



Producer Handbook

Version 1

A welcoming theatre community with a passion for creating vibrant, engaging entertainment

This document is kept accurate by the Production Chair with help from active Producers.

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Introduction

This Handbook has been prepared to help you be a confident and competent producer, an effective mentor and learner, and to help you have fun! It will guide you, help you solve problems, and save you time (and maybe grief). We want this to be a good experience for you and your team. We want you to happily produce shows here at Langham, again and again.

With few exceptions, the Handbook is not intended to tell you every detail of how you do every task as a producer. Each production will have different challenges. Instead it is to identify those things that have to be done at a certain time and in a certain way in order for the rest of the Langham activities to run smoothly.

Let's say that again: **AT LANGHAM THERE ARE THINGS THAT HAVE TO BE DONE IN A CERTAIN WAY AND AT A CERTAIN TIME OR IT MAKES A BIG MESS FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE THEATRE.**

Having said that (twice), we know that some producers are very much behind the scenes people, and others like to be more visible. How you do your work is up to you and the rest of your production team. As long as everything gets done, and someone assumes responsibility for each task, there is considerable flexibility in how you produce.

Producer: Responsibilities

This section outlines the tasks which **MUST** be done to produce a successful show. How these tasks are done may take various forms. As a producer at Langham the following areas of responsibility are most important. They are:

1.1. Help Build the Production Team

You may be working with directors with limited contacts in the Langham community. As you are brought on to the production team, see which roles still need to be filled. Use your contacts and connections to suggest people to the current production team. Please also ask the volunteer coordinator for those who have expressed interest. The Volunteer Coordinator will also have a list of new volunteers and the areas they have expressed interest in. Encourage mentorship by bringing in volunteers with less experience to assist those on your production team (but recognize not everyone is up to the task of being a mentor). The Production Chair may also assist with finding people to fill roles.

1.2. Culture and Communication

While we hope that everyone involved is focussed on making the show experience a positive one, at Langham the producer has a unique responsibility in setting the tone for all activities that contribute to a successful production.

Key Culture and Communication Information:

- You act as the eyes and ears for the Production Chair. They need to be kept informed of your production, and especially if any issues come up. The Production Chair is there to help you with these issues.
- You must ensure everyone connected to the production is aware of the *Guidelines for Respectful Communication*, and the *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*. These can be found on our website under Handbooks and Policies. There will be an ombudsperson assigned to your show who will reach out to you. This person can help resolve inter-personal concerns from the cast, crew, or production team where a neutral third party is required.
- Regularly check in on production heads: directors, designers, the General Manager (GM), and Stage Manager (SM). Leading up to the show, also check on the Box Office Manager for updates on how the show is selling. The Newsletter Editor can help excite the Langham community about your show. The lighting and sound designers may need assistance filling operator positions for the show, but they will be involved in asking people. The costume designer may require volunteers to help dress.
- Build a Welcome Package for the cast and crew who will be joining your production. A Welcome Package should include the following documents: *Welcome to Langham Court Theatre*, *Harassment and Discrimination Policy*, *Guideline for Respectful Communications*, *Detailed Emergency Info*, and *Social Media Guidelines*. It may also include information specific to your show. This is to be distributed to your cast at the first rehearsal, and crew as they join.

1.3. Budget

The producer is responsible for tracking all costs associated with the production. The only exceptions to this are the promotion of your show and the royalties to put it on which are paid out of a general fund for the entire season.

Key Budget Information:

- The Treasurer will tell you the budget of your show. This is to be shared among departments. Ask your designers (especially costume, set, and props) to outline how much they will require.
- You must provide an original receipt for every expense you are claiming.
- We recommend you check in with your production team at least once a week so you know what is being spent by everyone involved – no surprises.
- You may use any format you wish to track expenses.
- You may request an advance from the GM – but you are responsible for it.
- Langham has accounts at a number of building supply stores. Purchases can be charged to our account, but are still part of your budget. Please check with GM for a current list.
- Let the GM know ASAP if you think your show has a budget issue – again, no surprises.

1.4. Timelines and Calendar

The producer is responsible for creating, communicating, and keeping on track the production calendar for your show. The producer is also the main point person to ensure that the spaces in the building you need are booked in Langham's Room Booking Calendar. This calendar can be viewed by anyone by going to our website under 'Members'.

Key Timeline and Calendar Information:

- Prepare yourself for the reality that the producer's commitment to a show may start a year or more before the show opens. Pace yourself.
- It is the responsibility of the producer to make sure that ALL departments in the theatre have the information they need about your show on the timelines that they need it. This includes the GM, costumes, props, set construction, newsletter, etc.
- Langham uses a Room Booking Calendar to track the activity in all of our spaces. While any person can request space be booked, it is ONLY THE GM that can reserve the space for you. It is the responsibility of the producer to book the required rooms for the required times and that these requests make it to the Room Booking Calendar. Please book all spaces and times as soon as you know them. Update your requests as things change.
- If your show requires seats in the auditorium reserved for actors (ie, as part of the production, an actor comes offstage to use a chair), let the Box Office Manager know immediately, so they know not to sell those seats.
- It is the responsibility of the producer to create and share a production timeline so the staff and production team knows their deadlines and events. The following is a typical example:

1.4.1. Example Langham Producer Tasks and Timeline

When	What
12 months before opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meet with director: discuss expectations and vision- Identify and recruit as necessary all members of production team- Identify unusual requirements: music, costumes, unusual casting, etc.
6 – 9 months before opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Schedule 1st production meeting; producer chairs the meeting- Create and confirm contact list- Confirm roles and communication protocols- Distribute scripts to all designers. Get script from GM.- Book audition dates, times and space and send info to GM
5 months before opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Confirm set designer has met with head scenic carpenter- Send audition details to newsletter editor and GM- Get building alarm codes from the Box Office Manager

<p>10 weeks before opening of a PLAY</p> <p>(NOTE: 14 weeks before opening of a MUSICAL)</p>	<p>- AUDITIONS!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The audition forms are included in your Producer package, update as required for your show. - Copy audition sides provided by director (scripts or scenes to be read for the audition) - Have production dates and rehearsal times available for potential cast - Arrange accompaniment and have music pieces ready (MUSICAL only) - Copy scripts for the cast (talk to GM, who can print them easily)
<p>10 weeks before opening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book space for Meet and Greet - Schedule Costume Parade and Paper Tech ~10 days before tech weekend - Check budget to date with all production heads and get a budget advance from GM if required - Provide any interesting stories to the GM for media attention
<p>First Read Through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribute your Welcome Package to cast. Distribute this to other volunteers as they join your team. - Ensure SM distributes the rehearsal and performance schedule to cast - Confirm contact list details - Show set maquette if available
<p>Every week through rehearsal period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend at least one rehearsal per week to solve problems as they emerge - Chair a regular (often weekly) production meeting - Monitor budget expenses - Have director and costume designer plan the photo shoot
<p>Week before the strike of the previous show</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange the Meet & Greet, advise Box Office
<p>Meet & Greet (First rehearsal onstage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up lounge and arrange clean up - Open M&G with introductions, welcome newcomers, introduce GM, and Board Members - Coordinate head shots as required (those that do not have a recent headshot in the file)
<p>4 weeks before opening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain bios from everyone for the program - Obtain director's notes and "About the Playwright" from director - Prepare an unformatted document with all the bios and notes and send to Program Coordinator (ask the GM who this is).
<p>10 days before opening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper tech: have food and a big table(s) to spread out on - The stage manager, director, and tech designers will walk through the complete show. You are there for mediating if necessary. - Distribute program for edits. - Arrange dressing rooms with the Costume Designer/Makeup/Hair if required

Tech Weekend	- Be available; supply food - Archival photos are done at Dress Rehearsal on Monday evening
Opening Night	- You are expected to be there. Book your complimentary tickets at the Box Office.
During Performance Weeks	- Deal with and distribute complimentary tickets. - Schedule cast party (hosted closing night or Sunday after closing). The theatre can be used for this if space allows.
Closing Night!	- Ensure production teams have support to clear post-show so strike can start on time next day
Strike Day	- The carpenters strike the set. Crew and production team sort and return borrowed items and clean up for the next show.
Week after Strike	- Complete budget summaries, pay all bills, return all borrowed properties, costumes, gear (Or confirm with designers that items have been returned) - Submit reconciled budget to GM

1.5. The Producer's Role in Auditions at Langham

Auditions are a critical moment of every production. They require coordination from the production team and can often be a newcomer's first contact with the theatre.

We want to put our best and most welcoming face forward. We want to make this procedure as stress free as possible. At Langham, the producer has a key role in making this happen. We think the following tips are helpful:

Pre-Auditions (6-9 months before opening)

- Coordinate with the director and SM on the entire process. Directors will often have specific auditioning styles they employ.
- While you have flexibility, Langham auditions are usually Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Call-backs are usually the following Tuesday evenings. Book the required rooms before sending out audition information.
- Get audition notice from the director. This must include: contact for questions, dates and times for auditions and callbacks, and production schedule relevant to actors. Usually includes summary of roles available. The audition notice should also include expectations for people who may not have a background in theatre (use only limited theatre terminology)
- Provide notice to GM (for website) and newsletter editor. Feel free to distribute through other networks as well.

Week before Auditions

- Update the current *Audition Forms* (found on our website) for your production as required and print them.
- Print required audition material for director. This will likely be sections of the script.

Auditions and Callbacks

- You will work with the SM and Director to facilitate the auditions. An important part of the producer's role is to ensure that the incoming actors are welcomed and that *Audition Forms* are properly filled out.
- Make sure there are signs outside and inside the building telling auditioners where to go.
- Some directors may ask you to take a picture of each auditioner.
- Every person who auditions at Langham gets a respectful phone call thanking them for auditioning. These calls should be made by someone who was present for the audition, preferably the director.

At the same time, invite actors to callbacks.

- If the director wants to cast a member of a union or association who auditioned, they must talk to the GM before making the offer to understand the conditions the actor will have to agree to. Our *Paid Artist Policy* is can be found on our website. This is also outlined for the director in the *Director Handbook*.

Post-Auditions

- Create cast contact sheet and add to production team contact sheet.
- If uncast actors indicated that they would like to be involved in other ways, consider bringing them on as stage crew or talk to designers about possible roles. This is a separate call from the one where they learned their audition results.
- Provide newsletter editor with names of cast and production heads.

1.6. Photographer

A photographer has been booked for the Meet and Greet and Monday night Dress Rehearsal before opening. It is assumed that the Meet and Greet is the first Tuesday after the previous show has been struck. If either of these dates change, please contact the Photographer, which can be done through the GM.

Producer: Tools

The following is a list with short description of what documents exist, and how and when to use them. These will be printed off for you at the Pre-Season Meeting, and can also be found on our website under Handbooks and Policies.

2.1. Guidelines for Respectful Communication

Langham only works when we work together. Different people will have different ideas and emotions will get... out. In the most generous interpretation, this is due to people being invested in the success of the production. These guidelines can help navigate a collision of ideas.

This is to be distributed to production team, cast, and crew.

2.2. Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Harassment is not tolerated at Langham and can be against B.C. law. This document outlines the procedures to be followed should harassment occur. This policy should be referenced at the first read through, when the Ombudsperson meets the cast. As crew members join the team closer to the show, ensure they understand this policy as well.

To be distributed to production team, cast, and crew.

2.3. Welcome to Langham Court Theatre

This is a short overview of what the schedule of a play looks like at Langham. This is especially important for those who are less familiar with productions at Langham, though a refresher for veterans is also important as procedures may have changed.

To be distributed to production team, cast, and crew.

2.4. Complimentary Ticket/Drink Policy

Langham thanks our volunteers by supplying them with complimentary tickets. This document outlines who can claim these tickets, and how.

Langham also provides three complimentary drinks to those involved in the production. The FOH manager keeps track of this.

2.5. Audition Form

Used for collecting information during auditions.

To be updated for your show, printed, and made available at auditions.

2.6 Social Media Guidelines

This document outlines how we manage our Social Media at Langham. Social media is a major means of promotion, and to keep a unified voice, this document outlines a few requests. This document is primarily for the Production Team.

2.7. Strike Schedule

The set needs to be deconstructed, which will be organized by the head scenic carpenter. Lighting often needs to be struck, which is organized by the lighting designer for the night before strike. You are in charge of organizing actors and crew to return the rest of backstage to how you found it. This document should be posted in the green room in the last week of the show with an email reminding actors and crew to sign up. Additional tasks unique to your show should be added