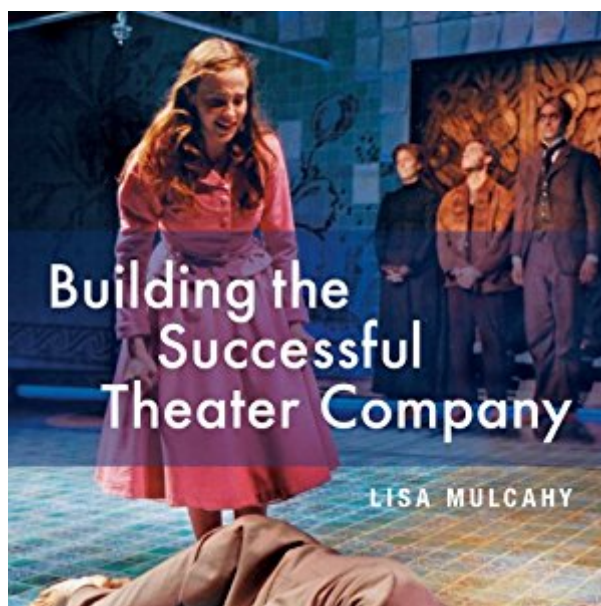


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# Building The Successful Theater Company: Second Edition



## Synopsis

The second edition of Building the Successful Theater Company takes listeners even deeper into the world of theatrical production, examining in great depth the financial realities of establishing - and maintaining - a successful organization. This indispensable reference is updated to include more theater company profiles with expert advice to better reveal the pitfalls, passions, and practicalities of the theater industry.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 43 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: March 4, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00BOWZ9GS

Best Sellers Rank: #506 in Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Reference #625

in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Performing Arts #740 in Books > Audible

Audiobooks > Arts & Entertainment > Performing Arts

## Customer Reviews

Please notice the absence of the words "How To" in the title of this book. This is a book of practical advice from the world of experience, not a book of instruction with facts and statistics. You will need to know and learn a great deal to figure out how to start and build a thriving theatre company, and this book will give you only the merest outline of what you need. That said, this book does glean the best advice from companies like Steppenwolf, Bailiwick, Mixed Blood, and the legendary Pasadena Playhouse, and presents all this advice in a clear, readable manner. By explaining how these above-average, highly-respected theatre companies built themselves up--their mistakes as well as their successes--we get a glimpse into the world of high motivation, artistic dedication, and pure love that turns something as uncertain as a theatre company into a thriving success. You'll still have to do the hard work yourself, and you'll still make some nasty mistakes right off the bat. Indeed, this book encourages you to do so early and often, so you get it out of your system. But if you want to get some good pointers and avoid the really egregious errors, this is your book.

Although, as the reviewer above points out, the book includes "from the trenches" advice, as opposed to condescending "how to" instructions, the content falls short for my taste. Additionally, the book seems to be written for a small, but established company, as opposed to a brand new company. This being said, I have two main problems:\* The author pays too much attention to attaining a space (including information about insurance and lighting/sound instruments, etc.), but fails to discuss in any deep way how to develop a strong mission statement, to attract the first audience, how to pick material, how to attain rights... Most fledgling companies would do well to rent a performance space (which generally includes tech equipment and insurance). Most fledgling companies, too, completely miss the boat on selecting material, forging a working mission statement, attracting the audience, etc.\* The inclusion of the Bailiwick completely baffles me. Yes, the company should be commended for taking chances on and discovering new talent. But lauded as a "successful" company? I think not. Bailiwick suffers from severe (and finally public) criticism amongst the Chicago theater scene, as evidenced in this fantastic article : [...]How can Mulcahy include a company that is in litigation for non-payment of a playwright and an artistic director who admits that "it wouldn't surprise me" if someone couldn't cash their check for \$100? While the company may be (likely is) making money- I don't think it counts as success if the money is owed to the artists who brought it in. Overlooking these two major flaws, the book does offer some good resources. The appendices, especially may be of use to new theater companies. Most of the book, though, really serves more useful to an established theater company looking to grow.

I can see why some people were disappointed with this book and only gave it 3 stars instead of more. Unlike the title "Building A Successful Theatre Company", it's not a nuts and bolts book with step-by-step instructions on how to build a theatre company. However, the book does give you insight on what goes on and how things happened in general while building different theatre companies. Generally when you quote people from conversations they don't give you every detail of "how to", they just tell you in a nutshell. If you aren't expecting as much detail about "how to" that you can reference later and take the book for what it is - a verbal commentary from actual people who experienced it, you'll be okay. It should of course be accompanied by other books that are drier but get right to the point in a detailed, textbook way about how to run a theatre. You'd have to accompany this book with other books such as "Running Theatres" and books tailored specifically toward topics like theatre management, arts marketing, grant writing, etc. I still enjoyed reading it as it gave hope as to how a person or group could go from start to finish in their own theatre company

and succeed.

You'll gain more from a fluffer-nutter sandwich than this time waster. It is purely anecdotal with an emphasis on artistic failure rather than commercial success. But, the end game, as the author points out is to have fun. Right.

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