

CASE STUDY: 501 (c)(3) Theatre Company

BACKGROUND

A Minneapolis-based, professional theatre company sought to differentiate itself in a crowded arts and entertainment marketplace. Competing with over 60 other professional theatre companies ([Ivey Awards](#), 2004), and myriad entertainment options in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, this theatre company addressed critical brand and communication issues to ground a unique symbolic identity.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Increase stability and viability in saturated Twin Cities' theatre market and ground a unique symbolic identity without losing its core audience support.

SOLUTION

Branding, communication, and marketing efforts were assessed. Upon Sanctioning Agent's recommendations, the company shifted its marketing and branding efforts to cultivate a unique company-centric identity, rather than each of its individual shows. The following deliverables were presented to address the business challenges faced by the company:

- A unique brand identity;
- A vision for the desired experience for all constituents (audience members, cast, crew, vendors, and business partners);
- Tactical and strategic plans to ground the new identity; and
- Repeatable marketing and publicity plans to promote shows and ground the company's symbolic identity.

RESULTS

In under 18 months, the theatre company:

- Increased fundraising from its annual letter campaign to **200%** of goal and **300%** of the previous two-year average, reversing a downward trend.
- First artistic grant for one of the company's festival.
- First corporate sponsorship for a main stage production.
- Unprecedented coverage in local media outlets including: *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, *St. Paul Pioneer-Press*, *Southwest Journal*, *City Pages*, *The Onion*, *The Rake*, and *The Current*.