

⁹Ferdinand F. Fournies, Coaching For Improved Work Performance, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1978), p. 78.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 80-82.

listener only half-heard what was said. The listener's brain was working six times faster solving the original concern. Consequently, the concerns of the speaker were neglected entirely or until much later.

The following example illustrates the detrimental effect poor communication can have on office efficiency:

Next Wave Management, as previously noted, is a young theatrical general management company founded by two former MNPI employees, Mary Nealon and David Musselman. The Next Wave Management office is located on Ninth Avenue between 44th and 45th Streets. At the time of the following incident, the EIM office had relocated to its present address on 42nd Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. This illustrates the physical distance between the two offices.

At the time of the incident, TANGO ARGENTINO was touring the United States, performing in each city for approximately two weeks. Before the tour could set-up in a new city, it was imperative that all of the proper contracts be signed and delivered to the business office of the venue in the new city. In this particular instance, TANGO ARGENTINO had completed its run in Boston and was preparing to move to Philadelphia. Two days before the move, the business manager in Philadelphia contacted Hans Hortig, the show's company manager, in Boston and explained that they had not received the necessary contracts. He further explained that he could not allow the tour to set-up in his theater until the contracts were signed and in his hands. Because of this oversight the show was in danger of losing

two weeks of performance time and more importantly, two weeks of profits.

Upon learning of this news, Mr. Hortig notified the EIM office. He spoke directly to Mr. Kearns who, in previous months, had acted as TANGO's company manager. Mr. Kearns instructed Ms. Wiley to call Next Wave Management since it was his understanding that Next Wave was responsible for delivering the contracts. Ms. Nealon replied that she was lead to believe that Ms. Wiley had been asked to take care of them in this particular instance due to a conversation the two women allegedly had a week prior. Ms. Wiley could not recall the conversation. After a lengthy and heated discussion, it was determined that Ms. McCann had told Ms. Nealon that EIM would be responsible for the Philadelphia contracts and it was assumed by Ms. Nealon that someone in the EIM was made aware of the change. Unfortunately, neither Ms. McCann nor Ms. Nealon followed-up on the change.

Consequently, due to many assumptions and a lack of communication among and between members of the two staffs, the task had not been completed. Although the contracts were hastily signed and delivered to the Philadelphia business office, the incident caused friction and mistrust between the staff members.

According to Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman in their publication entitled, In Search of Excellence, "if an organization is to work effectively, the communication should be through the most effective channels regardless of the organizational

chart."¹¹ Although the intern believes this statement to be true, she believes the theory does not pertain to EIM. Instead, before the members of EIM can successfully discern the most effective channels for communicating, the organization must have a coherent organizational chart or clear chain of command. EIM did not.

Ideally, according to Jim Cavanaugh in his publication entitled, The Theater Student, "there must exist a clearly defined chain of command where every individual in the organization is fully aware of this existing chain of command, of who his superiors are, who his subordinates are, and of just what responsibilities, rights and limits he has in that chain. The assumption of anything is taboo; responsibilities must be made known to all and must be fulfilled on time and when fulfilled, must be reported directly back to his or her superior."¹²

In the case of EIM, there existed no clearly defined chain of command. Other than acknowledging Ms. McCann as the authority figure, neither Mr. Kearns, Ms. Wiley, Mr. Schilling nor Ms. Nealon and Mr. Musselman, could identify, if asked, who were their superiors and subordinates. The intern believed that each thought themselves superior or at least equal to one another because of their positioning to Ms. McCann: Ms. Wiley felt she was in charge because she was the

¹¹Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., In Search of Excellence, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1982), p. 50.

¹²Jim Cavanaugh, The Theater Student, (New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1973), pp. 19-21.

office and business manager; Mr. Kearns thought he had authority because he was Ms. McCann's confidant; Ms. Nealon and Mr. Musselman thought they had superiority over the members of the EIM office because, although they had branched out into their own business, they had the most experience in the field; and Mr. Schilling thought he was an equal because he was Ms. McCann's personal assistant.

Throughout the research process for this report, the intern could not find an organizational chart that would accurately depict the chain of command evident in the EIM office. If she were to create one, on the top line would be Ms. McCann and on the second line, each of the staff members, including those of Next Wave Management, would be on a horizontal line. The positioning of the intern would be on a third line beneath everyone else. In fact, it was difficult for the intern to prioritize instructions given to her by the staff members because of this horizontal command configuration. Inevitably, she would anger one of the staff members if she completed someone else's instructions before theirs.

According to Norman S. Kanderlan in his publication entitled, The Role of the Arts Administrator, personality is a major factor that rules how an individual tends to behave in any given environment. It dictates his motives, values, sensitivities and habits. It also determines how one will react when given direction from a superior or "role sender," conditions his response to pressure and colors his perception of set pressures.¹³ In the case of EIM and Next Wave

¹³Norman S. Kanderlan, The Role of the Arts Administrator, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), p. 13.

Management, personalities of the individuals involved were a major factor in their actions, reactions and patterns of thinking. Although each person recognized Ms. McCann as the dominant role sender, when given instructions by any one of the other members, often the role receiver would react to this instruction unfavorably. This is because they did not recognize this person as one from which they were required to take orders. Thus, this lack of recognition colored their perception of set pressures which caused him or her to be confused and disgruntled. This would result in a lack of cooperation between the individuals.

In the case of the above-mentioned TANGO ARGENTINO example, if, in fact, there had been a clearly defined chain of command, Ms. McCann would have been able to successfully delegate the duty of completing the TANGO contracts. The information would have filtered down the chain and been received by all those parties involved. The responsible party would have prepared and delivered the contracts. There would have not been the assumption that everyone knew about the change. Once the task had been completed, that information could have filtered back to Ms. McCann through the proper channels. No mistakes would have occurred, there would have been no miscommunication or disgruntlement and the task would have been completed. The nearly disastrous outcome could have been avoided.

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the intern will role play as a professional managerial consultant to the EIM organization. She will offer recommendations that she feels will help solve the afore-mentioned problems.

The obvious solution to the problem of disorganization is to become organized. The initial step in conducting this mass reorganization would be to clean the physical office space. It is difficult enough to work in a cluttered office but in the intern's opinion, it is an impossibility to work effectively in a dirty one. This step would entail removing trash, ancient telephone books, newspapers, broken pieces of office equipment, empty cans and bottles, and giving the office a thorough sweeping and dusting.

The next step would be to clear the office of things that belonged to other people. For example, a large space in the EIM office was devoted to set models belonging to Lynn Pecktal, the author of the widely-read, Designing and Painting for the Theatre.¹⁴

¹⁴Lynn Pecktal, Designing and Painting for the Theater, (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1975).

Not only were the set pieces in the way, some pieces were needlessly ruined by things being carelessly tossed on top of them.

The third step would be to examine the piles and boxes of scripts, books, and theatrical memorabilia. Unwanted items could be donated to a library, the Schubert archives, or a theatrical department at any university, college or school.

According to Ms. Shatzher, an organization must learn to control the growth of files. This includes the creation of new documents as well as the destruction of old. She labels this as "paperwork birthcontrol."¹⁵ She recommends that data should be consolidated in a "summary form" which can be broken down into active and inactive files. Unnecessary copies of records should not be kept in individual's permanent files and only the originals should be put into this summary form. In light of the fact that all documents have a limited useful life, each document should have a destruction schedule attached to it. This destruction schedule can be determined by legal requirements, the degree of risk of not having the record in the future and the frequency to which the record is referred. Records that are thought to be needed permanently should either be stored on a computer disc, microfiche, or bound together in a book.¹⁶

Another suggestion entails the reorganization of current show

¹⁵Eleanor Oshry Shatzher, "Save Time and Money By Weeding Out Old Records," p. 11.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 12.

files, alphabetizing, categorizing, color coding and labeling each sub-unit accordingly. A separate file drawer should be used for each show.

Office equipment should be updated. For example, EIM did not own a computer system. Such a system would solve many problems, including record retention, clerical redundancies, and ineffective accounting procedures. If there are adequate funds, there should be no hesitation on the part of EIM to purchase one. Also, since EIM's photocopier is approximately three years old and inoperable more of the time than not, it should also be replaced. In addition, both the telex and answering machines are antiquated and should also be updated.

EIM was fortunate to have the intern in the office at the time of its move to 42nd Street because she had the time, desire, and ability to facilitate many of the above suggestions. The actual facilitation, however, will be discussed in the next section.

The recommendations for solving the lack of communication, could not be handled as easily as the recommended solutions for office disorganization. The reason is that the lack of communication can only be solved by communicating; it cannot be purchased, leased, replaced or cleaned.

As was stated earlier in this report, the physical distance between the two offices was significant. A suggestion made by Ms. McCann that could help to open the lines of communication between the two offices would be for them to move closer

together.¹⁷ Presently, most of their communicating was conducted over the telephone or by messenger; it was rare to see Mary Nealon or David Musselman in the EIM offices and vice versa. If, for instance, Next Wave was to move downstairs from EIM, then the likelihood of daily personal contact between the two offices would be increased significantly. This would lessen the chance that the listener would be involved with concerns of his or her own while being spoken to and would also increase the likelihood that each person would take the time to listen to what was being said.

A second idea that would open the lines of communication would be conducting weekly or bi-weekly intra-office meetings. The meetings would give the parties the opportunity to keep the others abreast of the issues, share with one another on what projects each was working, what the specific problems and challenges were, how they were solved, if they were solved and if need be, give them the opportunity to ask for suggestions. These sessions would promote comradery. They would also lessen the chance of petty jealousies and cattiness.¹⁸

A third recommendation for opening the lines of communication would be to instate a practice of writing memos when something of minor or major importance arose or when someone had news of which he

¹⁷ Interview with Elizabeth Ireland McCann, Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions, 21 October 1986.

¹⁸ William N. Newman, E. Kirby Warren, Jerome E. Schnee, The Process of Management, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), pp. 12-19.

or she wanted everyone aware. These memos could either be circulated or posted on a common bulletin board.

Recommendations for solving the third problem of no clearly defined chain of command involve the delineation of specific duties of each individual. This might involve the preparation of job descriptions for each member. A job description, according to Robert L. Mathis and John H. Jackson in the publication entitled, Personnel: Human Resource Management, is "a summary of the tasks, duties, and responsibilities in a job."¹⁹ In a group of this size and taking into account the personalities involved, the preparation of a series of job descriptions would have to be a group effort. This might be achieved at one of the afore-mentioned weekly meetings. Each individual could explain to the others exactly which duties he or she feels he is responsible and why. These duties should be put into writing and copies should be distributed among the members of the office staffs.²⁰ Then, for example, if Mr. Schilling heard from Mr. Hortig that the reservations at Hotel X had not been made, he could refer to the sheet and see that Mr. Kearns was the responsible party for matters concerning the TANGO ARGENTINO tour. He could then relay this information directly to Mr. Kearns, rather than informing Ms. Wiley and depending on her to notify Mr. Kearns of

¹⁹Robert L. Mathis and John H. Jackson, Personnel: Human Resource Management, (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1985), p. 182.

²⁰William N. Newman, E. Kirby Warren, Jerome E. Schnee, The Process of Management, pp. 203-207.

the problem.

Accurate job descriptions would aid in the delineation of a clear chain of command. Perhaps the most effective manner in which to devise such job descriptions in the case of EIM would be for them to place each member in work groups linked together by persons who hold overlapping memberships in at least two groups. This means that a superior of one group is a subordinate in the work group of another. Conversely, they would change places in another work group. This is aimed towards facilitating task assignments.

For example, it could be determined through a job description that Ms. Nealon was in charge of checking accounts for all upcoming shows. Ms. Wiley could then be assigned as Ms. Nealon's subordinate for that particular responsibility. In this structure, both women would know exactly what their duties were in respect to banking matters. Then if Ms. Wiley was to neglect her responsibility of obtaining the paperwork for opening a bank account for Show X, which would hinder Ms. Nealon's ability to pay bills for that show, then it would be within Ms. Nealon's rights to reprimand Ms. Wiley for not fulfilling her responsibilities. Thus, the chain of command is clear in regards to banking matters as a result of the adoption of this system.

An additional example of how this system could work is in respect to the responsibility of making travel arrangements. It could be determined through a job description that Ms. Wiley was in charge of making travel arrangements for Ms. McCann. Ms. Nealon

could then be assigned as Ms. Wiley's subordinate for this particular responsibility. If Ms. Nealon were then to fail to pick up airline tickets on time, then it would be within Ms. Wiley's rights to reprimand her. Once again, the chain of command is clear in regards to travel arrangements as a result of the adoption of this system.

Through these two examples, one can see how one person works on different levels of the organizational chart depending on the work groups to which she is assigned. In case of banking matters, Ms. Wiley is the subordinate. Conversely, in the case of travel arrangements, she is the superior.

According to Dr. Rensis Likert in his article entitled, "Tips on Group Structure," organizations built on this principle can achieve higher motivation, better coordination, better communication, greater confidence and trust, higher productivity and lower costs than those relying on a man to man pattern of organization.²¹ It is the intern's belief that the adoption of such a system would help the EIM organization in the above-mentioned ways for a variety of reasons but primarily because of the various strong and conflicting personalities involved. Therefore, it is the intern's recommendation that EIM adopt this type of organizational structure.

²¹Dr. Rensis Likert, "Tips on Group Structure," in The Arts Management Reader, ed. Alvin H. Russ (New York: Audience Arts Division of Mared Dehker, 1979), p. 6.

CHAPTER V

THE INTERN'S CONTRIBUTIONS: LONG AND SHORT TERM

The most significant contribution the intern made to the EIM organization was her re-organization of the office. From her first day, she cleaned and re-organized the office and storage spaces. She encouraged the staff to examine boxes, transfiles, and piles of papers and throw unnecessary items away. As previously stated, the internship period coincided with the move to 42nd Street and she was ready, willing, and able to facilitate the cleaning project. More than once she was in the sub-basement of the Paramount Building consolidating boxes and throwing away duplicates of records and eventually moving the remainder out of the space.

She helped Ms. McCann late into the evening on more than one occasion, going through transfiles and throwing away things. One evening, she had put on the sidewalk over twenty-five garbage bags filled with papers and trash. When leaving the office, Ms. McCann exclaimed to the crowd on the street, "See all this? It's the end of an empire!"

The intern organized the bank statement file, the financial statement file, the reserve fund account book, the union bible, the

contact books, and many of the past show files. In the new office space, she helped organize the file cabinets so that there was room made for the upcoming shows. She organized and purchased new supplies for the supply closet and maintained it for the duration of her internship.

Fortunately, EIM heeded the intern's suggestion for the purchase of new office equipment. They purchased two personal computers, a new photocopier machine, an answering machine and a new telex. They did not, however, microfiche any of the past records so they are still burdened with many transfiles. In fact, they rented another storage space on 23rd Street.

A rare office meeting had occurred on October 21, 1986. The subject of this meeting was communication. The EIM staff, including the intern, openly discussed the communication problem. It was agreed that bi-weekly intra-office meetings should ensue and that all pertinent information would be recorded on memos. It was to be made certain that the Next Wave office would be alerted of the EIM activities. An envelope was hung on a bulletin board in which memos addressed to Next Wave Management could be placed. It became the intern's responsibility to deliver this to the Next Wave office on her daily round of errands.

The above-mentioned contributions of the intern had short-range effects upon the organization, with exception of the suggestion of purchasing new office equipment. It is the intern's fear that EIM returned to its original chaotic state shortly after her departure.

Although she believes the EIM staff had good intentions of remaining neat and orderly, the hectic nature of the office probably did not allow them to do so. As for the communication and chain of command problems, the intern also fears that this will take time to correct.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Through this experience, the intern learned the processes and politics by which a show is produced on Broadway. She had the opportunity to meet and work with many of the key individuals involved. Due to the fast pace of the industry and the small numbers of those involved, she saw how important it was for these individuals, i.e. the producers, theatre owners and union leaders, to work together towards the common goal of keeping Broadway alive.

Many of Broadway's problems stem from its fast paced method of doing business and small numbers of people involved; a handful of individuals are required to make decisions that effect the entire industry very quickly. As was evident in the case of Elizabeth McCann, who is one of the most respected of these individuals, decisions made under these circumstances were not always the best. It is the intern's opinion that each individual in the industry would make an attempt to reorganize his or her business in accordance to basic managerial principles which would allow them to make decisions more effectively and efficiently. Until this is accomplished, the life of Broadway will remain in a state of disorganization.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cavanaugh, Jim. The Theater Student, New York: Richard Rosen Press, Inc., 1973.
- Farber, Donald C. Producing Theater: A Comprehensive Legal and Business Guide, New York: Drama Book Publishers, 1981.
- Fournies, Ferdinand F. Coaching For Improved Work Performance, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1978.
- Kanderlan, Norman S. The Role of the Arts Administrator, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973.
- Langley, Stephen. Theatre Management in America, New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1974.
- Likert, Rensis, Dr. "Tips on Group Structure." In The Arts Management Reader, pp. 2-9. Edited by Alvin H. Russ. New York: Audience Division of Mared Dehker, 1979.
- Mathis, Robert L., and Jackson, H. John. Personnel: Human Resource Management, St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1985.
- McCann, Elizabeth. Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions, New York, New York. Interview, 6 October 1986.
- Newman, William N.; Warren, Kirby E.; and Schnee, Jerome E. The Process of Management. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1982.
- Shatzher, Eleanor Oshry. "Save Time and Money By Weeding Out Old Records." In The Arts Management Reader, pp. 10-15. Edited by Alvin H. Russ. New York: Audience Division of Mared Dehker, 1979.
- Variety, 10 June 1987.
- Wiley, Lora. Elizabeth Ireland McCann Productions, New York, New York. Interview, 7 January 1987.