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Executive Search Consultants

*Finding People To Manage Major
Arts Building Projects*

SPECIAL REPORT



AEA

Finding People To Manage Major Arts Building Projects

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FOREWORD

We met sixteen years ago when we both worked in the Civil Service Department and subsequently in HM Treasury, where we shared a preoccupation with managerial problems affecting the public sector. The topic of finding people to manage arts building projects presented an unexpected opportunity to work together again and to bring different professional perspectives to a common problem.

We are both extremely grateful to colleagues and clients who have shared our interest and pooled their ideas so willingly. We are particularly grateful to Kim Acland, Eric Gabriel, Lawrence Goldman, Andrew Jowett, Caroline Kay, Jude Kelly, Stuart Lipton, Patrick McKenna, Ann Seamster, Sir Robert Scott and Monica Tross for making time to talk to us and for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

Douglas Board

Adrian Ellis

ABOUT OUR COMPANIES

Douglas Board is a director of the executive search firm Saxton Bampfylde International plc. Saxton Bampfylde is one of the top ten executive search firms in the UK and is part of the worldwide Hever Group. The firm works to find outstanding leaders and managers across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

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SUMMARY -
THE CHALLENGE OF
MANAGING THE MODEL
ARTS BUILDING PROJECT

As a result of the National Lottery the demand in Britain for project directors who are capable of planning, managing and executing complex arts and heritage building projects - and those associated with the Millennium - vastly exceeds supply.

The purpose of this article is to assist the boards responsible for such projects to overcome this problem.

It does so by placing the project director's role in the context of the entire leadership team. We challenge a number of common views about the appropriate background and skills that a project director should have. We suggest that although suitable candidates undoubtedly require a rare combination of skills, they may be drawn from a much wider range of professional backgrounds than is often assumed.

SIX CAUSES FOR CONCERN

Scores of buildings are commissioned, designed and constructed every day. Projects range from housing developments, university buildings and shopping centres to hotels, offices and public buildings. While all these present their own particular challenges, buildings for the arts seem particularly prone to controversy and confusion. The reasons for this are legion. Six important ones are listed below

First, most building projects are planned and managed by people who plan and manage building projects for a living; in other words, by building professionals - such as property developers - experienced in managing architects, engineers and other specialists to create buildings that actually work. By contrast, arts buildings - whether new buildings or major redevelopments - are conceived and executed by groups of people who are often inexperienced as clients of the processes of construction. They run theatres or art galleries for a living, and they will only find themselves involved in a building project once or twice in their careers.

Secondly, most arts and heritage organisations are either charitable trusts or public bodies, governed by non-executive boards and subject to

the constraints of charity law and the requirements of public accountability. These boards rarely have in place the funding to complete their project when they start to plan it. Meanwhile the funders, whether public or philanthropic, often have their own terms and conditions which can dictate both the content of the scheme itself and the way in which it is managed. The framework of routine governance is often ill-suited to managing the type of risks encountered in construction projects. Glyndebourne's new Opera House, the current benchmark of a successful British arts building project, is unusual in having a single client, Sir George Christie, with a single authoritative voice. Unfortunately, the British Library is a more representative model: involving numerous 'clients' speaking with numerous different voices.

Thirdly, arts buildings - and particularly performing arts buildings - are extremely complex affairs. The level of technical complexity in, for example, a modern opera house - with the competing demands of acoustics, sight lines, seating capacity, fly tower, public circulation and backstage areas - is probably trumped only by power station and hospital design.

Fourthly, the demands of technical excellence, financial viability, operational convenience and aesthetic pleasure all pull in different directions, and the criteria for their individual success are inherently contentious. Common consensus defines a successful building as one which is delivered on time, on budget, works well and looks good. But in the arts sector, the meaning of each of these apparently straightforward criteria is argued over endlessly and often conflicts with the other three. Different players responsible for making a building actually happen tend to put differing emphases on each criterion. Acousticians, for example, are rarely prone to worry about cost: they are paid to get the acoustics right.

What's more, when it comes to measuring the success of an arts project, major stakeholders increasingly apply criteria that are entirely external to the project itself. For example, these are frequently related to the role of the project in urban renewal; or in the attraction of inward investment; or in creating a higher public profile for the city or region where the building is located. Indeed, arts buildings are now regarded as cornerstones of

urban regeneration. Or as Lawrence Goldman, executive director of the New Jersey Performing Arts Centre, puts it: "Few arts buildings are put up these days because of love of the arts *per se*."

Fifthly, most arts organisations are loss-making - or would be without continuous public subsidy. Organisations which complete new building projects increase their long-term funding needs and their dependence on external support. So it is easier to scrape together capital funding than to provide for the adverse revenue implications which capital projects generate. This creates a pall of uncertainty - or bright optimism verging on duplicity - which hangs over the planning process.

Finally, arts projects tend to be high profile affairs and management of their presentational aspects can be crucial to their success. Why? Because civic buildings are invariably public statements. So every aspect of their funding and building tends to generate heated public debate. Politics with a small or capital P - local and national - are seldom off the agenda.

LEARNING THE LESSONS FROM HOME AND ABROAD

In Britain, we have put up many successful arts buildings since the war (see below). But - apart from a wave of undistinguished provincial theatres erected in the 1960s and 1970s - the level of construction activity has been too low to generate collective expertise of significant quantity or quality. More recently, a handful of individuals - such as property developer Stuart Lipton or project manager Eric Gabriel - have been able to share lessons learnt from their involvement in a range of

large scale projects. In Lipton's case, these include the National Gallery extension, the Sackler Gallery at the Royal Academy, the Royal Opera House, The Royal National Theatre, the Whitechapel Theatre and Glyndebourne. Gabriel's portfolio includes the National Gallery, Glyndebourne, the Ashmolean, the Henry Moore Institute and, currently, the Royal National Theatre. Such individuals are highly unusual. As a result, their expertise is highly prized.

Some Significant Post War Arts Buildings

Some Significant Post War Arts Buildings	Architect	Opened
Royal Festival Hall	Peter Moro and Leslie Martin	1951
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry	Arthur Ling, City Architect, Douglas Beaton, Principal Architect	1958
Chichester Festival Theatre	Powell and Moya Partnership	1962
Nottingham Playhouse	Peter Moro and Partners	1963
Hayward Gallery, London	Snr Architect, GLC, Geoffrey Horsfall	1968
Crucible Theatre, Sheffield	Renton Howard Wood Associates	1971
Christ's Hospital Theatre, Horsham	Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis	1975
Royal National Theatre (Olivier, Lyttleton and Cottesloe Theatres), London	Denys Lasdun and Partners	1976/77
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester	Levitt Bernstein Associates	1976
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art, University of East Anglia	Norman Foster and Partners	1978
Barbican Centre, London	Chamberline, Powell and Bon	1982
Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham	Renton Howard Wood Levin Partnership	1982
Theatre Royal Plymouth	Peter Moro Partnership	1982
St David's Hall, Cardiff	Seymour Harris Partnership	1982
Burrell Collection, Glasgow	Barry Gasson	1983
Derngate Theatre, Northampton	Renton Howard Wood Levin Partnership	1983
Swan Theatre, Stratford upon Avon	Michael Reardon and Associates	1986
Tate - Clore Gallery, London	James Sterling	1987
Tate Gallery, Liverpool	James Sterling	1987
Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow	Leslie Martin	1990
National Gallery Sainsbury Wing, London	Robert Venturi	1991
Symphony Hall, Birmingham	Percy Thomas Partnership	1991
Tate Gallery, St Ives	David Shalev, Aldren Evans	1993
Glyndebourne Festival Opera, West Sussex	Michael Hopkins and Partners	1994
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester	Renton Howard Wood Levin Partnership	1996
The Globe Theatre, London	Pentagram and Peter McCurdy	1996
British Library, London	Colin St John Wilson	1996
Belfast Waterfront Hall,	Robinson and McIlwaima	1997

In France and German, the pattern of building has been more vigorous. But on the whole it is motivated more by a search for national or civic status than by a desire for more effective arts buildings. The process of planning has tended to be 'top down' and 'outside in', with presidential or mayoral ambitions taking centre stage. In terms of priorities, looks have tended to come first, speed second, price third and fitness for purpose last. Few believe that many of Frankfurt's museums or Paris's Grands Projets actually work very well in any operational sense.

We can probably learn some of our most valuable lessons from the American experience. The Americans have built more consistently and effectively since the War, giving high priority to functionality and the appropriateness of a building for its chosen purpose. As a result, a small cadre of professionals has emerged: individuals who have successfully nurtured a number of large scale projects through to completion, who have lived to tell the tale and who are willing to tell it. Their salaries average \$150,000-\$200,000 per annum.

COULD THE
NATIONAL LOTTERY
PROVE TOO MUCH OF
A GOOD THING?

International experience proves conclusively that arts building is a tricky business. As a result of the National Lottery, Britain is currently investing some £750 million per annum in buildings for the arts and heritage sectors. This upsurge follows a period of relatively low capital investment in these areas and the size and suddenness of the building boom is creating pressures as well as opportunities. The scale and complexity of many of the projects currently being contemplated are frequently formidable - both in absolute terms and in terms of the resources and expertise available to the organisations undertaking them.

The widening gulf in Britain between organisational capacity and experience on one hand, and the ambition and scale of planned projects on the other, is a source of anxiety to everyone involved. It is a source of anxiety to the funding bodies (Lottery distributors and

those responsible for partnership funding, such as English Partnerships, the European Regional Development Fund, local authorities and the Department of the Environment, as well as the private sector); to the boards which are legally responsible for the governance of organisations; to the senior management of the applicant organisations, who have day-to-day executive responsibility; and to their consultants and designers who are, archetypally, only as good as the brief they are given.

Because of the apparently huge sums of Lottery cash available, the response to these pressures has rarely been to scale down ambitions. More usually the response has been to attempt, somehow, to gear up for the task ahead. This has usually involved strengthening boards, appointing project managers and increasing staff numbers.

HOW TO SELECT YOUR FANTASY PROJECT TEAM

Perhaps a project's single most important 'critical success factor' lies in the recruitment and appointment of the project director. In projects where a new organisation is being built in parallel with a new building, this person may be the chief executive. This is the case, for example, at the Lowry Centre in Salford and Bristol's new Centre for the Performing Arts. Where the organisation already exists, the project director may not be the most senior employee within the organisation. But he or she will be the most senior person with full-time responsibility for delivering the project.

There are usually three knotty dilemmas entwined around the decision to recruit: when? what sort of person? and how?

When? is a dilemma because at the point when a project director is first needed, there is often insufficient confidence in the fledgling project's future to allow those nurturing it to recruit a person of the calibre they require. By the time funding is secure, many critical decisions will already have been taken - without the wisdom or commitment of the one person who will have to live with the consequences of those decisions most directly.

Andrew Jowett, chief executive of the Symphony Hall in Birmingham, throws the dilemma into sharp focus: "Even in this marvellous building, I still walk around some areas and wonder how some decisions were made, and I regret that I arrived too late to reverse them." The problem arises particularly with Lottery projects which require relatively well-advanced plans before funding commitments are made.

What sort of person? presents similarly acute dilemmas. Are you after a fundraiser? a construction manager? a lobbyist? a career-long specialist in theatre/classical music/museums/popularising science - or whatever the project's core focus happens to be? Perhaps you require all of the above? Invariably, expectations tend to become hopelessly inflated and the world is scoured for immediately-available paragons whose stamina and dedication are matched only by the modesty of their financial ambition and their indifference to personal risk.

How do you find them? You won't. These bargain basement polymaths don't exist. In their absence, we would like to suggest how you can assemble a team capable of seeing through a

complex multi-faceted project such as planning and building a theatre. To help in the selection process, we have attempted to identify all the essential qualities and skills required to achieve such a team. We have also sought to identify where those characteristics can be found and where they can best be fitted in: at board level or senior executive level; from consultants or - occasionally - major funding

partners. We have done this to help give boards the confidence to make timely recruitment decisions as they wait in hope for the perfect arts project director to evolve.

Please fold out the table printed inside the back cover of this publication to review our summarised analysis of leadership requirements and roles.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

"The litmus test of a robust arts organisation is the strength of the relationship between the chief executive officer and the board."

*Lawrence Goldman, New Jersey
Performing Arts Centre*

The board of an arts organisation, like the board of any private company or charity, is ultimately responsible for defining - or at any rate ratifying - its values, mission and strategic direction. If the board is unconvinced, unfocused or insufficiently engaged, no organisation will thrive over the long term, even if a chief executive has the drive or talent to keep

things together in the short term. A chief executive who, in the usual course of events, routinely manages around an inert or antipathetic board or chair will find it quite impossible to do so on a building project of any scale. The long term financial implications and the political and organisational demands are simply too great.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

"There must be at least one dimension in which the board is aiming at excellence; without that there is no yardstick."

Jude Kelly, West Yorkshire Playhouse

The chair of a board overseeing a successful capital project needs the following characteristics:

Clarity and consistency of purpose;
The willingness and ability to take managed risks;
The ability to lead a board to thorough and informed decisions.

Clarity and consistency of purpose

Buildings are a means to an end. Unless the board has a clear view of that end from the start, the project will be blown off course. The pressures and counter-pressures which arise during the course of projects - and the scope for interested parties and consultants to lobby for particular enthusiasms - are enormous. A bulwark is needed to anchor the project and to crystallise its priorities.

Responsibility for generating a sense of purpose cannot be delegated to consultants. It has to be there in the board. With clarity of purpose must come determination: the sheer grim

stamina to argue, seduce, pressure or bludgeon a project through all those parties - such as funders, planning authorities, local communities - whose assent or consent is required. And from this determination should come a sense of momentum, of inevitability.

The willingness and ability to take managed risks

There are points in all projects when an organisation needs to take big decisions. Such points include the recruitment of senior staff, the signing of contracts, the promise to meet certain deadlines. Invariably, these decisions present risks - involving both money and reputation - that are considerably greater than risks usually encountered in routine management. If boards are not willing to take these risks, then decisions are either inappropriately delegated to staff, or the project flounders through lack of confidence and momentum. The board's chair

must not shirk the burden of taking risks. But the ability to take managed risks is not the same as recklessness. Risk needs to be measured, the legal and prudential context needs to be understood, and the probabilities balanced.

The ability to lead a board to timely and informed decisions

The third quality is perhaps the most important. Decisions need to be reached in a way which allows

differing perspectives to be articulated rather than suppressed. The chair who runs the board with too tight a rein will end up with too narrow a base of support when a project hits trouble. But the chair who fails to force discussion to the point of decision will allow - indeed force - those decisions to be made by the pressure of events and in other, often inappropriate, forums. The chair has to be willing to be ahead of the pack, but not too far ahead.

THE ROLE OF OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Without delving too much further into the endless literature on the responsibilities of charitable boards or the characteristics of successful teams, there are two other specific strengths which boards of organisations contemplating capital projects need to have, though they need not reside in the already overburdened chair.

First, the board should have a member with client-side experience of large capital projects. Someone who has been there before, and whose experience can both steady nerves and put the advice of professionals in context. That person should also be involved the selection of the professional team.

Secondly, the board needs to be able to take responsibility for representing the aspirations of - and building bridges with - potential stakeholders; particularly the relevant political and community leaders, and probably key funders. This means that representatives of these communities - or individuals who have or can gain their confidence - should be on the board. Sir Robert Scott's experience includes arts (first general manager, Royal Exchange Theatre), sports (Manchester's Olympic bid) and millennium projects (Greenwich's Millennium Festival bid). He emphasises the role of boards as a mechanism for co-opting potential dissent, and mobilising communities.

TRUE OR FALSE?

"It is absurd to build expensive environmental controls into the gallery - micro-climates for specific objects are the way forward."

"There is no such thing as a multipurpose lyric theatre. You must decide whether you are designing for opera or musicals, and accept that the other will be compromised."

"No concert hall with over 2,200 seats works acoustically."

"Good sight lines are not that important to the experience of theatre."

"Your out-turn costs will be double construction costs."

"Construction Management is the only appropriate procurement route for a complex building."

"Construction Management is inappropriate for inexperienced clients. They should use JCT80."

"Penetration analysis is totally inappropriate for assessing the demand for venues in dense conurbations."

"The design day should be 0.75 of the bank holiday peak."

"Sponsors won't touch bricks and mortar."

"All great architecture leaks."

All leaders need to be able to move ahead of their followers' opinions, otherwise they are not leaders. But project directors in arts construction schemes need to *withstand loneliness* and quite exceptional levels of ambiguity. Loneliness comes not only from the need, sooner or later, to upset everyone's sacred cow. It also comes from the bizarre tensions and disproportions that cultural projects attract. A nuclear power station is a complex construction, but it is the arts project director who has to cope with a committee working for a year on choosing a carpet, while fundamental structural issues remain unresolved: 'We're nearly there now, we only have to choose the colour.' There are few opportunities for the project director to vent safely their exasperation at this kind of carry-on.

Tolerating ambiguity, meanwhile, means surviving in the undefined spaces between words when doing so is essential to the project's survival. This is especially difficult to do when one of the project director's fundamental skills and motivations must be to reduce ambiguity and establish firm commitment wherever possible. Like withstanding loneliness, tolerating ambiguity means staying operational and sane under great pressure, without visible means of support from either clear written words or from allies.

More fundamentally, the project director does not need to arrive at the starting gate already equipped with credibility among users, funders, local community and business leaders; or with knowledge about the common pitfalls and

CONSULTANTS

The array of consultants required to see through a capital project is awesome. Most boards embarking on an arts building project treat the list with healthy scepticism: architects yes; but management consultants, consulting engineers, cost consultants, acousticians, theatre consultants, fundraising consultants, business planners? All have their place, depending on what skills and expertise exist in-house. But the critical point is that the role of a consultant is a technical one. They are ultimately there to offer advice - not to reach conclusions - and to expose the basis for that advice and its ramifications as clearly as possible. Consultants with covert agendas and a sense of responsibility which has strayed into psychological ownership are a liability. Furthermore, it is naive for boards and staff to expect that a consultant's sense of responsibility for the success of a project can - or should - be higher than their own.

Even with project management consultants, caution is in order. Project management consultancies are much more at home providing the technology and information flows which enable a complex ship to be steered. But do not suppose

that they will be able or willing to seize the helm at a critical moment. There needs to be someone at the helm at all times; someone accountable to the board and to no-one else; someone adequately supported by other staff.

Consultants may be willing, available and expert. But they are also potentially expensive and dangerous. Only the most committed consultants will be kept awake at night by fears for the project's success. When extraordinary commitment arises, it is invariably focused on the one aspect of the project which could make the consultant famous among his or her peers; or an aspect which represents the realisation of the consultant's lifetime professional ambition. This type of commitment is dangerous if it is not counterbalanced by the right client staffing.

Referring to consultants in general, director of the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Jude Kelly, commented: "With the best will in the world, there is just not enough loyalty from someone in an external consultancy relationship. Not even enough to protect against basic legal and financial risks."

dilemmas involved in constructing a cultural building of this particular type; or with an ability to develop the building's content and programmes. The project director does not even require skills in technical project management. These elements may be helpful, but they are not the essence of the project director's role. As our table illustrates, we believe that each element must be present in the project team, but not necessarily in the project director.

There are two reasons for this. If the project director possesses the integrative and somewhat paradoxical skills referred to in the next section, she or he will overcome such knowledge and credibility gaps. Secondly, the combination of attributes required are so paradoxical that they will only be found in very rare individuals - whatever their previous trade.

The paradoxical

We have already introduced the flavour of paradox in the preceding discussion about loneliness and the tolerance of ambiguity. The project director needs to be someone who also embodies several other paradoxes:

- Someone who can be *alone* but is not a *loner*. On the contrary, the role demands someone who draws, attracts and sensitively manages people.

- Someone who is *clear, definite and precise* but able to *survive in an unclear, contradictory environment*.

- Someone who *calculates and reduces risks, but still takes them*.

The project director is rather like someone standing above Niagara Falls with a barrel, meticulously checking and testing it while wearing a life-jacket, someone who knows the international standards on helmet strength - and then gets in the barrel and goes straight over the Falls.

- Someone who is an *uncompromising compromiser*.

Someone who knows the art of compromise backwards but will not give an inch when the distinctive excellence and vision of the project is at risk. Some would avoid the term 'compromise' altogether, pointing instead to an ability 'to create imaginative ways forward out of conflict and deadlock'. Whatever the language used to describe it, the trait is certainly unusual.

- Someone who is a *sensitive entrepreneur*. Someone who can hold and expound a powerful vision and draw people to support it; but someone who is also especially sensitive to the vision of others (even if those visions are confined to the colour of the carpet) and can hold people together in complex coalitions.

WHO SAID YOUR
IDEAL PROJECT
DIRECTOR ALREADY
WORKS IN THE ARTS?

If you do not have the good fortune (and probably the fortune) needed to hire one of the very small number of proven, outstanding talents in this line of work, your first task is to focus correctly on the fundamental questions: what would a very good project director look like? and where are they presently working? The chances are, you won't find them in the obvious places.

People have moved successfully into directing arts building projects from backgrounds as diverse as power station construction, retail and the Civil Service as well as arts management and the arts themselves. This diversity of background bears out our key message.

The purpose of this paper has been to crystallise thinking on what makes these diverse individuals

good at directing a major cultural building project. If we are correct, then good project directors for these kind of projects will be somewhat unusual animals who - if you can get them to apply - will be identifiable by the kind of traits and track record suggested in the three preceding sections, and summarised in the table. In their applications and in interview, ask them to give examples of achievements and experiences which demonstrate the obvious, the less obvious and the paradoxical qualities listed above. Not surprisingly, many candidates will not be able to do so: what you want is quite rare. But when you do find what you are looking for, and it is rigorously backed up by references pursued orally, then you can appoint with confidence - even if the ideal candidate has spent an entire career in health service management, consumer goods marketing or ballet.

FINDING YOUR PROJECT MANAGER

Identifying suitable candidates is where executive search consultancies can make a contribution. The person you want is probably not actively planning to put up an opera house or create a 21st century museum. Right now, they might be working in the National Health Service, running an oil refinery or managing a clearing bank. Hanging an advertisement out of the window saying 'anyone with these paradoxical qualities may apply' will produce an astonishing mailbag of humanity, all of whom will claim to be calculating risk-takers, sensitive entrepreneurs and uncompromising

compromisers. Judging from the applications you receive, it will suddenly appear that oil companies and clearing banks have staffed themselves exclusively with such rare creatures for the last 30 years. However, an executive search consultancy - if its work is soundly based on original research - can discreetly hunt through oil companies, clearing banks and numerous other organisations, sorting genuine candidates from wannabes. It will then place a gentle hand on someone's shoulder and invite them to consider a very different career.

OTHER RECRUITMENT ISSUES

Two other recruitment issues are particularly germane to our argument:

Timing and risk;
Job definition and relationship with the board.

Timing and risk

It is never too early to bring a project director on board. Without exception, whenever major problems develop on a project, their origins can be traced to assumptions made or directions taken in the earliest stages. As the playwright David Mamet said when considering his first experience as a film director: "All serious mistakes are made in pre-production."

In the early stages, the risks may be sky-high. Quite probably, less than half the funding will have been committed. Essential permissions and agreements will not yet have been obtained. It is possible that nothing may get built at all. So it is hardly reasonable to expect a would-be project director to absorb all these risks as part of their job. It is naive to try and recruit on the basis that, if one or more of these unfortunate contingencies materialise, the project director should be happy to walk away with three months' money. Equally, it is self-defeating to argue that the kind of project director you have in mind is the sort of person who will overcome all these obstacles anyway.

Depending upon the circumstances, it might be necessary to offer the project director a guaranteed 12-month period of employment (or pay in lieu) with six months' notice applying thereafter, subject of course to satisfactory performance by the individual once employed. To achieve this, budgets set for the initial phases of the project will need to take account of the importance and cost of recruiting and retaining the right project director. Mistakes and false economies at this point will lead to much higher capital costs, operating deficits - and perhaps total project failure.

One commonly underestimated practicality is the time which the recruitment process itself will take. The time lag from deciding to recruit until the new person properly arrives will easily be 4-7 months - if all goes well.

Defining the project director's role and its relationship with the board

This will also repay careful attention. It is absolutely essential that the project director is able to attend and speak at meetings called by the board and its sub-committees, and direct all the board's paid staff and consultants effectively. Lawrence Goldman, the executive director of the New Jersey Performing Arts Centre, observed

that it had sometimes been necessary "when engaging consultants, and with the full consent of the board, to make it a contractual condition that they would be dismissed if they ever attempted to lobby the board directly on particular decisions."

While this level of rigour may not always be necessary, it is essential that the project director is given adequate space by the board to deliver their objectives - without behind-the-scenes subversion

between individual board members and individual staff members or consultants. This one activity which the board and its would-be director should not tolerate. As far as Eric Gabriel is concerned: "There needs to be such a strong relationship with the board that when the project director and the board's favourite guru disagree, the board take the advice of the project director. Usually that trust isn't given to you on a plate, you have to earn it. But it needs to be possible to earn it."

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that they will be able or willing to seize the helm at a critical moment. There needs to be someone at the helm at all times; someone accountable to the board and to no-one else; someone adequately supported by other staff.

Consultants may be willing, available and expert. But they are also potentially expensive and dangerous. Only the most committed consultants will be kept awake at night by fears for the project's success. When extraordinary commitment arises, it is invariably focused on the one aspect of the project which could make the consultant famous among his or her peers; or an aspect which represents the realisation of the consultant's lifetime professional ambition. This type of commitment is dangerous if it is not counterbalanced by the right client staffing.

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FUNDERS - A WORD OF WARNING

It may be worth briefly mentioning the role of funders. Funding bodies, particularly those which put in a significant element of either capital or running costs, often describe themselves as partners in a project, but infrequently behave as such. They rarely exhibit the flexibility or pragmatism or discretion of venture capital, whose equivalent they are

in this context. Arbitrary conditions arbitrarily applied can kill a project by starving it of funds at a critical time. Mature funding partners, capable of appropriate flexibility - but not indiscipline - can make a profound difference to the prospects of success. The Lottery is not yet that mature, though it is trying to head in the right direction.

All the qualities of leadership listed in the first column are, we believe, crucial to success. Where the word 'essential' does not appear opposite a particular quality, that simply means that there is no one place where we think that quality must be found. The adjoining columns suggest where each quality is best located within the project team. While this diagram is necessarily simplified, we hope it will assist boards from the earliest stages of projects to explore their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their staffing and consultancy needs.

In the UK context, by 'the board' we mean the frequently unpaid but formally constituted group of people who share legal responsibility for the project. By 'project director' we mean equally 'chief executive' or any other suitable title for the head of the executive team.

Analysis of leadership requirements and roles

Essential Qualities of Leadership	Board		Staff		Consultants
	chair	other members	project director	other staff	
Acts with clarity and consistency of purpose	essential	desirable	essential	desirable	
Takes managed risks	essential		desirable		
Chairs fairly and effectively, achieving both decisions and genuine discussion	essential		desirable		
Previous board level experience of a large building project (not necessarily in the arts) - eg a property developer		essential			possible but not sufficient
Willingness and ability to galvanize users, funders, local community and business leaders		essential			
Creative in resolving conflict - 'the uncompromising compromiser'	desirable		essential		
Totally committed to the project - 'a maniac'	possible	every board should have one	desirable but not at the expense of sanity		possibly desirable, possibly dangerous
Skilled in technical project management - identifying and revising critical paths, timetables and budgets			desirable	desirable	desirable
Skilled in building design					essential
Knowledgeable about the building issues associated with this particular cultural purpose		desirable			essential
Able to develop the content and building issues associated with this particular cultural purpose			desirable	desirable	possible
Able to manage people and budgets			essential		
Builds complex coalitions and holds them together - 'the sensitive entrepreneur'	desirable		essential		
Able to manage specialists in very unfamiliar fields			essential		
Energetic, gets results	desirable		essential		
Identifies when to bring critical issues to a head, and has the courage to do so	desirable		essential		
Skilled with words and numbers			essential		
Tolerates exceptional levels of ambiguity and sometimes isolation			essential		
Myriad other skills including fundraising, public relations, legal etc		possible		possible	possible