



Production Planning Manual

Introduction

Designed to help you be a confident and competent Chair of the Production Planning process, this manual will guide you and support you to present two successful seasons at the theatre.

This manual is not intended to tell you how you “must” proceed. Instead, it serves as a guide for which tasks need to be completed by specific deadlines.

The description of the position of Production Chair in Langham’s By-Laws is simple, but historically the role of the Production Planning Chair has evolved to include the selection of directors and producers, and their support when needed. In recent years, the role has been shared by two members, elected together to serve as Co-Chairs. Wherever “Chair” is used in this guide, “Chairs” can be substituted.

The Role of Production Planning Chair

Elected by the membership and reporting to the LCTS Board (but not a member of the Board), the Production Chair chooses five plays for each of the two seasons. The choice is made with the support of a reading committee appointed by the Chair. LCTS data shows that audiences respond well to a season that includes a drama, comedy, musical, and mystery. Any combination is possible and choices are up to the Production Chair. The Production Chair may direct one play during their two-season term. In the case of two Co-chairs they may each direct a play in separate seasons. The play they choose to direct goes through the established selection process.

The Chair presents their first proposed season, with directors attached to each production, at the Board meeting held the February following the Chair’s election. The second proposed season is presented at the Board meeting held in January of the following year.

Responsibilities and Timeline

This section outlines the tasks which **MUST** be done to present a successful season. There is no written policy for *how* tasks should be done so current practices are included as an example.

November to January

Play Selection – first season.

Immediately after election, publicize a call for play submissions by publishing an article in the LCTS newsletter, copying the Publicity Chair for social media promotion to the public and local theatre groups. Potential directors and all others are encouraged to submit plays they’d like to direct, or plays they’d like to see on the LCTS stage. Encourage scripts to be included with submissions as there is limited budget to buy perusal copies. Langham favours plays that have a production history and published reviews that can be used for marketing/promotion. As LCTS does not have an incubator or play development program at this time, authors of plays that do not meet our criteria for the mainstage season are encouraged to submit their materials to our Reader’s Theatre Coordinator for consideration.



The Production Chair forms a Play Reading Committee to read and evaluate submitted materials. Publicize a call for readers and pull names from a hat if needed to keep numbers manageable. Ensure that there is inclusive representation on the committee – demographic, gender, ethnicity. There is no required number of readers, but recent Chairs found that 5-8 readers worked well. Allow 6 weeks for the reading committee to complete their work. A **sample** spreadsheet and Play Evaluation form are attached.

Develop a draft season from your and your committee's recommendations, ensuring that you have "alternates" identified for one or more of the plays.

January

Who, When, and How Much?

Issue a call for Directors and Producers in the newsletter and send a personal email invite to directors who submitted a play, whether or not their play was chosen. When responding to everyone, ask them to maintain confidentiality about the plays in the proposed season (1. They aren't yet confirmed and 2. The Board plans an "unveiling" event). Provide perusal scripts if needed. Select potential directors for each production and determine their choice of rehearsal days/times. Provide a confidential "draft season" to each potential director, allowing them to choose which project interests them the most. Interview directors if more than one is interested in the same project. Rehearsals are usually scheduled Tues/Thurs/Sun or Mon/Wed/Sat, but any combination is possible if the venue is available. Auditions are usually held over a weekend: Friday evening and Saturday afternoon with the Callbacks on Sunday afternoon. Determine the directors' preferences.

Meet with LCTS Lead Scenic Carpenter and Admin Services Coordinator to discuss the draft season and determine a proposed schedule. The Admin Services Coordinator is responsible for venue rentals and will alert you to any conflicts, and the Lead Scenic Carpenter is responsible for all builds (they set a timeline for those builds and strikes), and the use of the stage by renters. The Board will want assurances that you have collaborated on the schedule and that these details have been addressed when you present the season for their approval. Each play has 8 weeks of rehearsal (4 weeks in the rehearsal room, and 4 weeks on stage). Musicals have a minimum of 10 weeks (6 weeks in the rehearsal room and 4 weeks on stage). Auditions are usually 10 weeks prior to the first rehearsal.

Research the license availability and fee for each production. In the US, licenses are issued by Concord Theatricals and Music Theatre International, and scripts must be purchased from them, incurring additional shipping and customs costs. Canadian plays are usually licensed by the Playwright's Guild of Canada, but a few playwrights provide licenses either personally or through their agent. They sometimes sell the scripts but often require that you buy them somewhere else and send them a copy of the receipt to prove that you have the required number of copies and will not be making unlicensed photocopies. Licenses are usually based on the number of performances with an audience (16), the size of the theatre minus comp seats (172), and our minimum and max ticket prices (quoted in US dollars for American licenses).



February

Confirm the season.

Present your season to the Board for approval. Your presentation should include the names, playwrights, genre of each play, the director, the number in the cast, the schedule of each play including approx. audition dates, rehearsal, and build dates, and the approx. cost of the performance license and scripts. Be aware of any specific ethnicity requirements, and program the season to be as inclusive as possible. Ensure that you have alternate shows to consider if the Board doesn't approve your initial recommendation, or if your license request is ultimately denied.

Confirm details with all Directors and offer to help them find a producer, if they don't already have someone in mind. Ask Directors and Producers to maintain confidentiality until the Board unveils the new season in late April or early May.

Apply for licenses for your approved season. Depending on the licensor, you may need to pay for the initial deposit on your credit card and receive reimbursement from the Finance Committee (currently chaired by Gloria Diao). Licenses to perform will include requirements for credits and will clearly state what isn't permissible for print, social media, and promotion/advertising. Share the terms of the rights agreement with the Producer of each show, the Programme Coordinator, and the Publicity Chair.

As a rental venue LCTS shares the rehearsal hall, lounge, and stage with the community and it's important to reserve the space(s) that we need for our season. Share the confirmed season and schedule with the Admin Services Coordinator and ask them to "hold" audition and rehearsal and performance dates on the LCTS Calendar as Play 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Actual names of the plays will be added after the season is "unveiled". Explain this process to Producers and encourage them to contact the Admin Services Coordinator after the season is announced to add/release dates as they confirm their schedules.

March

Promotional materials

Work with LCTS graphic designer (currently Kathy Makovichuk) to design individual posters for each show in the season, paying close attention to the license requirements. Share the graphic design and descriptions with each director for their input and approval.

Provide content for the Season Brochure – a "welcome to the season" message and brief descriptions of each play, including audience advisories if necessary. Ensure that promo for each play includes the info required by the licensor. Carefully proofread the dates and text of the brochure and the large format lounge and lobby posters that are designed and printed by the LCTS graphic designer.



April/May

Launch

Host a meeting of the season's Producers to provide them with budget info, to run through the Conflict Resolution guidelines and the Producer's Manual, and to answer any questions they may have. Invite a Board member to attend and introduce them to the financial reporting system they will use.

Budgets: The season has a maximum budget set by the Board and each production's share is allotted by the Production Chair. Shows with simple sets, minor technical requirements, and small casts can have lower budgets than complicated shows and musicals, which are often the most expensive shows to mount. When the Board confirms the total budget for the season, the Production Chair divides it among the five shows with that in mind. The Producer is responsible for managing a show's budget and reports directly to the Board regarding finances.

The Board hosts a volunteer appreciation event to "unveil" the new season. When you have the date and time from them, send invitations to the Reading Committee and the season's directors and producers. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce them and thank them and to encourage those interested in joining production teams to reach out to the Producers.

July -November

Play Selection – second season.

Begin the selection process for Season Two, following all the steps from your first season.

January

Present draft season to the Board for confirmation.

January – April

Finalize all details and assist with the second season brochure.

Throughout each Season

Support and trouble shooting.

Provide support and encouragement to Producers throughout the season! Attend the Meet and Greet when each show makes the move from rehearsal hall to stage and attend an Opening or Closing performance.

It is essential to be available to your Producer and Director for trouble shooting issues that arise. The Producer will deal with any problems as quickly and efficiently as possible but, if there is an issue they are unsure of or unable to solve, they will contact the Production Chair. Conflict resolution must follow Langham's Code of Conduct.



Post-Production Survey

The Production Chair provides each Producer with a questionnaire for distribution by email. After each production we request feedback from anyone connected with the show who wishes to offer it. The Producer emails the questionnaire to everyone to be filled out and returned to the current Production Chair. It helps address any issues that occurred and finds out what did or did not work, either personally or in a specific department, to assist with planning and improving future productions. All responses are Confidential. Data is gathered for the Season Report, but the forms are destroyed. If action is required due to concerns or a complaint, the Production Chair forwards the information in confidence to the Board's HR Committee. If a Production Chair is a member of the show's cast, crew, or production team, an alternate person should be chosen to receive the questionnaires. *A template of the post-show questionnaire distributed during 2025-26 is attached.*

Returning materials

The Producer will collect any rented scripts or scores for the Admin Coordinator to return to the production's licensor. The Production Chair may receive an email from the licensor with a reminder of the deadline and a printable packing slip to be forwarded to the Admin Coordinator.

-end-

August 2026