

CHANGING THE GAME:  
Using the National Football League as a Model for the Growth and Expansion of the  
Broadway League, Broadway Shows, and League of Resident Theatres

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## INTRODUCTION

There are few people who are die-hard professional football fans and love, let alone work in the theatre. Kirk Cousins, the quarterback of the Washington Redskins, is a National Football League (“NFL”) player who expressed his love for Broadway musicals. He made the correlation between a fan cheering in the stands at an NFL game, to him being a fan sitting in a seat at a Broadway theatre.<sup>1</sup> Upon further inspection, one can begin to see several correlations between the business of the NFL and the business of theatre. The National Football League (“NFL”) is a billion dollar machine that has seen rapid growth since its founding in 1920, and the merger with the American Football League in 1966. The NFL’s growth and expansion can be used as a model to grow and expand business for the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, the League of Resident Theatres (“LORT”), and LORT Companies. These four segments of the theatrical industry can use the model the NFL has put in place to reach more people by increasing the number of individuals viewing theatrical productions and touching peoples’ lives beyond the theatrical productions that are produced.

This paper will begin with a brief history of the NFL and definitions of the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies. Following that there will be five sections addressing Audience Experience, Community Engagement, Branding and Marketing, Venues, and Broadcast and Television Deals that will lay out how these segments of theatre can use the NFL model in these areas to grow and expand business. Within those sections, I will provide a definition or history of the subject matter, look at how the NFL has implemented it, and follow that up with how the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can use it as a model.

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<sup>1</sup> Mattern, Perry. "Kirk Cousins Really Loves Broadway Musical, Was A Singer Himself ." *News RSS*. N.p., 30 Nov. 2016. Web. 03 Dec. 2016.

The National Football League started in 1920, as the American Professional Football Association. The name was permanently changed to the National Football League in 1922. At the time, stadiums were not filled with seventy thousand plus people, along with millions of people watching at home. There was an average of four thousand people in attendance,<sup>2</sup> and no one could have imagined where the NFL would stand ninety-six years later. The NFL became a nonprofit, specifically a 501(c)(6) organization, which applies to trade associations, in 1942, with a mission of “Trade association promoting interests of its 32 member clubs.”<sup>3</sup> The NFL was not exempt from all taxation, as television rights fees, licensing agreements, sponsorships, and ticket sales were all earned by the clubs and taxable. In 2015, the NFL ended its nonprofit status and joined the thirty-two clubs as for-profit entities. With revenues of about \$10 billion, the NFL is now facing an annual tax bill of about \$10 million.<sup>4</sup> Another important date for the NFL was 1966 when the American Football League (“AFL”) and NFL merged. The two were competing professional football leagues, and through the strength and reach of both leagues, this merger sparked growth in the NFL and has enabled it to become the money-making machine it is today.

“Yay, sports!!” is the sentiment of most in the Broadway community. Like the NFL, the Broadway League is a national trade association for the Broadway industry. Theatre owners and operators, producers, presenters, and general managers make up the over seven hundred members. References to the Broadway League in this paper will primarily focus on Broadway Shows in New York City. The Broadway League was founded in 1930, with a focus on collective bargaining of union agreements for the Broadway industry. Today, it is “dedicated to

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<sup>2</sup> Crepeau, Richard C. (2014-08-01). *NFL Football: A History of America's New National Pastime (Sport and Society)* (p. 3). University of Illinois Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> United States. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. “Form 990.” *National Football League*. Department of the Treasury, June 2015. Web. 3 December 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Harwell, Drew, and Will Hobson. “The NFL Is Dropping Its Tax-exempt Status. Why That Ends up Helping Them Out.” *The Washington Post*. WP Company, 28 Apr. 2015. Web. 03 Dec. 2016.

fostering increased interest in Broadway theatre and supporting the creation of profitable theatrical productions.”<sup>5</sup> The Broadway League spearheads marketing initiatives, sponsorships, and program creation to make Broadway more accessible. The League has a desire to have Broadway infiltrate the national entertainment spotlight, which becomes challenging with the geographic constraints of Broadway Shows being located in New York City and old school producers not wanting to expand into television and broadcasting. Some might say that it is the unions that are holding the producers back from breaking into television and broadcasting. The unions want to make this happen,<sup>6</sup> but it will come down to finding a model that works for both the producers and the unions.

Defining a Broadway Show is difficult, since the industry itself has been reluctant to promulgate a formal definition. For purposes of this paper, a Broadway Show is: a show that is presented in a theatre with 500 or more seats; the theatre is located within the Broadway Box, which is within an area that runs from West 40<sup>th</sup> Street to West 54<sup>th</sup> Street, between 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, along with Lincoln Center Theater’s Vivian Beaumont Theatre; the show is a legitimate theatrical production; and the producer can be a for-profit or not-for-profit entity.

The League of Resident Theatres (“LORT”) was founded in 1966 and is made up of seventy-two member theatres in twenty-nine states. LORT administers the collectively bargained agreements with Actors’ Equity Association (“AEA”), the union that represents actors and stage managers and for which LORT Companies issue more contracts than Broadway Shows and commercial national tours combined, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), and United Scenic Artists (USA). This conglomerate of theatres uses LORT as a way to share

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<sup>5</sup> "About the League." *The Broadway League*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Dec. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Scott, Elizabeth. “n Rapt”. Personal interview. 28 November 2016.

information and strategy in a global fashion.<sup>7</sup> However, LORT is not like the NFL and the Broadway League that have robust staffs that can respond to issues. Governance and administration falls to committees that are made up of managers from individual LORT Companies. LORT's Diversity Committee is the primary committee that looks beyond collective bargaining. The paid staff at LORT includes the LORT Labor Counsel in New York City and a LORT Management Associate that works with the LORT Labor Counsel. One way to think of LORT is as a small church or synagogue that has a small staff with many volunteers. Throughout this paper, the LORT sections will look at issues and recommend how the committees in LORT and LORT Companies can collectively respond.

This leads into LORT Companies. These seventy-two member theatres are not-for-profit theatre companies throughout the United States. Within the industry these companies tend to be called regional theatres. The regional theatre movement was the point of origin for LORT Companies, with companies such as the Alley Theatre in Houston and Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. having led the way in this movement. After years of growth and transition, each of these companies currently produces an annual season or series of shows for their subscribers, or as the NFL would call them, season ticket holders. They also normally promote new play development activities and have an active education department.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "League of Resident Theatres About LORT." *League of Resident Theatres About LORT*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Dec. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> "League of Resident Theatres About LORT." *League of Resident Theatres About LORT*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Dec. 2016.

## I-AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

Without an audience, the theatre industry does not have a business. The audience is the lifeblood of theatre, and without it, the only reason to pursue this craft is for self-satisfaction. We need to look at the audience members as our customers; the product that we provide to them is live entertainment that transports them into another world. While we all know how to serve up the product of live theatre, one of the things that the industry has struggled with is the customer experience, or as I call it the Audience Experience. By improving the Audience Experience there will be a shift in reactions to the shows the audience sees, and the audiences will continue to grow and expand in terms of both numbers and demographics.

McKinsey & Company (“McKinsey”) helps its clients in an array of ways that includes branding, digital marketing and, most importantly for this discussion, “Developing a customer-experience vision.”<sup>9</sup> While McKinsey focuses on businesses like an airport or a restaurant, there is no reason that the theatrical industry should not adopt their customer-experience vision. Customer service is the lifeblood of business, whether it is an airport, a restaurant, or theatre. It is vital that each theatre company, producer, and theatre maker create an Audience Experience vision for their customer.

McKinsey specifies four things to identify in a customer’s experience. Those are the customer’s needs, wants, stereotypes, and emotion (think North, West, South, East). There are four ways to help the customer through the experience, and that is through safety, comfort, ease, and speed.<sup>10</sup> The first interaction an audience member of theatre might have is with the website or box office to buy a ticket or a parking attendant upon their arrival to the theatre. The

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<sup>9</sup> Boyarsky, Brooke, Will Enger, and Ron Ritter. "Developing a Customer-experience Vision." *McKinsey & Company*. N.p., Mar. 2016. Web. 04 Dec. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Boyarsky, Brooke, Will Enger, and Ron Ritter. "Developing a Customer-experience Vision." *McKinsey & Company*. N.p., Mar. 2016. Web. 04 Dec. 2016.



executive leadership at theatre companies must put an emphasis on treating front-line employees, such as house managers, box office staff, and ushers, with the highest level of respect, assuring that their training and education is up to par. As we look at ways to improve the Audience Experience, we will explore three areas: (1) Getting There, (2) Experiencing the Event, and (3) Post Event. By focusing on these three areas, the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can improve the Audience Experience, and thereby expand the audience beyond the industry's wildest dreams.

### I.1-THE NFL'S AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

The NFL occupied one day a week, and that was Sunday. Now, the NFL has infiltrated pop culture and occupies every day of the week. Sports networks, local news, and national news all cover the phenomenon that has become a “lifestyle choice.”<sup>11</sup> That is what the theatre hopes it can become. *Hamilton* is a show that marks how theatre can make a shift into pop culture, but theatre must find a way to occupy a place in individual's lives more than the one or two times a year that an audience member attends a show. The NFL became something that you experience, and the National Football League put an emphasis on the Audience Experience to take itself to a new level.

“GETTING THERE” is the first thing an audience member needs to do to experience an NFL game. That begins with the ticket transaction, which the NFL has centralized. Audience members can start by buying tickets through Ticketmaster, or they can buy or sell tickets on the NFL Ticket Exchange, which Ticketmaster runs. A dedicated location to purchase tickets ultimately steers the customer away from the secondary market, and allows the customer to buy tickets from the source. The NFL has also implemented a marketing strategy to let the customer

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<sup>11</sup> Crepeau, Richard C. (2014-08-01). *NFL Football: A History of America's New National Pastime (Sport and Society)* (p. 78). University of Illinois Press. Kindle Edition.

know where to purchase the tickets. Commercials include coaches, such as Ron Rivera, dressed up and performing a “shady” ticket deal with a football fan. The coach then reveals himself, the fan recognizes him, and then he asks the fan why he did not buy the ticket from the NFL Ticket Exchange. Centralization in ticket buying is the key. Without centralization there is confusion and the audience may use alternative sources. Confusion is tied to a lack of speed and ease that customers desire when they purchase a ticket. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century speed and ease is king. Too many choices can slow down the ticket-buying process for the customer, and lead to the audience member giving up and not purchasing a ticket in the first place. Centralization of ticket buying creates speed and ease for customers because they know where to buy the ticket and how to purchase the ticket.

The tickets have been purchased, and now it is game time. Everyone loves a party, and this is evident with the tailgating scene at NFL stadiums. Fans arrive hours before kick-off time, setting up barbecues, smokers, sound systems, and big-screen televisions. It might seem crazy, but it creates an environment where the audience members can interact with one another before the event and enjoy local food. The Houston Texans have an epic-tailgating scene. Glen Miller, who represents the Raging Bull Tailgaters (yes, they have names and tents with their names on them!), says that he spends \$12,000-\$15,000 throwing tailgate parties during the season.<sup>12</sup> It is unbelievable, but that is what people do when they want to have an incredible experience. The NFL has provided a space to let passionate fans like Glen do this. There are three points that tailgating achieves that going to dinner before attending a show does not. Tailgating occurs at the venue, connects you to what you are about to experience, and creates a sense of community for fans.

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<sup>12</sup> "The 10 Best NFL Tailgating Cities In America, Green Bay Packers Land At #1." *The Roosevelts*. N.p., 28 May 2015. Web. 04 Dec. 2016.

“EXPERIENCING THE EVENT” is the next step in the Audience Experience. The Super Bowl in and of itself is the behemoth of all games and the NFL looks to have an excellent technical presentation and festival atmosphere, as well as to create an event that people do not want to miss. And throughout the rest of the season, there is a strategy that is implemented to create an excellent Audience Experience. Have you ever been on the jumbotron at the stadium? An audience member will do anything to get up on the screen. They make signs, paint their faces, and might even kiss their neighbor when the “kiss cam” comes on. This in-stadium activity takes preparation and is highly anticipated by the audience member. Fans that attend NFL games regularly know what to expect, during the commercial break the camera will pan the audience, and it is their moment to shine.

For years, stadium instant replay lived solely on the jumbotron. Now it is available on an audience member’s mobile device. Levi Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, has implemented a way for fans to watch the instant replay from their devices, controlling what they want to see.<sup>13</sup> The owners have steered away from providing what THEY THINK the audience wants, to letting the audience members control it on their own.

Fantasy Football has brought the Audience Experience to a whole new level. Fantasy Football is built around the creation of a league that is made up of friends and/or work colleagues. As the General Manager of your Fantasy Football team, you begin by drafting NFL players to build your lineup, the weekly selection of your roster, in the hope that your players score more points than your opponents’ players on a weekly basis. Scoring is tied to the NFL player’s actual performance during the week. For example, a touchdown scored by a running back will earn you six points in a standard scoring league. A majority of Fantasy Football

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<sup>13</sup> "Stadium App - Levi's® Stadium." *Levi's® Stadium*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Dec. 2016.

leagues are managed online and come with cash prizes for the winner. During the event of an NFL game, people are checking their phones to see if their player has scored a touchdown, putting their team ahead of a co-worker in the office's Fantasy league. The activity in Fantasy Football has created an engagement that has made the audience get to know players that they might not have known in the past. Now a fan knows how many rushing yards and touchdowns Jay Ajayi had for the Miami Dolphins when before Fantasy Football one might have said, "Jay Ajayi, who?"

"POST EVENT" is where things typically slip away in the theatrical arena. You got them there and provided a great experience, and immediately thereafter the audience member is forgotten. The NFL wants to keep its audience engaged by pumping out statistics through channels such as ESPN, HBO, and the NFL Network. All three have materials from NFL Films that they make available to the audience, and Elias Sports was hired by the NFL to provide a wealth of statistics.

In the 80s and 90s, talk radio sparked the rise of audience members and fans being able to express their opinions. The audience wants a place to vent, and the NFL knows that in the forum of talk radio there will be adverse reactions. The NFL has embraced the fact that not all negative news is bad news!

## I.2-BROADWAY LEAGUE

"GETTING THERE" is something the Broadway industry would say about the status of the ticket buying process for an audience member. The NFL successfully centralized ticketing to Ticketmaster and utilizes the NFL Ticket Exchange to buy and sell tickets. For a Broadway show, tickets originate with Ticketmaster, Telecharge.com, or Tessitura, and then the consumer can purchase tickets from Ticketmaster, Telecharge.com, TodayTix, and the TKTS Booth to

name a few. Not to mention, if you want to buy a show that is housed at a Shubert Theatre, you need to go to Telecharge.com, if you want to buy a ticket for a show at a Nederlander Theatre, you need to go to Ticketmaster. The average consumer does not understand the logic of where to purchase tickets, or what show is at a Shubert Theatre or a Nederlander Theatre. It is confusing, and the Broadway League needs to step in to fix it. Of course, there will be resistance because of the revenue streams lost by Ticketmaster, Telecharge.com, or Tessitura. However, something must change, to keep a customer who wants a fast and easy way to process a ticket order.

Just as the NFL created the NFL Ticket Exchange, so could the Broadway League. The Broadway Ticket Exchange could be a hub that sources tickets from Ticketmaster and Telecharge.com, and allows individuals to buy and sell tickets. The Broadway League must work with the government to reduce tickets sold on the secondary markets, and the Broadway Ticket Exchange is one tool that could help. Along with full price tickets, there is oversaturation in the discount ticket market. The number of licensed sellers, such as TodayTix or TKTS, needs to be limited to reduce customer confusion. The secondary market is difficult to police, but one strategy the Broadway League could implement is to have only digital tickets. The first step to digital tickets is New York State eliminating its ban on nontransferable electronic tickets. Digital tickets will not eliminate unauthorized reselling of tickets but will mitigate the problem. By centralizing the ticket selling process through the Broadway Ticket Exchange, and limiting the number of discounted ticket sellers, customers will have a streamlined experience of purchasing tickets, and know where to go when they need to buy a ticket to a Broadway show. Centralization of ticket selling will ultimately improve the Audience Experience.

“EXPERIENCING THE EVENT” is the focus for the Broadway Shows, but how can the Broadway League help? The NFL made it clear what gear people should wear to make them feel

a part of the crowd. Clear direction to the Broadway audience as far as what they should wear is a task that needs to be handled by the Broadway League. People in the industry are frustrated when someone arrives at the theatre in flip-flops and a t-shirt. The fact is that no one told them what to wear, so what is one to expect? If industry insiders want people to be dressed appropriately to see a show, the Broadway League is the one that must step in to suggest a dress code. Incorporating a dress code in a pre-show email that the ticketing service sends to the customer can clarify the ideal attire to wear to the theatre. By doing this you eliminate one thing audience members can question, and rather than feeling out of place, they feel a part of the crowd, and they have confidence as they come to experience the Broadway Show they are about to see.

Along with what to wear, the audience member needs to know how to get to the venue and what to do before the show. The NFL provided space for people to tailgate and the Broadway League can provide instructions on how to get to the theatre and local restaurants to attend before seeing the show. It is a simple notification that can be given at the time of purchase and again with the reminder email before the performance.

“POST EVENT” is where the Broadway industry has missed the mark. There are a lot of people that enjoy statistics, and why not provide statistics to the people that are seeing shows? Let them know how much the show costs to build, the weekly expenses to run the show, and how much a show generates in income on a weekly basis. People do not always understand what a large operation the Broadway shows are, and this is an opportunity to give them an inside look at what is happening. The Broadway League generates the Broadway grosses on a weekly basis but they can be difficult to find on the Broadway League’s website. While Playbill.com has become a primary resource for theatre news, the Broadway League has an opportunity to create

an official location for all Broadway news that could include information mentioned above. Why not call it Broadwaynews.com? This new website could be a place to direct audience members following a performance to find additional information about the show they just attended, along with approved video links and photos for sharing, and the ability for audience members to post a review.

Talk radio was an incredible tool that gave NFL audience members the chance to express their opinions. The Broadway industry sees a lot of chatter on All That Chat or Broadway World, which are essentially two gossip sites. The Broadway League could create monitored online forums, including podcasts (today's radio), that discuss specific topics, and not just an open forum. These mediums are an excellent opportunity for audience members to express their opinions. Does it mean that every person on a creative staff needs to read or listen to these comments and do what they say? No, but it is a great chance for honest feedback as far as what the audience is experiencing. Extending and improving the Audience Experience would help to generate word of mouth, which in turn would bring in new audience members and give the original audience member a reason to return to the theatre. A focus on new audience acquisition and repeat attendance is a way to grow and expand the business for the theatrical industry.

### I, 3-BROADWAY SHOWS

“GETTING THERE” is one of the last thoughts a producer and creative team has as a show is in production and approaches its opening night. While the primary focus of the ticket buying process for a producer of a Broadway show is selling the show, there is a lack of thought on how to make the process easier for the customer. A potential audience member will go to a show's website to find the date they want to attend and buy tickets. When they find their date on the calendar, they get redirected to Ticketmaster or Telecharge.com and have no idea why that is

happening. Staying in the same window, or a window that looks similar to the show's website, allows the ticket buyer to stay on the site following the ticket purchase. One way to improve the Audience Experience is a simple instruction that notifies the customer that there will be a redirection to Ticketmaster or Telecharge.com. HAMILTON has done that, but it launches another window when you click into Ticketmaster. Staying in the same window is of key importance, so the customer maintains a fluid ticket buying experience. NFL teams have kept the ticket buying experience in a single window. By staying in the same window, it continues a smooth ticket buying experience and allows the consumer to continue exploring the website following the ticket purchase.

Broadway Shows focus on the audience "EXPERIENCING THE EVENT" through the performance that is created by Broadway Shows, but what can they use from the NFL as a model to grow the business? The one thing that Broadway Shows have started to do is have an interactive experience. Two shows, *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* and *Heisenberg*, opened in the fall of 2016 on Broadway, and both integrated the seating of the audience in the design of the show. This type of seating arrangement creates an interactive experience, which audiences currently desire. In addition, Replay is an element that Broadway shows could look at exploring. Following a performance, audience members would be given access to watch highlights or particular moments of the show from their mobile device or computer. This additional access ultimately empowers the audience member to be the biggest marketer of your Broadway Show. Offering an opportunity to be closer to the action and being able to relive the experience are two things that can be done to improve the Audience Experience.



“POST EVENT” is an area that producers of a Broadway Show rarely consider. The Broadway industry knows how to get the audience there and give them an excellent time, but to continue to engage with audience members beyond the experience of the show is a challenge. Broadway Shows are struggling with this interaction because they do not hold the contact information for the customer, which the company that sells the tickets and the theatre owner hold. Tying into the idea of the Broadway League creating forums for discussion, Broadway Shows could create a review tab or open forum on their websites. Implementing this strategy relates to what happened with talk radio and the way fans were able to express their opinions about NFL teams. Broadway Shows’ fill their websites with pull quotes from the biggest newspapers, but what would happen if there were quotes from the fans that saw the shows as well? In today’s society, a person will not buy a coffee maker unless they read all the reviews from customers on Amazon, but Broadway Shows avoid this. Let us get the audience talking more. Creating a forum beyond Twitter is of utmost importance.

NFL Films created “behind the scenes” material that the NFL pumped out to fans. Similarly, stars of the show could give virtual backstage tours. The show’s website is a perfect location for the virtual backstage tour to live. A program insert could provide instructions to visit the “Post-Show” tab of the website with a code that the audience member must use to create a login with their email address that gives the audience member access to content such as the virtual backstage tours and replays. A unique login is one strategy to create additional access for the audience member and for the show to start building its own customer database. Creating an access code stresses the importance that you still must first experience the event live to unlock additional experiences. The importance is not to replace the live event, but to enhance it. When Broadway Shows learn to go over the hurdles that keep them from interacting with the audience,

the experience will improve. The audience is what keeps these Broadway Shows alive, and with an improved audience experience, shows will run longer, and audience sizes will increase.

#### I, 4-LORT

How the audience is “GETTING THERE” is something that each LORT Company is looking to improve. LORT can have a global impact on LORT Companies through committees, which focus on improving the ticket-buying experience. When people think of theatre, they think of New York, and they think of Broadway. Little do people know that in their backyard they have a high-level professional theatre that features some stars from New York or people they recognize from television or film. LORT Companies need to collectively capitalize on first-time theatregoers that attend Broadway shows. When a person sees a Broadway show, an email should be sent to them that tells them the LORT Companies that are in a 50-mile radius of their zip code. This communication will take collaboration between the Broadway League and LORT to work with theatre owners and ticket sellers of Broadway Shows. This strategy could ultimately fuel growth in business for both LORT Companies and Broadway Shows.

Also, LORT can work with LORT Companies to connect audience members to similar shows that they have seen at one theatre with other theatres that present similar work. One example is if you saw a new play by Sarah Ruhl at La Jolla Playhouse in 2015, and The Old Globe in San Diego produces the world premiere of Sarah Ruhl’s latest play in 2017, LORT should be able to connect audience members to the playwright’s latest works just down the road. This connection can go beyond authors by being tied to directors or titles of shows. Ultimately, this makes the audience member feel like they know the play or playwrights and have a desire to consume more. LORT Companies see the audience members as their own, but with the rise of

single ticket buyers, this sales tactic is an opportunity for LORT to collectively grow and expand the business by using the power of all seventy-two theatre companies.

LORT also can spearhead an initiative of creating something similar to the NFL Ticket Exchange for LORT Companies. Let us say you are a subscriber at the Alley Theatre in Houston, and you are in Chicago for a family vacation. A ticket exchange website, possibly called LORT Ticket Exchange, should be created to enable audience members to log in and purchase tickets to see a show while they are in Chicago. The groundwork of familiarizing the ticket buyer with that site would begin when a person becomes a subscriber at their home theatre. These few steps in ticket buying will enhance the Audience Experience throughout the country.

“EXPERIENCING THE EVENT” is where the collective body of LORT can provide suggestions and strategies to LORT Companies that will allow them to employ advances in technology to grow and expand their business creatively. Providing all LORT Companies with advanced technology that they can use at the theatre is one step in the right direction. The annual LORT conference is a time to do that, but LORT needs to get more active beyond just the conference. Additional activity will occur through online videos, with content generated by member theatres in categories such as administration, artistic, and production. By doing this, LORT is creating an open forum to share technological advances in the industry. The NFL strives for an excellent technical presentation by always being ahead of the curve. LORT can help LORT Companies stay ahead of the curve, and provide the audience with an excellent technical experience.

“POST EVENT” is where LORT needs to commit itself to encourage the collection and sharing of information. LORT Companies cannot do this on their own. LORT can collectively create strategies to gather and share information in the most streamlined and efficient way.

Getting the feedback from audience members is an area of focus for all LORT Companies. LORT Companies try their best by sending out post-show emails, but LORT can collectively create a global survey that theatres disseminate to audience members. The demographic at LORT Companies skews older, and having a hard copy of feedback forms on the audience members' seat is an excellent way to get responses. After collecting the information, it can be aggregated and sent to the LORT Companies.

Getting statistics is crucial for managers of LORT Companies to know how to run these institutions in a more effective way. Audience members and local communities need to know the economic impact these incredible organizations have. They do not just provide art that you enjoy watching, but they are a vital piece of a community's economic success. LORT can start by working with the local communities to collect that data, and strategize as far as the best way to distribute the information to the community. This information is something that can help all development departments in their fundraising efforts. The NFL found success in pumping out statistics to fans, and the Audience Experience will improve by leaps and bounds by giving the audience a clear understanding of what the LORT Company is doing for their community beyond just producing shows. Statistics and a clear understanding of the impact of these organizations is a vital piece to growing and expanding business of the LORT Companies that find themselves in local communities across the country.

## I, 5-LORT COMPANIES

“GETTING THERE” is a space in which the LORT Companies have the opportunity to make significant strides. With most of these companies owning their space, or having extended leases, LORT Companies have the opportunity to be more creative in the way they use their space than a Broadway Show in New York, excluding Disney at the New Amsterdam Theatre.

By controlling the ticket-buying process, LORT Companies need to be clear in their instructions of how to buy a ticket and simplify the different ticket packages. With a decline in subscriptions, LORT Companies have tried to find a way to keep the sales numbers up with flex packages, which can be a confusing sales tool for the customer. The NFL has stuck with a simple plan, and that is to sell season tickets. LORT Companies might want to think about staying simple to avoid confusion for audience members.

Unlike Broadway Shows, LORT Companies can control pre-show activities, and the world of tailgating provides an example here. While audience members are not going to set up their barbecues and smokers in the parking lot, there are a few things that a LORT Company can do. La Jolla Playhouse does Food Truck Fridays, which allows audience members to socialize and have an activity to take part in at the venue before the theatrical event. Food trucks are not for every community, and not every LORT Company can have people outside all the time like they can in La Jolla. A LORT Company needs to think of ways to bring people together through food and use the space that they are so fortunate to have, by opening it up to the audience. Just like tailgating, this creates a festive atmosphere and allows an audience member to get to know fellow theatergoing individuals before the event.

“EXPERIENCING THE EVENT” through mobile technology is one of many places LORT Companies need to turn their attention. Just as the San Francisco 49ers have done at Levi Stadium with instant replay on the audience member’s mobile device, LORT Companies can turn their programs into a digital format. Within this digital program, an audience member can explore the subject matter in more depth. The digital program could then be stored in iBook, or perhaps the Company’s app. By going digital, a company not only saves on the cost of printing programs, but they also can provide more information to the customers. Similar to giving the

audience member the ability to control the instant replay, the audience member at a LORT Company can control what they see before the show.

“POST EVENT” is a tremendous opportunity that LORT Companies need to explore. Most of the time the show ends, the doors open, and the audience members take off to their cars. Linking to the idea of sports radio and the commentary fans give, LORT Companies need to create space for the audience to discuss and debrief with others about the show. Many audience members go to a local bar to continue the conversation with friends after the show. Keeping the theatre facility open, with a bar, gives the audience members the time to discuss what they saw and continue the conversation. By continuing the conversation about the piece of theatre that the audience member just saw, a connection between the audience member, show and theatre is made, which could lead to word of mouth marketing. Many companies have talkbacks with the audience, but this new suggestion is less rigid, and something that can be done on a nightly basis, or at least started on the weekend, with keeping talkbacks on a Tuesday or Wednesday night. In addition to this, the theatre can provide talking points for the drive home that the audience member accesses in the program. This set list of questions can help spark conversation and give an extension of thought for the piece of theatre that the audience member and their theatre-going partner just viewed.

Continuing with the idea of creating space for audience members to discuss the show that they saw, or are going to see, is scheduling a weekly meeting where audience members can come to discuss the show after having seen it. Also having a pre-show conversation to learn a little more about what they are going to see is an interactive way for the audience member to feel more comfortable as they enter the theatre. These LORT Companies have a space that they can open beyond the times the shows are playing. Extending the time communal space is open for

the public will create a feel of community, which is a vital part of the mission of LORT Companies. The Audience Experience will only improve with a step forward in making the audience member feel like they are part of a community.

Turning the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies to think of the Audience Experience through the lens of what the NFL does successfully will improve the Audience Experience for the theatrical community. The suggestions of what to do are just that, suggestions. The pillars of (1) Getting There, (2) Experience the Event, and (3) Post Event are what all these parts of the theatre industry must keep in mind to bring the Audience Experience to the next level.

## II-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is a hot button topic in the theatre industry. Initiatives, such as The Public Works at The Public Theatre,<sup>14</sup> have put this at the forefront of the conversation in the theatrical community. But, what is Community Engagement? In theatre, it seems to be getting people in your local community to participate in a show that specifically is built for them and finding other access points for the local community to engage with the company. In this section, we will look at a slight shift from that mindset.

Yes, Community Engagement does deal with interactions with other people. The State of Victoria, in Australia, gives some great insight on a definition of Community Engagement. To begin with, there is the word Community that can be based on geographic location, a similar interest, or an affiliation.<sup>15</sup> And affiliation can be, in the case of the NFL, the sport of football or a team such as the Dallas Cowboys. In theatre, this can be the art of theatre or a particular Broadway Show or LORT Company.

Engagement has to do five things: (1) Inform, (2) Consult, (3) Involve, (4) Collaborate, and (5) Empower.<sup>16</sup> Community Engagement gathers individuals based on location, interest, or affiliation and informs, consults, involves, collaborates, and empowers them. By looking at Community Engagement through those two words, Community and Engagement, the theatrical community can start to address how to tackle this hot button topic.

Community Engagement is not solely about focusing on the community that has never interacted with theatre, which is of vital importance, but it also must deal with the community of artists that go in and out of Broadway Shows and LORT Companies throughout the country.

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<sup>14</sup> *THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES NEW COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE PUBLIC WORKS* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

<sup>15</sup> "What Is Community Engagement?" *What Is Community Engagement?* N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



Community Engagement is not just important to grow the audience that comes to see shows, but it is also a vital part of creating a well-rounded local community. The NFL looks at Community Engagement as giving back and divides this effort into three categories: Communities and Institutions; Causes; and To Players.<sup>17</sup> The next section will use these three categories as a model that can expand the business of the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT and LORT Companies.

## II, 1-NFL

The NFL does a fantastic job of serving the community where the NFL team plays the game. The NFL's service to the community is about giving back while finding a way to use it as a marketing tool. The NFL teams work on connecting to the community, but the NFL puts initiatives in place to help the NFL teams.

Under the heading of Communities and Institutions, the NFL has the NFL Foundation that is a not-for-profit that represents the 32 NFL clubs. The Foundation focuses on youth football, protecting players, and community involvement.<sup>18</sup> Since its founding in 1973, the foundation has contributed \$370 million to charities and youth football programs.<sup>19</sup> This impressive number shows how important youth engagement and community connections are to the NFL. The theatrical community must focus on the young people to find the next generation that will star in Broadway Shows or run the next LORT Company. Being involved with the community is not simply an option for the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies; it is a requirement that must happen.

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<sup>17</sup> "Economic & Social Impact." *Economic & Social Impact | NFL Football Operations*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The way the NFL has stayed connected to the youth is by encouraging youth health and fitness through NFL Play 60. This initiative encourages the young people to play any activity for 60 minutes a day. It is not just about playing football, but it is about being active and general physical wellness. The focus of these types of initiatives do not always have to be on what you do (football or theatre), but on making sure you are improving the overall well-being of individuals.

“Causes” are something that the NFL controls and limits. Recently, the NFL allowed players to wear shoes in honor of organizations they support. The players’ ability to choose organizations to support is something that has diverted from the NFL’s standard practice of telling NFL teams what they will support. The NFL focuses on supporting organizations that they believe are well respected throughout the United States. Two examples are the American Cancer Society and saluting the active duty service members in the United States. Throughout the month of October, players will wear pops of pink in honor of breast cancer awareness month. The support of breast cancer awareness month not only shows support to a cause but also ties in the female community.

In addition to these global causes, each team has its charitable foundation that chooses causes to support. The team’s players take time on their days off to volunteer in some different capacities. Players can be seen serving food at shelters, playing with students at local schools, and bringing words of encouragement to people that are housed in local hospitals. The act of service is a selfless act by these players who are deemed celebrities in their local community.

When thinking of Community Engagement, “To Players” was not something I had considered as an element of community engagement. Community engagement always seems to be outward facing, but the players, whether NFL stars, Broadway actors, or a general manager

from a LORT Company, all need to be served in some way. Did you know that the money the NFL fines a player goes to the NFL Foundation, which then goes to the NFL Player Care Foundation? This circle of funds helps former players that are in need.

NFL playing careers can span many years, which can be similar to the career of an actor or other creative talent in the theatre industry. With that in mind, the NFL created the NFL Player Engagement initiative that focuses on career training, health and wellness, and additional resources. This care is a vital part of improving the life of players, and one thought that would be a huge step for the theatrical community. The list of initiatives the NFL has put in place goes on and on. They include Player Engagement Prep to promote education, community service, and leadership; NFL Life Line, a crisis hotline for players and their families; and NFL Total Wellness, which assists former players and their families in staying healthy and living well physically, emotionally, and financially.<sup>20</sup> For the NFL, it is about both taking care of others and their own.

## II, 2-BROADWAY LEAGUE

“Communities and Institutions” are an area in which the Broadway League has begun to make strides. Youth involvement is crucial to maintaining and growing the future audience. Kids’ Night on Broadway is a way to get young people to see a Broadway show. It does that by giving a free ticket to a child who is accompanied by an adult paying full price. The Broadway League needs to work with producers of Broadway Shows to find entry points that are appropriate for people of all ages.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Family First Nights is another initiative that gives access to under-served families.<sup>21</sup>

Reaching groups of people like this is another great move by the Broadway League.

“Communities and Institutions” are areas that the Broadway League has focused in on and done a terrific job. The growth of these programs is a vital part of the Broadway industry. The one area of improvement would be to show the public what the Broadway League is doing through these types of initiatives. By doing so, the Broadway industry will not seem like such an elitist group. That stigma is something that the Broadway League must address, and Community Engagement activities are a place to start.

“Causes” that are encouraged by the Broadway League are few and far between. Most people are aware of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids as a cause that the Broadway League supports. Just like the NFL, the Broadway League needs to find additional causes that Broadway Shows can support on a global level. The Broadway League must encourage shows to find causes to support around the subject matter of the show. These causes would need to be submitted by the producers of each Broadway Show and approved by the Broadway League.

The Broadway League can also identify local shelters, schools, and hospitals that members of Broadway Shows can volunteer at, just as NFL players do. Along with identifying the organizations that need volunteer assistance, the Broadway League can orchestrate the means of getting the Broadway talent to these volunteer opportunities. The service to others will begin to get the eyes looking outward rather than just what is being done within the Broadway community.

“To Players” is referenced in this section of how the Broadway League can support former Players of Broadway Shows. Broadway Shows rehearse, run, and close, and the cast,

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<sup>21</sup> "Family First Nights." *The Broadway League*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2016.

designers, director, and technical staff are turned into free agents and are onto their next show. Making your way in the industry is not an easy thing. The Broadway League can create a program that provides career training, along with health and wellness support for all people working or people who have worked on Broadway Shows. The career training can focus on what to do after a show closes and in between jobs. It can also address the idea of how to keep yourself present while you are in a long-running show, and what alternatives are available after a career in the theatre. Not everyone that is in a Broadway Show will make a lifetime career of working in theatre or the entertainment industry. Health and wellness are hit or miss in the theatre industry. People working in the theatre industry can get incredibly busy and caught up in not exercising and eating poorly. Providing suggestions and guidance on how to implement a healthy diet and workout regimen will improve the overall performance of everyone involved in Broadway Shows. The Broadway League has the responsibility to equip producers and theatre owners with the tools necessary to inform their employees about how to access information in the areas mentioned through the employee's union, Actors Fund or Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids.

Technology is always changing and the technical staff, along with the creative staff and actors of Broadway Shows, could use continuing education courses on changes that are happening in the industry. Continuing education will keep these individuals ahead of the curve and can speed up load-in and technical rehearsals, which are the most expensive time periods in the process of creating a Broadway Show. Providing a crisis line is not something that people enjoy talking about, but the NFL has done it for former players, and the Broadway League needs to work with the Actors Fund to inform the theatrical community of these types of services that are available.

The Broadway League is doing so many things right but can continue to grow and expand its Community Engagement activities.

## II, 3-BROADWAY SHOWS

“Communities and Institutions” are not a focus of most Broadway Shows. The challenge is that a Broadway Show could play on Broadway for three years or three days. There is also the fact that the star-driven vehicles are running for limited periods of sixteen to twenty weeks. These Shows are not staying around long, so getting connected to Communities and Institutions is not a priority. With that in mind, the focus of this effort should be on shows that have run for six months or beyond. At the point a Broadway Show has run for this length of time, the producer needs to begin focusing on Communities and Institutions. That means involvement with activities like Kids’ Night on Broadway or other initiatives that start to get a new group of people to the Broadway Shows. These shows do not want to give up anything financially, as they continue to have the responsibility to sell as many full price tickets as possible in order to make the investors happy. One way to look at this is as a marketing tool, and dedicate funds to support these types of activities. The NFL’s Baltimore Ravens have found a way to donate tickets to charitable causes, or those that might not be able to attend a game. Fans can donate their purchased ticket and the Ravens will assign it to an individual who is less fortunate, and would not be able to buy their ticket.<sup>22</sup> Producers could implement a similar model by having regular theatregoers purchase tickets for a particular performance, and then donate the tickets to individuals who are less fortunate and unable to purchase tickets for a Broadway Show. Making Broadway Shows more accessible will begin to bring in crowds that are not just old, white, and wealthy individuals.

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<sup>22</sup> "Unused Ticket Options." *News RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Feb. 2017.

“Causes” are an opportunity for Broadway Shows to support organizations that are not supported globally by the Broadway community. *Eclipsed*, which ran on Broadway in 2016, started an initiative with the goal of bringing 10,000 girls to see the show.<sup>23</sup> This initiative was a way to tie into the subject matter of the show. *The Lion King* saw a need to send money for AIDS relief in South Africa, which was outside of the money they raised for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Finding charitable organizations that have ties to the show takes this giving a step further. It shifts the focus from getting people to come and see what you do, to concentrating on the needs of others. In so doing, Broadway Shows can engage ticket buyers who are interested in supporting the cause that has a link to the show.

If the Broadway League does not take the initiative to connect Broadway Shows to shelters, schools, and hospitals that need volunteers, then the individual shows need to do this on their own. It is not just a publicity stunt to have actors and creative staff serving at the local shelter; rather, it demonstrates that these Shows care about their Community and their sole focus is not on themselves. It is time for Broadway Shows to serve the local community that is in need. A word of encouragement to the children at the children’s cancer treatment center will go a long way. Humanization and good will of either an NFL player or a Broadway star allow fans and new audience members to feel like they have an entry point. This entry point is a way to build new audiences.

“To Players” must go beyond just the performers. Broadway Shows need to ensure that the health and wellness of the entire staff are at the highest level. Investing in all individuals will go a long way. Broadway Shows commonly provide performers with physical therapy, which in most cases is 100% necessary, but how does the back of the carpenter feel and what about the

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<sup>23</sup> "Eclipsed Ten Thousand Girls." *Eclipsed Ten Thousand Girls*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2016.

stage managers that are on their feet eight times a week for the entire show. Keeping a happy and healthy company on a Broadway Show is an expense most producers will not want to splurge on, but the dividends on that investment could be huge down the road.

When a Broadway Show is coming to an end, a closing notice goes up, and that is about all that the company manager or general manager will do. They may also provide necessary information on how to file for unemployment. The entire company is then on its own to figure out how to continue forward. What if financial planners, who will most likely volunteer their time, were brought in by producers to talk to the members of a Broadway Show about financial planning for the non-traditional career path at the beginning of the process? Assistance in financial planning will help the company of the show prepare for when the closing notice goes up, so they do not feel like they are at a complete lost. The NFL's commitment to employee wellness outweighs what the Broadway industry provides. Having financial stability and an overall commitment to employee wellness will improve the mindset of company members and improve overall performance.

Broadway Shows lack initiative when it comes to giving back. The focus needs to be turned outward and placed on the local community that has significant needs that can be addressed by Broadway Shows.

## II, 4-LORT

Just as the NFL and the Broadway League have focused on the global perspective of Community Engagement, so can LORT as it explores how to involve “Communities and Institutions.” The two areas of growth that LORT needs to focus on are how to have LORT Companies expand youth involvement and build relationships with local community organizations. Community theatre is an entry point where many young individuals find their



love for theatre that can continue into a lifelong career or passion for the theatrical industry.

LORT can identify these community theatres that are near to a LORT Company and find ways to have the two groups interact. The future actor on a stage at a LORT Company tends to begin at the community theatre level. The community theatre cannot be looked as a laughing matter, but must be a place the LORT community embraces. It is the future of theatre.

LORT needs to also look at the model of the Broadway League and create initiatives that get a new audience to the theatre. Kids' Night on Broadway and Family First Nights are two activities to explore. It goes back to the youth. Within LORT Companies there are so many conversations about how to get a more diverse administrative staff or creative staff for shows. The answers are to start investing in the youth and getting them involved in theatrical opportunities at an early age. Youth involvement is what the NFL is doing, and their sidelines do not look like the administrative office at a LORT Company.

“Causes” that LORT supports at a global level are virtually non-existent, although some of the LORT Companies will raise money for Broadway Cares/Equity Fight Aids. LORT needs to empower LORT Companies to identify at least two local community partners that they can support through the Company's activities. The reason this does not happen is that these LORT Companies are not-for-profit companies, so they do not want any dollars going away from the theatre, and contributed income is often earmarked for a particular purpose. Support of community partners is a change in mindset that LORT should look at addressing. It is never a bad thing to look like caring people, and encourage others to support other not-for-profit companies or local community partners.

“To Players” is LORT's opportunity to engage with individuals that have previously participated at a LORT Company. Career training and health and wellness support need to be

provided for everyone working or people who have worked at LORT Companies. Regarding career training, there can be a focus of recruiting individuals from New York to see how they can make a career by working at a LORT Company. Decentralization of New York will only improve the industry as a whole. There are so many talented people in New York who simply fail to have an opportunity. These individuals are focused on staying in the theatre capital of the world and do not want to go outside of New York. Information about why people should go to a LORT Company begins with awareness at training programs at universities throughout the country, and members of theatrical unions, such as Actors' Equity Association.

Continual employment for a freelance artist is rare, but LORT and LORT Companies have the opportunity to provide it. LORT can create a network of actors, creative staff, and other freelance artists to connect with other member theatres. A lighting designer may continually design at Dallas Theater Center but may never have had the opportunity to work at Long Wharf Theatre. While individuals have gone off making their own forums, connecting the production departments of the two companies can be and should be orchestrated through LORT, which would enable this lighting designer to get connected to another organization. A connective network of theatres will improve the community of LORT Companies, and ultimately improve the interaction each LORT Company has with its local community.

## II, 5-LORT Companies

“Communities and Institutions” is the foundation of LORT Companies. Many LORT Companies were founded on the notion of serving their community, but in many cases that instinct seems to have been lost as the theatres have matured. A select number of LORT Companies look more like a commercial institutions, churning out shows that have their eyes set on Broadway. What should these LORT Companies do to grow and expand their business by

using the model of the NFL? The answer is that they need to get back to their roots. The reason that these LORT Companies exist is to serve the community. Whether that means getting the community involved in an annual show, having them serve in some way (other than being an usher), or getting involved in the local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club, the thing all these LORT Companies must do is get the community involved and get involved in the community. Getting involved with the community is not an option, this is a sacrifice, but it will ultimately return a reward. That reward could be financial, but it could also be the fulfillment of helping your community.

“Causes” are thought of as one cause: “Support us, your local LORT Company.” While these companies need philanthropic support themselves, there are times that these Companies need to support what is going on around them. Theatre is a great platform to share a message, and that comes through the art that is created by the theatre maker. Accompanying that art are messages that support and address causes that need support in real time. Real-time support could be something like aid for a natural disaster, but it could also be allowing, let us say, a resident playwright to write a play as a reaction to events that are happening around the country and the world in real time. By acting in real time, there will be a support of causes that address needs in the moment. That is what live theatre is all about -- being in the moment.

Supporting other causes can be difficult because LORT Companies want to keep all of the donations within their organization. These LORT Companies should look at local or national not-for-profits that tie into the subject of the shows on stage. These other companies might not all need financial support, but they might need a helping hand. The LORT Company can provide that, and if the other not-for-profit is in need of financial support, doing the play and leading the audience to support them is another way of helping these companies. The LORT Companies

will ask, “What is in it for me?” Offering this type of support could be the beginning of a reciprocal relationship. The other not-for-profit could help connect its donors to the show that the LORT Company is producing. For example, a not-for-profit in Louisville, Kentucky would need to let its donors know that Actors Theatre of Louisville is addressing subject matter that is a passion of that company. Relationships with other not-for-profit companies is a mindset change for LORT Companies, but the potential benefits will be unknown until the LORT Companies commit to building those types of relationships on a regular basis.

“To Players” addresses the administrative staff and freelance artists that come in and out of the LORT Company. The NFL has a focus on health and wellness, and LORT Companies should make an effort to maintain the health of their staff. For example, most people that work at a theatre company are buddies, and creating a running club at lunchtime or before work are considerable efforts that not only create a healthy body but a healthy working relationship.

Going back to the idea of making a career at a LORT Company, these companies need to be able to demonstrate to New York artists how they can make a life in these communities. There used to be resident acting companies that acted in the shows and also lived on Elm Street next to the audience that attended the show. The idea of having more people than just the administrative staff residing in the community makes the company not feel like a New York company that has people coming and going on a regular basis. This relationship building will help these LORT Companies bring it back to the community, and ultimately build new audiences.

### III-BRANDING AND MARKETING

Branding and marketing are words that are thrown around all the time, but what do they mean? The American Marketing Association (“AMA”) defines branding as, “the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product from other products.”<sup>24</sup> I would say that is pretty important for the theatre industry. AMA then defines marketing as, “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”<sup>25</sup>

Roger Goodell, the current commissioner of the NFL, led the NFL’s move to master branding and marketing. In 2000, Goodell focused on five areas to improve branding and marketing in the NFL. This section will look at those five areas, see what the NFL has done with them, and then identify how the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can use the NFL’s efforts as a model to grow and expand their business.

The five areas that the NFL focused on were: Building the Audience; Increasing the Reach of NFL.com; Growing Merchandise Sales; Building Player Image; and Increasing Youth Interest.<sup>26</sup> It is also important to note that a shift occurred in which the NFL became the “brand” and pro football was the “product” that the NFL was to market.<sup>27</sup> To equate that to the theatrical industry, the Broadway League and LORT have more of a focus on “brand,” while the Broadway Shows and LORT Companies have more of a focus on the “product” and strategizing ways to market it. And yet, there is no question that the Broadway League and LORT need to market, and Broadway Shows and LORT Companies need to have a brand. This section will explore

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<sup>24</sup> @ama\_marketing. "Definition of Marketing." *Definition of Marketing*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Dec. 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Crepeau, Richard C. (2014-08-01). *NFL Football: A History of America's New National Pastime* (Sport and Society) (p. 165). University of Illinois Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 164.

how the Broadway League and LORT can create branding and marketing for the Broadway Shows and LORT Companies, along with how the Broadway Shows and LORT Companies can create a brand identity and successfully market the product they produce.

### III, 1: NFL

The importance of branding and marketing was at the forefront when the NFL created the National Football League Properties, Inc. in 1963. Youth competitions, publishing, advertising and merchandising were the focus of NFL Properties,<sup>28</sup> which was likely the inspiration of Goodell's focus on branding and marketing. In addition to the work Goodell did, Sara Levinson, who became president of NFL Properties in 1994, laid the groundwork for him by turning marketing attention to the NFL. This shift in marketing strategy would be the equivalent of the Broadway League, LORT, LORT Companies and producers of Broadway Shows beginning to truly market their organizations versus marketing the shows, which is their product.

BUILDING THE AUDIENCE was the first area of focus for Goodell. A light bulb went off when the NFL realized it needed to get more women to watch the NFL. It sounds like the reverse problem that theatre has. The NFL did not just sit on its hands. The NFL started the NFL 101 Workshop for women. It was a genius strategy to engage with an underserved group of audience members. Females now make up half of the NFL audience, which is evidence that this engagement has worked.<sup>29</sup> In 2016, the NFL began to face the problem of declining attendance and viewing numbers. There is a multitude of reasons of why, but player misconduct, concussions, and market saturation may be having the most significant influence. In the coming year, the NFL will continue to explore the cause of this drop in numbers.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 99.

INCREASING THE REACH OF NFL.com was something the NFL had to do as it moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NFL.com went from 5.4 million unique visits in September 2000 to 16 million in September 2005, more than tripling in just five years.<sup>30</sup> It was not luck that caused this change, but strategy. The NFL began posting content that the audience wanted to see, such as statistics, analysis, history of the teams and the NFL, audio and video content, while also enabling fans to purchase tickets directly from the website.

GROWING MERCHANDISE SALES has been a growing trend, with the 2015-16 season hitting a record \$1.55 billion in sales. Jersey sales are at the core of that number, and Tom Brady, of the New England Patriots, was king with \$20 million in jersey sales.<sup>31</sup> Sales figures aside, the popularity and pervasiveness of merchandise is also evident by looking in the stands of a game. The fans are all in the team color and sporting their team's gear, which of course has the NFL logo branding. Anywhere a team logo goes, so does the NFL.

BUILDING PLAYER IMAGE was a struggle in 2000 that has become magnified in 2016. Protecting the shield, which means protecting the NFL's logo that contains a shield, and maintaining brand image, are two areas that Goodell constantly speaks about. The work to build the audience can come crashing down as a result of negative behavior, which ultimately threatens the success of the NFL brand. The NFL uses former players and coaches to help train these young professionals to recognize the importance of their image while they are in the national spotlight. By teaching NFL players the importance of their behavior in protecting and promoting the shield through their behavior, they are simultaneously protecting their brand's image.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>31</sup> Brady's Total Haul: over \$20 Million. "Tom Brady Is NFL's No. 1 Player in Merchandise Sales." *CNNMoney*. Cable News Network, n.d. Web. 17 Dec. 2016.

INCREASING YOUTH INTEREST is where it begins. With a focus on the youth, the NFL can feed the next NFL star through the ranks to a successful career. The Punt, Pass and Kick competition, a skills competition for children between the age of 6-15, was a way that the NFL engaged with youth, along with the previously discussed Play 60, which puts a focus on youth being active for sixty minutes a day. Now, let us take a look at how the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can apply these five areas of focus.

### III, 2: BROADWAY LEAGUE

BUILDING THE AUDIENCE falls in line with what the Broadway League is looking to do for Broadway theatre. Just as the NFL hosted workshops for women, the Broadway League could begin to hold workshops for men or first-time theatregoers. These workshops can give future audience members basic terminology of the theatre industry, how to buy tickets for shows, what to wear to the theatre, and what to do before and after a show. It is simple, but can be distributed through social media and in-person workshops as necessary.

INCREASING THE REACH OF Broadwayleague.com is a must for the Broadway League. To increase the reach, there must be more information that the audience wants to consume. Statistics, archival recording or photos, and directions to purchase tickets to Broadway shows are three attributes that can be added or improved on the website. Weekly grosses are on the website but can be difficult to find and understand. Consumers also want statistics of performers and creative staffs, which IBDB.com could implement and Playbill.com is already doing. Archives of any sort would be incredibly valuable to have access to on the website. A relationship with the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts to offer streaming and archival viewing of former and current Broadway productions is one direction to take. An arrangement with the Broadway League and the New York Public Library to provide such



services would have to begin by overcoming numerous copyright and union obstacles. The ticket buying process for a Broadway Show is a confusing process for most, but the Broadway League can outline simple steps of how to purchase tickets on their website.

GROWING MERCHANDISE SALES is tough to see how the Broadway League can be involved when the focus of merchandise is for the shows. The focus of NFL merchandise is on the team, but what the NFL did was to put their logo on everything. There should be official Broadway Merchandise that has “Broadway Branding” on it. Doing this would also create thematic Broadway merchandise that could be similar on a show-to-show basis but still allows the Broadway Show to show their team colors.

BUILDING PLAYER IMAGE can span multiple areas in the theatre industry, and the Broadway League has an excellent opportunity to improve media training for Broadway professionals who deal with the press on a regular basis. The Broadway League could begin by partnering with unions such as Actors’ Equity Association, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists to allow their members to go through media training sessions with experts in the field. Negative media attention has the possibility of breaking a show. Knowing how to react and take advantage of the press is of the utmost importance to the ongoing success of Broadway Shows.

INCREASING YOUTH INTEREST is where the focus must turn. BWAYZONE.com is one way the Broadway League has worked on bringing a youthful perspective and engagement with a younger demographic. If we want a more diverse group of theatre-makers and theatregoers, we must begin by getting the youth involved at an early age. The Broadway League needs to work with producers on finding an entry point for children. Not every show will be appropriate for children, but how can a child still interact with that show? It might be by

teaching them the process of building the set or costumes. Youth involvement tends to focus on performing in shows. Not everyone will be able to perform professionally, and some may not want to perform in youth theatre either, so showing young people additional options can spark an interest that gets a child involved at an early age. It is not about all children becoming professional theatre artists; it is about developing the future audience member who will be sitting in a Broadway theatre in thirty years.

The Branding and Marketing efforts by the Broadway League have the potential to empower Broadway Shows to reach new audiences for generations to come.

### III, 3: BROADWAY SHOWS

Broadway Shows must clearly define their Branding and Marketing efforts at an early phase, or face the reality of closing the show prematurely. Each Broadway Show is a startup company with the pressure of building an audience base quickly.

BUILDING THE AUDIENCE is the starting point for all Branding and Marketing of a Broadway Show. Sticking with the idea of workshops that the NFL used to engage the female audience, Broadway Shows have an opportunity to build the audience by giving workshops about the creation of the show. The subject matter of the workshop would give potential audience members an inside perspective of the developmental process (workshops and readings), the design process, and what is happening in the rehearsal room. Video, video, video is the way to go, and distribution through the Show's YouTube channel is an excellent choice. Fans love getting an inside perspective and an understanding of what it takes to make something happen. The first step of a marketing strategy is building awareness. Social media and online media buys that direct new audiences to the show's website, will need to be included in initial marketing strategies for Broadway Shows. Embedded links to the videos can be on the landing page of the

show's website, which will build awareness for the show that can lead to new audience members.

INCREASING THE REACH OF THE SHOW'S WEBSITE will help the Broadway Show brand and define what the show is all about. Content is king, and NFL.com found success with added audio and video segments, which is a must for Broadway Show websites. The Broadway Show can add interviews with cast and creative team members, virtual backstage tours, and could look at the idea of creating backstage live feeds. Working with the unions would be a challenge for the last suggestion, but it is worth trying. These additions in the content will create an avenue for an audience member to interact with the show's website. Doing this allows audience members to have more information that they can share utilizing the most impactful marketing tool, word of mouth.

GROWING MERCHANDISE SALES is seldom the focus because of the necessity of selling tickets first. The focus of merchandise sales is something that can come when either you know you have a hit on your hands, i.e. *Hamilton*, or you are a show that has been running for more than six months. Merchandise sales have a potential for added revenue, but if done incorrectly, Broadway Shows can invest money into products that do not sell and lose the audience's interest in purchasing merchandise. The branding of merchandise needs to have a thematic tie-in. Teams keep things consistent, such as the Dallas Cowboys having the star that is on nearly every piece of merchandise. The merchandise for a Broadway Show should incorporate the logo and artwork to be used not only as a revenue source, but a way to brand the show. The NFL found success with consistency in their merchandise, and Broadway Shows need to be consistent in the use of logo and artwork in the creation of merchandise.

BUILDING PLAYER IMAGE looks more at building the image of the show for a Broadway Show. Broadway Shows can be classified based on preconceived notions, and a review is something that can make or break a show. Producers of these shows must learn how to take these negatives and turn them into positives. One thing to do is to focus on the reason for doing the show. Making a clear marketing effort of why this show must be heard and seen, can be much more impactful than listing all of the great reviews you received. It is about looking at the negative things people are saying, such as a bad review, and finding a way to make them a positive. Spinning the conversation in this way could result in an increase in ticket sales from strong word of mouth. Word of mouth is the most powerful marketing tool any business can have. If there is a positive word of mouth for a Broadway Show, success will be found, regardless what one critic has to say. A challenge is that theatre artists, including producers, have trouble coming to terms that something they have worked so hard to create is not being well received. Broadway Shows must face the fact that not every person will enjoy the show, and instead focus on why the potential audience member should still experience it and thereby create strong word of mouth.

INCREASING YOUTH INTEREST through Broadway Shows can be done by creating junior versions of shows. *School of Rock* is a show that has done this in a fascinating way. They created a version that has been licensed throughout the country as the show was opening on Broadway. Now that *School of Rock* is about to open in London, they have offered free licensing to academic institutions in the U.K. and Ireland. After being in their local production of *School of Rock*, guess what show these kids want to see when they come to New York? *School of Rock* of course! Junior versions or early licensing of shows is a new distribution model, but one that could increase youth interest.

### III, 4-LORT

LORT has an opportunity to improve branding and marketing strategies for LORT Companies globally. Similar to how the NFL put practices in place that let the NFL teams soar in their branding and marketing, LORT can bring branding and marketing efforts to a new level of excellence for LORT Companies by implementing and disseminating information and strategies amongst LORT Companies.

BUILDING THE AUDIENCE was the goal of the NFL, and it is the goal for LORT as well. LORT can establish “Theatre 101 Courses” for local communities where LORT Companies reside. A fear of prospective theatregoers is that they are unsure of what the experience will be like; overall, it is uncomfortable territory. To break down those walls through free classes is one step that LORT can take. LORT’s role in this would be to distribute strategy, while it is on the LORT Companies to execute and share results with LORT.

INCREASING THE REACH OF LORT.org needs to begin with an entire website redesign. The website looks outdated, which makes an individual feel like they are reading old information. Stats are nonexistent on the site. Theatre profiles, similar to what TCG publishes, should be available for the LORT Companies. Within those profiles, there should be information about the Company’s executive leadership and operating budgets, along with the past and current seasons. Doing this creates another resource for the avid LORT theatre fan to explore.

GROWING MERCHANDISE SALES would come by selling anything. The role LORT has in that is to create a branding effort that LORT Companies incorporate into merchandise. A layman has no clue that La Jolla Playhouse is a LORT Company, and the question is, do they care? At this time, they do not. Through the branding of merchandise, the layman might come to realize that there is a level of excellence at all LORT Companies. Merchandise is an

opportunity for LORT to assist LORT Companies in finding a way to brand LORT and to look at additional marketing strategies through merchandise.

BUILDING PLAYER IMAGE is looking at how to build the image of the LORT Companies in their local community and nationally. Building the image brings us back to the previous point of branding LORT Companies to inform potential theatregoers that there is a certain level of quality that you get at a LORT Company. Broadway has been successful in doing that. When a person comes to New York, they know, or at least they believe, they will get the highest level of theatre that is available. By building a brand of excellence, the demand for tickets will increase and new audiences will want to be a part of it.

INCREASING YOUTH INTEREST is a tremendous opportunity for LORT Companies, with LORT being the central hub that can help connect and spread the word of these opportunities. Community theatres are present throughout the country. LORT Companies are often just down the street from them, and yet, might never interact with them. LORT can identify community theatres that are near a LORT Company, and connect the two organizations and begin a relationship. LORT is not able to be very active in the process. Much of the interaction and legwork will fall to the LORT Companies, which would be challenging for management given the workload that already exists at these Companies. That opens the idea that LORT needs to expand its business, and become a trade association that truly works with the individual LORT Companies to find ways to build the audience. The youth is in the backyard of these LORT Companies; they just need the door opened for them. LORT can open that door.

### III, 5-LORT COMPANIES

LORT Companies are theatrical institutions in neighborhoods throughout the United States. They are long-running institutions because they have created a brand that the local

audience has grown to love. Their marketing strategy speaks to the local community, with marketing almost exclusively focused on upcoming productions. Each one of these Companies must answer the question: do they market shows or do they market the company? An NFL team markets the team, with the idea of getting the bulk of its audience through the sale of season tickets. It does not focus on getting the customer to buy a single game, but on buying the entire offering of the company. When marketing, LORT Companies need to look at marketing the company, and exploiting the brand that the community has supported for years.

BUILDING THE AUDIENCE can be done through information sessions at the theatre -- not information about the show, but about the company. Let people in the doors on the weekend, share a bit of history about the company, speak about current leadership, inform the information seekers about the current season, and finally give them access to see the theatre spaces, offices, and shops. By showing off their impressive spaces, the theatre will create an opportunity for additional fundraising, and will open their door to future audience members.

INCREASING THE REACH OF THE COMPANY'S WEBSITE will be done by adding interactive content. The NFL saw great success with audio and video, which is an area the LORT Companies need to explore. Including videos of an inside look at the making of the show, interviews with the creative staff to give an inside perspective about the shows, and additional content about the show that the audience can consume post-show are ways to increase reach. It creates a beginning, middle, and end for the audience's experience, which will direct the audience to the website and increase activity.

GROWING MERCHANDISE SALES will begin when these LORT Companies offer merchandise that the audience will wear. Offering anything that is related to a specific show is a waste of money for these companies unless the show is moving to Broadway. Avoiding show-

specific merchandise and coming up with more than just t-shirts with the company's logo will be where sales will begin to increase. Investing resources in the creation and design of this merchandise will be required to see any change. LORT Companies need to ask their incredible boards what they would wear, and then see how the board can assist in the design and creation of the new and improved merchandise. Merchandise will create brand awareness, and hoodies and polo shirts, with the LORT Company's logo, are great examples of items that a theatre going crowd will wear.

BUILDING PLAYER IMAGE is the LORT Company building its image in the community. Improving the image of these companies comes through community service efforts. The companies must stay away from the idea of being an elitist organization, and learn what the community needs from them. The image can be helped or hurt by the programming of shows. If the choices are away from the brand or mission, then these companies will begin to see a decrease in support. In this respect, changes in artistic leadership can be the biggest challenge. A new artistic director wants to bring their artistic voice to the job but must understand and keep in mind the image of the company that the community has come to know.

INCREASING YOUTH INTEREST will come through continual growth and focus on education programs. Perhaps the names of the education departments could be changed to "youth outreach departments" in order to emphasize the focus of these departments. If a LORT Company lacks an education department, or the new "youth outreach" department, then it need to make the creation of a youth outreach department the number one priority. Building the future generation of theatre-makers and theatregoers begins with a robust youth outreach program at LORT Companies.



LORT Companies are doing many things right in branding and marketing. The most significant shift is to begin looking at branding and marketing the company versus the concern of branding and marketing for each show.

## IV-VENUES

Stadiums, the NFL venue, are what propelled the value of NFL franchises to levels that people never thought were possible. The venues made a home for the teams, which marked success for the cities that these teams called home.<sup>32</sup> The stadiums were also a way for owners to generate new revenue streams. With these brand new stadiums, the ticket prices began to soar, people kept buying more and more even with increased ticket prices, concession sales rose to unbelievable levels, and new forms of luxury were born. “Luxury boxes, premium seating, and seat licenses” are new elements of the stadium that the fans keep filling on a weekly basis.<sup>33</sup>

The NFL saw a boom in stadium construction from 1974 to 1989. Throughout that time twenty-three of the twenty-six teams were playing in new or refurbished facilities.<sup>34</sup> This construction growth was made possible by significant financial investment, with the owners spearheading most of the movement. In comparison to Broadway, NFL owners are like producers but they actually have a say in the type of venue they want. They get the venue built by the city, with the city being similar to the theatre owner. The NFL owners reap the benefits of the stadium’s revenue like a theatre owner. LORT Companies are similar to NFL owners in that they have a say in the features of the venue; these companies will most likely get funding from the city they reside in, and they reap the benefits of the venue.

The NFL has found creative ways of Financing the Venue, extraordinary Attributes of the Venue have been implemented, and these, in turn, have generated new Revenue from the Venue. The three areas of Venue Financing, Attributes, and Revenue will be used as a guide to explore the NFL’s success, and in turn, will be applied to the Broadway League, Broadway Shows,

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<sup>32</sup> Crepeau, Richard C. (2014-08-01). *NFL Football: A History of America's New National Pastime* (Sport and Society) (p. 44). University of Illinois Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

LORT, and LORT Companies as areas that could promote the growth and expansion of their business.

#### IV, 1-NFL

FINANCING THE VENUE was something the NFL learned to be creative with. There are three great examples, and two of them have to do with the Dallas Cowboys and one with the Washington Redskins. Clint Murchison, the founder of the Dallas Cowboys, wanted a new stadium, but Dallas would not provide financing. Irving, a neighboring town, was willing to put up \$25 million towards the \$35 million stadium, and therefore Texas Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys, was built in Irving. The Cowboys then structured various subsidiaries that operated different parts of the venue. There was the stadium management that went to Texas Stadium Corporation, concessions that went to another subsidiary, and Cowboy's Stadium Club sold liquor.<sup>35</sup> The next move came for the Cowboys when they moved to the \$1.15 billion AT&T Stadium in 2009. The stadium was built in another Dallas suburb, Arlington, which contributed \$300 million.<sup>36</sup> When the Cowboys' rival, the Washington Redskins, was ready to build FedEx Field, the company went a whole new route - no public funding. Due to the Redskins' popularity, tickets were in demand and the company was able to raise \$71.35 million of the \$250.5 million through the following seating options: "205 Dream Seats brought in \$5.2 million, Touchdown Club seats \$2.25 million, Tailgate Club initiation fees \$3.9 million, Tailgate Club season fees \$1.5 million, loge seats \$9.7 million, and club seats \$48.8 million."<sup>37</sup> Finally, one of the biggest breakthroughs was when the NFL's former commissioner, Paul Tagliabue, set up the G-3 program in 1999. The G-3 program created a fund, which came from television

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 162.

revenues that provided 50 percent of the financing for a new stadium or renovation. The G-3 did not want to eliminate the community from subsidizing the stadium. It just wanted to be able to help the stadiums that were unable to raise enough funds from their community to avoid relocation.<sup>38</sup>

The ultimate ATTRIBUTES OF THE VENUE are the luxury boxes. The Cowboys proved to be the trailblazers in luxury box success. In Texas Stadium, the first stadium, the “circle suites” were purchased for \$50,000, a hefty price tag, but that was just the beginning. That price did not include the twelve \$1,300 per ticket season tickets and twelve \$300 per season memberships to the Stadium Club that were a requirement for each box.<sup>39</sup> Corporate money funded most of these luxury boxes. The Dallas Cowboys’ owner, Jerry Jones, upped the ante with the new suites in AT&T Stadium that cost \$350,000 per year. These suites tie into additional revenue, but they also were a reason why people wanted to come to the stadium and support the Cowboys. AT&T Stadium, or “The House that Jerry Built”, quickly became known for the incredible experience all fans have. Having attended a game at AT&T Stadium, I can attest to the fact that the stadium has great areas for entertainment outside of the stadium, an incredibly welcoming entrance, and the biggest jumbotron you will ever see. It is truly an unbelievable place to experience a game. These stadiums have also been built to host other events besides football. AT&T Stadium has hosted the NCAA Final Four, along with some of the biggest college football games of the year. Owners have found ways to make the stadium into a year-round functioning facility.

That leads nicely into the REVENUE FROM THE VENUE. The NFL has revenue divided into Shared and Unshared. Shared Revenue is revenue that the 32 NFL clubs share,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 114.

which includes broadcast TV revenue and a partial share of ticket revenue. Unshared Revenue remains solely with the NFL club, and includes advertising, sponsorships, and luxury box revenue.<sup>40</sup> Stadium revenue falls into the Unshared Revenue category that saw a 21 percent spike in 2003.<sup>41</sup> The revenue from the luxury boxes became a significant resource for the Dallas Cowboys in the early 1990s when the team was not profitable. Jerry Jones did a couple of things at the stadium to boost revenue. He filled ninety-nine luxury boxes that were empty and began selling beer. The luxury boxes alone generated \$30 million per year in 1994. Jones did not stop there; he set up a \$2.5 million a year deal with Pepsi and found additional sponsors with companies such as American Express, Taco Bell, and AT&T. The bottom line is that these NFL franchises generate a massive amount of their revenue from income at their venue, with the key element being that it is Unshared Revenue.

#### IV, 2-BROADWAY LEAGUE

The Broadway League is in an interesting situation regarding venues. The space in the Broadway Box is limited, leaving room for growth difficult, which in turn puts the focus on renovations. That is, of course, unless you are the Shubert Organization, which is looking to build a new theatre on 46<sup>th</sup> Street. But even the Shubert Organization struggles in finding new spaces. In 2017, the Hudson Theatre was brought back by Ambassador Theatre Group, becoming the forty-first Broadway theatre. However, that is not new construction, but rather renovation and restoration.

FINANCING THE VENUE for the Broadway League is focused on the theatre owner's relationship with New York City. Air Rights and the theatre restoration fee, which a fee that is added to the price of every ticket sold, are a source of income that the theatre owners receive that

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<sup>40</sup> *NFL Lockout 2011: The NFL's Revenue Gap Problem*, Blogging the Boys, <http://www.bloggingtheboys.com/2017/2/18/2004505/nfl-lockout-2011-revenue-gap-problem>.

<sup>41</sup> Crepeau, 162.

they use for the renovations of theatres. The Broadway League can begin to work with the City of New York to find new sources of income to bring these Broadway theatres into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which could include the renovation of bathrooms, waiting areas, and lounges. The economic engine that is the Broadway industry can be used as leverage to receive more funding from the City that has a dedication to theatre renovations.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE VENUE are few in Broadway theatres. The ticket price of a Broadway Show is in line with what should be a luxury experience. However, the feeling you get at a majority of Broadway theatres is far from that. Location defines premium tickets for a commercial Broadway Show, similar to the boxes in the NFL. At the not-for-profit Broadway houses, there is the ability to create luxury experiences by offering patron lounges. The Broadway League needs to work with the theatre owners to respond to the audience's experience in the venue. The Broadway League can collect the data that is necessary and distribute this to the theatre owners. Just as the luxury boxes exist in the NFL, the Broadway League needs to work with theatre owners to create a luxury experience on Broadway, outside of prime seat locations. Ambassador Theatre Group has made strides in this with their luxury lounge at the Lyric Theatre. Of course, there is much more real estate available in that theatre to create that type of space.

The outward facing aspects of the venue are a priority, but attention does need to turn to the backstage areas. Dressing rooms and backstage halls could use a bit of a revamp. Of course, this is the last place that theatre owners would want to put resources. The Broadway League can get feedback from actors, stage managers, and crew members to see what areas are in need of renovation. Then they can work with the theatre owners to find a way to have resources that are

dedicated solely to the renovation of backstage areas. Assuring that the talent working on the shows, who come into the building eight times a week, are enjoying their experience.

REVENUE FROM THE VENUE is funneled straight to the theatre owners. The difference between the NFL and Broadway is that the theatre owner, in most cases, is not the producer or creator of the product that is being consumed by the audience. The NFL owner has funneled billions of dollars into the venue and is responsible for the product. They have every right to receive Unshared Revenue from the venue. With that in mind, the producers need to receive some share in the revenue generated from the venue. Without the show, the theatre owners are unable to generate revenue from the venue. The Broadway League's role in all of this is to encourage conversations between individual theatre owners and producers to find what sources of income can become shared versus the current model of being unshared. This shift in revenue sharing is a rethinking of the current model and relationship between theatre owner and producer but one that would be in the best interest of the long-term health of the industry. The Broadway Shows section will outline the sources of income from the venue that the producers should share in.

#### IV, 3-BROADWAY SHOWS

As mentioned in the previous section, the Broadway Shows and their producers have very little to do with the venue, other than begging the theatre owner for a theatre and most important, putting the product in the venue that generates revenue for both the theatre owner and Broadway Show. Broadway Shows have varied lengths of time that they spend in the venue. The time spent in the venue is based solely on the success or failure of the show, but having a high-quality venue, in terms of location and attributes of the venue, can extend or cut short the life of a show.

FINANCING THE VENUE falls to the theatre owners, which leaves the Broadway Shows having very little to do with Financing the Venue. An area for exploration is requiring Broadway Shows to contribute a portion of their profits to go to renovate specific areas of the venue. This concept would go into effect following the recoupment of a show, making the theatre owner a net profit participant. With shows running for an extended period of time, and with the contribution post-recoupment, these funds could be used to improve the backstage areas, where the Broadway Show's employees are working. A loss of net profits would be unpopular for producers, but if they were able to share in the theatre owners' income streams earlier and get to recoupment quicker then perhaps this is one concept they would consider.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE VENUE are wildly important for the Broadway Shows. *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, which opened in fall 2016 on Broadway, transformed the Imperial Theatre to create an immersive experience. Transforming the theatre to create immersive spaces is a trend that will likely grow in the coming years. The Broadway Show wants to be able to control the entire experience from the moment the audience member purchases the ticket, to when they are leaving following the show. Broadway Shows will need to continue to build relationships with theatre owners to make these types of improvements and alterations a possibility. Theatre owners are hesitant to make large sweeping changes without the assurance that the show will have success. In December 2016, it was announced that *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* would arrive on Broadway in the spring of 2018 at Ambassador Theatre Group's Lyric Theatre. To get this coveted title in the Lyric Theatre, Ambassador Theatre Group had to pay Cirque du Soleil over \$20 million to close its show *Paramour* prematurely in April 2017. The move to close *Paramour* was done to allow Ambassador Theatre Group ample time to modify the theatre from a 1,900-seat theatre to a 1,500-seat theatre, and



shift the main entrance of the Lyric Theatre from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. The anticipated success of a show like *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is a reason why a theatre owner will allow such renovations to occur.

REVENUE FROM THE VENUE is non-existent now for a Broadway Show. As mentioned earlier, there needs to be a share for the Broadway Show. All the Broadway Show does is pay hundreds of thousands of dollars a week to cover the expenses of the theatre owner. Broadway Shows should no longer have to share revenue from merchandise sales. The sale of merchandise should just be a part of the theatre license agreement. Now to areas that the Broadway Show should share in. Concessions are a logical area of revenue sharing. If a Show wants to set up partnerships to tie into the show, the theatre should allow this, with the Broadway Show reaping the financial benefit. Credit card commissions are another area that a Broadway Show should have a share. The Show brings the value of having a product to sell, and these transactions do not happen without the product to sell. A huge area of contention is the interest on the advance. The theatre owner holds the advance, which is all the money that is held for future performances. With successful shows like *Dear Evan Hansen*, which opened in the 2016-17 Broadway season, the advance can be about \$10 million.<sup>42</sup> The theatre owner currently receives interest on the advance with no share to the Broadway Show. The Broadway Show should be given a significant portion of the interest. The theatre owner would receive \$0 in interest if it were not for the efforts that a Broadway Show put in to sell each and every ticket to the show. These new examples of revenue sharing to Broadway Shows come from the value that the Broadway Show provides to the theatre owner, and would require extensive negotiations, with honest conversations from each party of what they could gain if they ever came to pass.

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<sup>42</sup> Clement, Olivia. "Dear Evan Hansen Advance Sales Climb to \$10 Million After Opening." *Playbill*. PLAYBILL INC., 09 Dec. 2016. Web. 02 May 2017.

#### IV, 4-LORT

LORT is in an optimum position to use the venue to grow and expand its business, as a majority of the seventy-two member theatres own their building. The LORT Companies need to not only maintain these buildings but also see them grow and expand.

FINANCING THE VENUE is a struggle that every LORT Company has. Substantial capital campaigns need to be put in place to raise millions of dollar to see renovations occur. The NFL set up the G-3 fund that was created to provide 50 percent of the fund necessary to build or renovate stadiums. Each team provided money to the G-3 fund from their share in television revenue. LORT can set up a similar fund that pools together financial resources from LORT Companies that is used solely to provide 50 percent of the funds needed to build or renovate theatres. The source of this money can be the sharing of incremental income that each theatre generates from increased venue revenue, similar to the theatre restoration fund for Broadway theatres. LORT Companies should look at this fund as a way to pool resources to help in a time of need. It is inevitable that a LORT Company will need to engage in a capital campaign to maintain or renovate their building. When the LORT Company is in that time of need, LORT would collectively determine the amount to award that LORT Company. The award would be based on the dollar amounts contributed to the fund, the annual operating budget of the LORT Company, and the cost of the maintenance or renovation that is required. The LORT Companies will resist this, but it creates a forced savings account that all can reap the benefits from by being a member of the League of Resident Theatres.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE VENUE is not an area of focus for LORT. The luxury boxes were not the focus of the NFL, but of the NFL teams. What LORT can do to add value is to create standards, for the LORT Companies, of attributes that venues should include. One area of

growth would be providing childcare facilities. The legwork of knowing rules and regulations can be taken care of by LORT and then distributed to the member theatres. Another area is creating a database that includes information about each LORT Company's theatre spaces. The Broadway industry already has this with Stage Specs. With the number of co-productions between LORT Companies, it is a resource that would be incredibly valuable.

REVENUE FROM THE VENUE is not something that LORT is expected to share in, but is something that they could help build relationships among the LORT Companies. Two areas are commercial partnerships and concession deals. Commercial partnerships are potentially huge areas of revenue for LORT Companies. Naming rights of theatres are handled by the LORT Companies and are one-time donations that are used to get the theatre construction complete. The NFL has sponsorships that generate revenue year in and year out. Getting corporations to sponsor specific areas of the venue on an annual basis can generate residual income that all LORT Companies would love. More value can be brought to these corporations when a collective group of companies comes together. Of course, LORT Companies would want a local tie-in, but some sponsorship that LORT collectively acquires would be outstanding for all. These types of sponsorships could be annual naming rights to the patron lounge, bar areas, or box office.

The other area that LORT can help is with global concession deals. Again, coming together as a unified group of theatres will allow for lower expenses in concession spending, creating greater profit in sales. Every theatre has its standard bar and snacks, so why not set up partnerships with a company like Makers Mark that all seventy-two LORT Companies use.

#### IV, 5-LORT COMPANIES

Out of the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, and LORT, LORT Companies are the closest the theatre industry comes to NFL teams and the way that they have to run their venue. LORT Companies can control the experience the audience has at the venue. The audience experience at the venue is a day-to-day challenge that these companies face, but when embraced can be a tremendous opportunity to grow and expand the business.

FINANCING THE VENUE is the challenge that LORT Companies face. Raising enough funds to support the operations of the company is difficult. To raise millions of dollars to build a new venue or refurbish the current venue only happens through capital campaigns. Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago announced a \$50 million building expansion in 2014.<sup>43</sup> The fact is that these LORT Companies are contained by the size of their theatres and spaces. Without the ability to grow to meet demand, the companies will stay stagnant in their income and income potential. That is why the creation of a fund similar to the G-3 fund is vital for these companies. As mentioned earlier, the idea is for LORT to set this up, but each LORT Company should have funds that are raised and earmarked for venue renovation and construction on an annual basis. It then avoids some of the panic of having to raise \$50 million to grow and expand the venue, which ultimately grows and expands the business of these LORT Companies.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE VENUE have become standard at these LORT Companies. There is the lobby area with the VIP Lounge, a standard bar area for the rest of the theatregoers, and parking that is a challenge for most of these companies. There are more people than just the donors of the theatre that would enjoy a VIP Experience. A strategy is to create luxury lounges that a one-time visitor of the theatre can purchase and experience. You never know if they could turn out to be the next big supporter of the company. To accompany these luxury lounges, a VIP

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<sup>43</sup> Biasco, Paul. "Steppenwolf Announces Major Expansion Plans, 400-Seat Theater." *DNAinfo Chicago*. N.p., 02 Oct. 2014. Web. 02 May 2017.

Experience/Concierge Service could be created for audience members. These services would include arranging pickup from and drop off at the audience member's house, babysitting arrangements, restaurant reservations, and a location for pre-show, intermission, and post-show cocktails and refreshments. This service would bring the audience experience to the next level. Just as the NFL has created the luxury boxes, so too can the LORT Companies. With this top-notch experience at the venue, word of mouth will spread that will ultimately bring new audience members through the doors.

Not every person can afford a luxury experience like that; so creating space for audience members to lounge before a performance is critical. The Off-Broadway theatre company, Signature Theatre Company, has created a lounge that is open throughout the day where people can read, meet, and have a place to congregate. It makes the venue more than just a place to come for a three-hour event. The venue becomes a public sanctuary for the community that is surrounding these LORT Companies.

REVENUE FROM THE VENUE can increase by creating these sanctuaries for potential audience members. Of course, these theatres are not in the restaurant business, but generating revenue from a café, by bringing in a local coffee company to operate it, can be another income stream that comes from outside the standard concession income. The venues in the NFL have found ways of programming outside of just football. LORT Companies must find a way occupy the venue for as many days as possible by providing additional programming. An empty venue is not able to generate any income.

Outside of the standard offering of concessions is to have post-show activities. Many audience members will find a bar for a post-show drink, along with cast and crew members that are looking for a place to go after the show with their friends and family. Creating a post-show

lounge with drinks and a late-night menu has huge potential. This late-night bar is something that would need to be tested, and might not work every night of the week. It could be something that is done on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

Venues are an area that the NFL learned how to generate substantial amounts of revenue from that, in turn, brought the business to new levels. If the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT and LORT Companies focus on new ways of financing the venue, including new attributes of the venue, which generate new revenue, these segments of the theatre industry will grow and expand in ways that are currently unimaginable.

## V-BROADCAST AND TELEVISION DEALS

In the history of the NFL, there is no other area of growth, in terms of both revenue and reach, which has had a bigger impact than the Broadcast and Television (“TV”) Deals. This section is not intended to provide a history of TV Deals, but rather how these TV Deals impacted the sport. However, a brief history of TV Deals is vital to understanding how the NFL used Broadcast and TV Deals to grow and expand the business.

The NFL earns more money from these deals than it does from ticket sales. At the founding of the NFL, everyone thought that you have to experience this live event in person and that Broadcast and TV Deals would cannibalize the business. These words are exactly what many people in the theatre industry are saying today. The NFL gave television a shot for the first time in 1939<sup>44</sup>, and in 1947 the Chicago Bears agreed to a local TV deal for \$4,500, or \$60,338.25 in 2017 dollars, for WBKB to televise six of its games.<sup>45</sup> Television deals are where that fear of people not coming to the games began to creep in, but all that happened was a doubling in attendance for the Bears.

The Los Angeles Rams were trailblazers in granting the local rights for all of their home games to be televised in 1950. With the fear of people staying at home and not coming to the games, Bert Bell, commissioner of the NFL at the time, implemented the blackout rules in 1953. The blackout rule prevented NFL teams from televising a game in the local area where the NFL club was playing the home game unless the stadium was sold-out within seventy-two hours of the beginning of the game.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Crepeau, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Crepeau, 46.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 50.

In 1956, CBS was paying a mere \$1 million per year for TV rights, or \$8,873,272 in 2017 dollars, and now the network spends about \$3 billion per year. A milestone for the NFL was the start of Monday Night Football in 1970. This programming changed the way that the NFL used television to present football. Ratings soared, and so did the TV deals. The NFL drew attention from the Home Box Office (“HBO”) and Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (“ESPN”) to create programs that went beyond just the games. The NFL Network launched in November 2003, which was headed by Steve Bronstein at the NFL to create a network that was solely devoted to the National Football League.

Audience, Visibility, and Revenue are three areas of focus that the NFL utilizes in its implementation of Broadcast and TV Deals. The Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can use these three areas of focus as a model to grow and expand their business through Broadcast and TV Deals.

#### V, 1-NFL

Without the Broadcast and TV Deals that are in place today, the NFL would never have made the impact on society that it currently makes. Growth in Audience, Visibility, and Revenue are three reasons why the NFL continued to grow and expand through the Broadcast and TV Deals.

AUDIENCE growth only came with the NFL making an invaluable realization. The Audience was looking for more than just a game, it wanted entertainment. The growth of Broadcast and TV Deals gave access to a greater Audience base to watch the game. The NFL gave the Audience access to more than just the games, but the focus is still on the number of people watching the games on a weekly basis. That is why DirecTV paired with the NFL to give



the audience access to watch all games through the NFL Sunday Ticket package.<sup>47</sup> This subscription allows the audience to view more than just locally broadcast games. Fans are scattered throughout the country and can stay connected to their favorite team without attending the event. Another area of growth was done through sports bars, giving the audience a chance to watch multiple games at once. Outside of the games, the NFL gave the Audience a look at the process by broadcasting the NFL Draft. The idea of reading off a list of names for hours does not sound like entertainment, but the NFL learned how to make this an entertaining evening. Today, the first round of the draft is broadcast on primetime television and generates more viewers than most college football games.<sup>48</sup> The NFL Audience is looking for entertainment, and the NFL is finding a way to do that on a daily basis that is beyond just the game.

VISIBILITY grew for both the NFL teams and athletes with the growth of Broadcast and TV Deals. Visibility increased with the purchase of Ed Sabol's company, Blair Films, which was later named NFL Films. The acquisition of NFL Films in 1965 was a way for the NFL to glamorize the game for the public's consumption.<sup>49</sup> The NFL achieved this through the use of multiple cameras, which gave the audience a new perspective to view the game. The Visibility went beyond just the players; "Monday Night Football helped transform the way in which Americans watched football and other sports by turning announcers into stars and celebrities, and sport into entertainment."<sup>50</sup> The announcers became the personalities of the games and had the NFL fan looking at the game with a critical eye. Some former players and coaches make up the group of announcers that comment for the NFL's broadcasts on a weekly basis. The Visibility hit a new level in 2009 when the Super Bowl became the most-watched event in television

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<sup>47</sup> Crepeau, 157.

<sup>48</sup> Crepeau, 106.

<sup>49</sup> Crepeau, 77.

<sup>50</sup> Crepeau, 98-99.

history.<sup>51</sup> Visibility for the teams and players grew through the creation of NFL Films and the personalities of the announcers that gave fans a new perspective of the teams.

REVENUE is the biggest impact that the Broadcast and TV Deals had on the NFL. The demand for the game catapulted the numbers into a new stratosphere. The contract that was signed in mid-December 2011 had CBS, NBC and FOX each agree to pay nearly \$3 billion per year to the NFL.<sup>52</sup> And that is only the beginning. DirecTV pays \$1 billion a year and ESPN pays \$1.9 billion a year for the broadcast to Monday Night Football. As mentioned earlier, this is shared revenue that provides each NFL team with nearly \$184.4 million per year.<sup>53</sup> This power in Revenue does not come from a single team, but from the collective strength of the NFL. That is the key to generating this level of revenue. Other sources of revenue from the NFL came through advertising, which led to the creation of the TV Timeout. Former Commissioner Bert Bell implemented this rule because he knew that advertisers would be willing to pay for that valuable airtime. The Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies will need to find a way to forge together to hit revenue potential that will impact the industry in creating a new audience, bringing greater visibility, and sustaining the business with new revenue for years to come.

## V, 2-BROADWAY LEAGUE

Broadcast and TV Deals for the Broadway League means a lot of negotiations with unions. The benefits of putting these deals in place will serve to expand the Broadway industry as a whole. The Broadway League and Broadway Shows know that there must be progress made in this area of the business. The NFL saw incredible growth in its business through Broadcast

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<sup>51</sup> Crepeau, 177.

<sup>52</sup> Crepeau, 188.

<sup>53</sup> Crepeau, 188.

and TV Deals, and the Broadway League will only see expansion in business by investing resources in Broadcast and TV Deals.

The AUDIENCE growth came from the NFL putting deals in place that expanded the reach of its product. The Broadway League can compare the value of a Broadway Show going on tour while it is still running on Broadway, and the impact, either positive or negative, that distribution through Broadcast and TV Deals would have on Broadway Shows while they are still running. Broadway Shows had a similar resistance to the touring market, and my opinion is that expanding to Broadcasting and Television distribution would only increase demand for a show. The comparison can be made between the Broadway League and the NFL in how they set up distribution models through networks such as NBC, CBS, and ESPN. The Broadway Shows are now responsible for setting up that model, but with a collective force, through the Broadway League, more lucrative Broadcast and TV Deals can be structured. Structuring these deals and creating a solid distribution strategy will increase the visibility of the Broadway Shows.

An increase in VISIBILITY will not occur for individual Broadway Shows, but the Broadway industry as a whole. The Broadway industry was once a part of most family homes, with albums such as *South Pacific* being played regularly in the late 1940s and early 1950s. That was the Golden Age of Musical Theatre, and some people say we could be heading back there with shows like *Hamilton*. The visibility that was present during the Golden Age will only happen again if the Broadway industry finds a way to Broadcast Broadway Shows successfully. NBC and FOX's live broadcasts of shows are a way to bring the Broadway musical back into people's homes. The Broadway League must find a way to connect these broadcasts to the Broadway industry and utilize these two networks to help in distribution models. The country has an interest in watching these live events, so why not exploit it.

The Broadway League will see REVENUE in the share it would earn from Broadway Shows in future Broadcast and Television Deals. With a successful model for Broadway Shows to record and distribute through these channels, the Broadway League can reap the benefits as well.

The Broadway League is in the position the NFL was in in 1939. The Broadway League's first task is convincing everyone in the Broadway industry that this is good for the industry as a whole. Then, it needs to put parameters in place to maintain the prospective audience's desire to experience the Broadway Shows in person, while structuring deals that generate the substantial revenue that will help propel the Broadway industry to the next level.

### V, 3-BROADWAY SHOWS

Broadway Shows equate to the NFL teams regarding Broadcast and TV Deals. NFL Teams provide the product that the NFL distributes through the lucrative Broadcast and TV Deals. They also would reap the benefits of the success the NFL has found in these deals. However, the Broadway Shows must maintain control of how the show is recorded and distributed, in conjunction with the Broadway League. The way a Broadway Show records and distributes is part of the story telling, which makes or breaks the distribution of the Broadway Shows.

AUDIENCE growth through Broadcast and TV Deals will come by making the Broadway Shows national. The NFL teams became recognized around the country, which in turn grew fan loyalty. This loyalty leads to new revenue. Broadway Shows only can be viewed in one place, their Broadway theatre in New York City. It is a shame that not everyone will have a chance to see a show because they are not able to visit New York City or might be unable to

afford a Broadway ticket. By finding a new way to distribute the product, Broadway Shows can come into the home of every theatre lover throughout the country.

The National Theatre, in London, found a new way to distribute theatre. In 2009, it launched National Theatre Live (“NT Live”), and as of June 2014, its broadcasts have been viewed by over 5.5 million people in over 2,000 venues around the world.<sup>54</sup> This significant reach has not had an adverse impact on the attendance at the National Theatre, and since the founding of NT Live, London has seen an increase of local theatre attendance of 6.4%.<sup>55</sup>

Distribution model like NT Live leads to a significant growth in VISIBILITY. Ticket prices are soaring for Broadway Shows, which makes it difficult for many to afford to see the Shows. A new distribution model through Broadcast and TV Deals will give access to an audience base that is longing to see a Broadway Show but just cannot afford the ticket. By engaging this audience member in a new way, there is the possibility that one day they will be able to purchase a ticket to a Broadway Show. It also is not always about affordability, but about geography. Some people simply are not able to travel to New York to see a Broadway Show. I am a huge Dallas Cowboys fan and continue to be one because I can see the team play on a weekly basis on TV. If Broadway fans were able to watch their favorite Broadway Shows at home, Broadway Shows would create a new loyalty for fans. The new phenomenon of a live broadcast of musicals has seen a tremendous spike in popularity on network television. *Grease Live!* averaged 12.2 million viewers,<sup>56</sup> which shows a demand for people watching live musicals from home. Shows like *Hamilton* need to play off of their hype and quickly find a way to

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<sup>54</sup> "Research Finds That National Theatre Live Has No Negative Impact on Regional Theatre-going." *Research Finds That National Theatre Live Has No Negative Impact on Regional Theatre-going* | Nesta. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> "TV Ratings: 'Grease Live' Surges on Fox, Nabs 12.2 Million Viewers." *The Hollywood Reporter*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2017.

distribute through television before they lose an audience that is dying to see the show. Trust the NFL's experience, it will not cannibalize the ticket sales! The Chicago Bears took a similar risk in 1947 that paved the way for tremendous Broadcast and TV Deals, larger audience numbers at games, and NFL clubs reaping the benefits from that movement to this day.

REVENUE is an area of concern for Broadway Shows. The main concern is not about earning additional revenue from Broadcast and TV Deals, but of losing money from audience members that no longer want to see the show live. The loss of audience members is a legitimate concern. My belief is that Revenue will only increase with Broadcast and TV Deals in place that expands the distribution of Broadway Shows. If the Broadway League sets up deals with networks, the Broadway Shows that participate in the distribution will share in the revenues generated from the network deals. This national exposure will, in turn, increase merchandise sales, including cast albums, future licensing, and ticket sales of touring productions. These streams of income will be further reinforced through the fan loyalty that would be created through national distribution.

#### V, 4-LORT

LORT and LORT Companies might be the driving force that will create a model for the Broadcast and TV Deals. There is so much risk in the commercial world of Broadway, and the not-for-profit LORT Companies are a place that can take a risk. Think about it as a pre-Broadway engagement.

AUDIENCE growth will come through the global deals that LORT can put in place for LORT Companies. The research and development of broadcast and TV deals can be taken on at the LORT level for the theatrical industry as a whole. The NFL led the charge to find a way to distribute the NFL game on a national level. LORT needs to utilize the power of the seventy-two

companies throughout the country to secure distribution models that make sense on a global level, such as the capability to blackout broadcasts if there are concerns about attendance at the local LORT Company. The structure of these deals and an additional distribution model will allow a new audience in to see a show at a LORT Company.

The focus of VISIBILITY for LORT will be on creating a greater visibility for the LORT Companies. In a world where LORT Companies are distributing their product through Broadcast and TV Deals, an introduction of what LORT is must be made. The value of LORT is low, and the knowledge of what LORT does is even lower. Broadcast is an excellent way to let a group of individuals know what an organization like LORT does.

Through Broadcast and TV Deals, different communities get to see other's shows. LORT Companies are tied to their communities, and the programming of shows reflects that. By LORT connecting the LORT Companies through a new way of distribution, we could see the new model of a co-production. Co-productions tend to be produced at one company and then a couple of months later they will move to another. It is common for the production elements and cast to go to each theatre. While this model saves on expenses and perpetuates the live in-person experience, there is always a world of expanding co-productions by showing them on a big screen at the theatre. These could be nights at one LORT Company to view another Company's show that LORT would arrange through agreements that they monitor on a global level. The ability for these communities to see different types of work will increase the overall brand of LORT throughout the country.

REVENUE for LORT is taking a share of what is generated from LORT Companies to help support the fund for theatre renovations. To maximize the Revenue potential through Broadcast and TV Deals, LORT must bring the LORT Companies together in a collective

manner. The power of the seventy-two companies will generate greater revenue than one of these LORT Companies attempting to structure deals on its own. LORT would generate revenue from arrangements with local channels, similar to how the Chicago Bears started with a local Chicago television channel in 1939.

LORT's focus in Broadcast and TV Deals is to unify the LORT Companies and collectively bargain the deals by using the power of all seventy-two companies. LORT can be the maverick that leads the way in the world of Broadcast and TV Deals for the theatrical industry as a whole.

#### V, 5-LORT COMPANIES

LORT Companies exist in different communities throughout the country. These communities have different interests, and to remain successful, LORT Companies must cater to what the community wants to see, or what the artistic director chooses to produce. What if a portion of that community would like to go beyond the programming they have come to love? They are not able to unless they travel to other LORT Companies. LORT Companies can let the communities see more through broadcasting models. These new models might be a Monday night event with a big screen to see shows at other companies throughout the country, which, in turn, would help maximize value of the venue. It also might be getting the community involved that does not come to their local LORT Company. Distribution on local network affiliates is a way to achieve this new broadcast model.

With that in mind, there are two perspectives to see AUDIENCE growth, the growth of the local and national community. LORT Companies have the potential to reach more audience members in their local area through Broadcast and TV Deals. New audience acquisition can occur from someone that watches a local broadcast on television, to someone who then makes a



visit to their local LORT Company. On the national level, LORT Companies are known in their local community and are recognized on the national level only if they transfer shows to Broadway. Broadcast and TV Deals can create a distribution model for LORT Companies to reach an audience throughout the country.

VISIBILITY for these LORT Companies will increase with a new local and national model for distribution. It becomes a model not only for the local community watching the shows, but also for people throughout the country who will be able to experience these incredible plays and productions that these LORT Companies bring to life. It means that these LORT Companies can become a household name that increases exposure and revenue for these companies.

REVENUE potential is significant for LORT Companies. NFL teams did not see massive amounts of revenue immediately, but over time they certainly have reaped the benefits of Broadcast and TV Deals. One source of revenue for LORT Companies will be a share in revenue generated by other LORT Companies broadcasting their production throughout the country. There will also be the model through local channels that will be a share similar to the NFL. One additional note is that ticket sales will increase because this new distribution model is also a marketing strategy for all of these LORT Companies. The last revenue generator comes from the idea that more commercial transfers to New York will happen because producers will now be able to see more shows at LORT Companies. This stream of revenue is not a guarantee and is something that can be an unreliable source. The fact is that significant exposure through Broadcast and TV Deals will enhance the opportunity for LORT Company's production to have a future commercial life.

LORT Companies are in a position to take advantage of Broadcast and TV Deals the same way that NFL teams were able to. Through the new model of distribution, a new audience will be reached on a local and national level.

## CONCLUSION

The proof is in the pudding. The Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies can use the NFL's growth and expansion as a model to grow and expand business. That growth and expansion will happen through five areas of focus: 1) Audience Experience, 2) Community Engagement, 3) Branding and Marketing, 4) Venues, and 5) Broadcast and TV Deals.

The growth will happen by utilizing the power of both the Broadway League and Broadway Shows, and LORT and LORT Companies. The National Football League did not grow and expand just by the models put in place by the League or teams. It was a collaborative effort that let the sport of professional football turn into a worldwide entertainment company.

While the theatrical community is doing a lot right, and moving in a great direction, we can do more. It is my passion to break down the walls of resistance to changes that have been ingrained over years of practice. A general form of resistance will be that the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies think that they are doing enough already. Sure, there are great things that are being done, but what changes are being made and are those things that are being done having a big enough impact? Another form of resistance is that there is not enough funding to invest in these new areas. To make strides in any area of business that business must invest resources. Not all of the initiatives that the NFL embraces required significant financial resources. Sometimes the resources are time, talent, and energy, rather than money. The final area is that the theatrical community says there is not enough time to do these and still produce the same amount of theatre. Again, it takes an investment to make these things happen. It might mean turning the focus onto new things that can bring a new level of reach to

the work that is being produced. The work that theatre artists create and produce cannot have its full potential of impact without reaching the greatest number of people possible.

It has been said for years that theatre is in its final days, that we are losing our audience, and that the art is a dying breed. The fact is that the theatre is a gift to society that has the ability to transform an individual or a group of individuals' lives forever. A changing of the hearts and minds of the theatrical community will have to take place to grow and expand the business as a whole. With expansion come more lives to impact. The theatrical community knows how to do the art that will transform lives, but there is so much more to add to society that will grow and expand the business of the Broadway League, Broadway Shows, LORT, and LORT Companies. Who is in to change the game?

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