



## **Strategic Plan**

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# Professional Association for Canadian Theatre (PACT)

## Strategic Plan 2026-2029

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# Executive Summary

The Professional Association for Canadian Theatre (PACT) and its members stand at a critical juncture. The theatre sector faces unprecedented challenges with significant increases in operating costs, a decline in national audience participation, and a marked drop in philanthropic donations since 2019. Yet within this crisis lies opportunity for transformation.

This strategic plan, developed through extensive consultation with members, stakeholders, and sector leaders, charts a path forward that acknowledges we cannot return to pre-pandemic models. Instead, PACT will evolve from a "club" model to a more inclusive "hub", serving its membership as well as the full spectrum of Canadian theatre.

This work is not simply about strategy—it's about collective clarity. For PACT to lead effectively, the entire membership must align around a shared vision, rooted in mutual trust, equity, and action.

Our strategy rests on four interconnected pillars:

1. **Build a More Resilient PACT** - Strengthening internal capacity and governance
2. **Nurture a More Connected Membership** - Fostering meaningful relationships across regions and organizational types
3. **Create a More Supportive Sector** - Advancing equity, professional development, and inclusive artistic leadership
4. **Cultivate a More Engaged Community** - Amplifying theatre's value and building strategic partnerships

This plan positions PACT to serve as Canada's recognized standard for professional theatre while responding to the sector's most pressing needs: financial sustainability, labour relations modernization, and authentic inclusion of diverse voices.

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## Introduction

Founded in 1979, the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT)—the successor to the 33-member League of Canadian Theatres—has evolved into a national organization serving more than 170 theatre companies. The sector has faced a changing landscape over many years, with recent years imposing fundamental shifts.

Notably, the pandemic accelerated existing challenges while revealing new possibilities for connection, advocacy, and mutual support.

This strategic plan emerges from recognition that incremental change is insufficient at this moment in time. Canadian theatre requires bold transformation to survive and thrive. PACT's unique convening power—identified by stakeholders as our central strength—positions us to lead this transformation while maintaining the sector unity essential for effective advocacy.

Our planning process revealed both tensions and opportunities: between member service and sector advocacy, between survival needs and values-driven work, between traditional models and emerging realities. This plan navigates these tensions while providing clear direction for organizational evolution.

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## Purpose

This strategic plan serves three primary purposes:

**Organizational Direction:** Providing clear strategic priorities that guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development through 2028.

**Stakeholder Alignment:** Creating shared understanding among board, staff, members, and partners about PACT's evolving role and aspirations.

**Accountability Framework:** Establishing measurable outcomes and implementation mechanisms that address the previous plan's weakness in actionable guidance and key performance indicators.

The plan specifically addresses member feedback that PACT must become more responsive, transparent, and effective while maintaining its essential functions in labour relations, advocacy, and professional development.

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## Process

Our strategic planning process spanned 9 months and employed multiple engagement methods:

**Document Analysis:** Systematic review of board documentation, annual reports, research and reports, and planning documents to understand organizational evolution and sector challenges.

**Member Survey:** Comprehensive consultation capturing priorities, challenges, and strategic preferences from across PACT's diverse membership base, achieving a 50% response rate.

**Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups:** In-depth conversations with current and former members, sector leaders, and allied organizations to understand PACT's role in the broader theatre ecosystem.

**Regional Engagement:** Direct participation in regional caucus meetings and participation in PACTcon ensured a strong understanding of regional representation and local challenges.

**Board and Staff Engagement:** Collaborative sessions with individual groups, guided by a Steering Committee of Board and Management, to synthesize findings, test strategic directions, and build organizational commitment to implementation.

This process revealed strong consensus on strategic directions while highlighting the need for clearer communication about PACT's value proposition and more inclusive engagement approaches.

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## Stakeholder Participation

The planning process engaged diverse voices across Canada's theatre community:

**Primary Stakeholders:** Board members, staff, and member organizations ranging from million-dollar institutions to volunteer-run community theatres across eight regions in Canada.

**Secondary Stakeholders:** Allied organizations including Canadian Actors' Equity Association, other arts service organizations (ASOs), and advocacy coalitions like the Canadian Arts Coalition.

**Sector Partners:** Government funders, presenting organizations, academic institutions, and business community partners through organizations like Business / Arts.

**Emerging Voices:** Special attention to equity-deserving groups, independent theatre makers, and early-career professionals historically underrepresented in PACT's governance and programming.

Key insights emerged from this engagement: the need for enhancing tiered service models, modernized labour frameworks, enhanced digital accessibility, and stronger regional support networks.

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## Mission Statement

*We serve as an inclusive hub connecting, supporting, and advocating for professional theatre across Canada. We facilitate collaboration, advance equity and accessibility, and champion the essential artistic and cultural value of live performance in Canadian society.*

This evolution reflects our strategic shift from not only an exclusive membership organization but also an inclusive sector resource while maintaining our core advocacy and convening functions.

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## Values Statement

PACT's organizational values, developed through extensive consultation, center on four core principles with supporting values:

- **Responsive:** We adapt quickly to member needs and sector changes while listening actively to diverse voices across our membership and addressing both urgent crises and long-term transformation.
- **Responsible:** We act with integrity and accountability in all relationships, including transparent decision-making, ethical governance, and honest communication about our capabilities and limitations.
- **Relational:** We prioritize authentic connection and collaboration, fostering genuine community across regions and organizational types through meaningful dialogue.
- **Respectful:** We honour diverse perspectives, experiences, and creative approaches to theatre-making, embracing the full spectrum of Canadian theatre through our inclusive hub approach.

**Supporting Values:** Connection, belonging, adaptability, empowerment, integrity, accessibility, humility, innovation, and intersectionality.

These values guide decision-making, program development, and stakeholder engagement while reflecting our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity ,and accessibility (IDEA) principles.

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## Vision Statement

*We envision a Canada where theatre thrives as vital civic infrastructure—nurturing empathy, belonging, and democratic engagement—where theatre practitioners and audiences imagine boldly, gather safely, engage critically, and contribute to a culture of flourishing.*

*PACT will serve as the essential hub making this vision possible: a trusted convener, effective advocate, and inclusive community that strengthens professional theatre practices from coast to coast to coast.*

This vision positions PACT as both sector standard-bearer and inclusive catalyst for transformation, reflecting member aspirations for organizational growth and sector leadership.

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## Theory of Change

PACT's approach to sector transformation operates through three interconnected pathways that leverage our unique convening power while building authentic community across Canada's diverse theatre ecosystem.

Beneficiaries	Approach	Impact
<b>Member Organizations</b> (170 theatre companies from million-dollar institutions to volunteer-run community theatres, including Indigenous and equity-deserving organizations)	<b>Inclusive Hub Development</b> - Transforming from exclusive "club" to accessible sector resource through modernized professional development, labour relations support, and peer networking	<b>A resilient, connected theatre sector</b> where organizations of all sizes have access to professional and artistic standards, advocacy representation, and collaborative partnerships necessary for sustainability
<b>Sector Partners</b> (unions,	<b>Strategic Advocacy &amp; Coalition</b>	<b>Enhanced sector influence in</b>

funderson, allied arts organizations, educational institutions)	<b>Building</b> - Amplifying collective voice through crisis response, policy development, and cross-sector partnerships that position theatre as an essential public good	cultural policy, emergency funding, and long-term sustainability planning, with theatre recognized as both culturally essential and environmentally responsible
<b>Audiences &amp; Communities</b>	<b>Value Demonstration &amp; Accessibility</b> - Championing theatre's cultural, social, and economic contributions while removing barriers to engagement and supporting innovative audience development	<b>Strengthened public support</b> for professional theatre as vital infrastructure for democracy and belonging, with increased recognition of theatre's essential role in fostering empathy and critical engagement in Canadian society

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## Mandates

PACT operates under several interconnected mandates:

**Legal Mandate:** Incorporated as a charitable organization with objectives including advancing arts education, promoting Canadian theatre, and providing member services.

**Sector Mandate:** Serving as the collective voice for professional Canadian theatre through advocacy, labour negotiations, and resource development.

**Member Mandate:** Delivering value through professional development, networking opportunities, resource sharing, and specialized support services.

**Public Mandate:** Championing theatre's cultural, social, and economic contributions to Canadian society while stewarding public investment in the arts.

These mandates create productive tension between member service and sector advocacy that this strategic plan addresses through clearer role definition and enhanced communication.

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## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths



- **Convening Power:** Unique ability to bring together diverse stakeholders across the theatre sector
- **Virtual/Hybrid Meeting Effectiveness:** Demonstrated capacity to deliver high-quality digital programming and events
- **Strong Advocacy Capacity:** Established voice and influence in policy discussions affecting Canadian theatre
- **High-Performing Staff Team:** Dedicated, knowledgeable team with deep sector expertise
- **Diverse Membership Base:** Spans organization sizes, geographic regions, and career stages across Canadian theatre
- **Essential Labour Relations Role:** Critical function in maintaining sector stability and professional standards
- **Government Relations Foundation:** Established relationships with key funders and policy makers

## Weaknesses

- **Limited Staffing Capacity:** Small team managing extensive mandate creates sustainability concerns
- **Technology Infrastructure Challenges:** Ongoing challenges with systems and digital capacity
- **Communication Inconsistencies:** Variable messaging and engagement across different stakeholder groups
- **Previous Plan Lacked Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) / Outcomes:** Historical planning gaps in measurement and accountability
- **"Club Mentality" Perception:** Some stakeholders view organization as exclusive or insider-focused
- **Geographic Representation Challenges:** Governance and programming may not fully reflect national diversity
- **Governance Structure Gaps:** Bylaws do not address all membership categories equally and succession planning needs strengthening
- **Revenue Over-Dependence:** Heavy reliance on membership dues limits growth and crisis resilience

## Opportunities

- **"Hub" Model Development:** Positioning as the central coordinating body and resource center for Canadian theatre sector
- **Strengthening Connectivity:** Enhanced virtual programming and service delivery models that increase access and engagement

- **Youth/Early-Career Engagement:** Developing pathways for emerging professionals
- **Academic Partnerships:** Stronger connections with theatre training institutions
- **Cross-Disciplinary Partnerships:** Collaboration with other arts sectors and cultural organizations
- **Social Prescribing Movement:** Positioning theatre's role in mental health and community wellbeing
- **Tourism Partnerships:** Cultural economic development and destination marketing opportunities
- **Environmental Leadership:** Positioning theatre as leader in sustainable cultural production

## Threats

- **Sector Financial Crisis:** Ongoing economic challenges across Canadian theatre organizations
- **Audience Decline:** Changing entertainment preferences and post-pandemic attendance patterns
- **Government Funding Challenges:** Uncertain public support for arts and culture
- **Political Tensions:** Polarized environment affecting arts advocacy and programming
- **Corporate Sponsor Preference Shifts:** Increased competition from sports and social causes for sponsorship
- **Climate Change Impacts:** Environmental challenges affecting touring, facilities, and operations
- **Generational Workplace Differences:** Evolving professional expectations and labour relations dynamics

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## So What Analysis

**Critical Success Factors:** The SWOT analysis reveals that PACT's survival and growth depend on three critical factors:

1. **Leveraging Convening Power:** PACT's unique ability to bring the sector together is irreplaceable and must be strengthened through enhanced meeting formats, regional engagement, and inclusive participation models.

2. **Modernizing Service Delivery:** Technology infrastructure, communication systems, and program offerings must evolve to serve diverse member needs effectively while reducing administrative burden.
3. **Navigating Sector Transformation:** Rather than managing decline, PACT must lead sector evolution by facilitating innovation, collaboration, and new models of sustainability.

### **Strategic Implications:**

- Internal capacity building is a prerequisite for effective external advocacy
- Member engagement strategies must address diverse organizational realities
- Labour relations frameworks require modernization to serve all (or more) professional theatre models
- Advocacy must shift from "asking for more money" to demonstrating essential value
- Technology adoption should enhance rather than replace human connection
- Environmental sustainability must be integrated across all strategic priorities

**Risk Mitigation:** The plan addresses major risks through diversified revenue strategies, enhanced member value propositions, strengthened internal systems, and clearer role definition that balances member service with sector advocacy. Crisis preparedness protocols ensure PACT maintains strong government relationships for emergency response, while reserve strengthening provides financial resilience.

## **Strategic Issues**

Five strategic issues emerged from our analysis as requiring urgent attention:

**1. Identity and Role Clarity:** PACT struggles with the "big tent dilemma"—serving organizations from million-dollar institutions to volunteer-run companies while maintaining a coherent identity and value proposition. The tension between member service and sector advocacy requires consideration and resolution.

**2. Labour Relations Modernization:** Many labour agreements that members operate under create barriers for independent and emerging companies while failing to reflect diverse creative practices. Restructuring relationships with all negotiating partners—including the Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Associated Designers of Canada (ADC), and others—will be essential for long-term sector sustainability.

**3. Financial Crisis Response:** The sector-wide financial emergency demands a coordinated response beyond traditional advocacy. Organizations face existential threats requiring immediate relief and long-term sustainability strategies.

**4. Equity and Inclusion Implementation:** The historical exclusion of Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) theatres requires authentic inclusion, not accommodation. The current generation of artists requires values-led rather than survival-focused approaches. Addressing this historical exclusion requires concrete action beyond policy statements, which PACT commits to through the following Truth and Reconciliation implementation framework.

**5. Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability:** The climate crisis requires immediate action to position theatre as an environmental leader while addressing how climate costs disproportionately impact smaller organizations and touring practices.

**6. Governance and Succession Planning:** Bylaw inconsistencies across membership categories and lack of clear succession planning protocols create governance vulnerabilities that could undermine organizational stability and transformation efforts.

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## Truth and Reconciliation Implementation Framework

PACT acknowledges its responsibility to advance reconciliation, inclusion, and representation throughout Canada's theatre sector. Particularly, working towards realizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #83, which calls upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish a national strategy for supporting collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists toward reconciliation.

PACT's Commitments:

- Ensuring the Indigenous Caucus retains decision-making authority and direction over Indigenous-related programming and policies, established through Indigenous community consultation. Such as:
  - 15% of professional development budget dedicated to Indigenous-led programming and reconciliation education
  - Comprehensive review of CTA agreement to incorporate Indigenous values and working methods
  - Annual reconciliation progress reporting to PACT membership with specific metrics and outcomes

- Finding opportunities to support, centre, and celebrate Indigenous leadership, artists, and organizations already doing the work within PACT's governance and programming, rather than recreating the work
- Demonstrating effective allyship by supporting Indigenous-led advocacy priorities
- Advocating for Canada Council for the Arts to continue fulfilling TRC Call to Action #83 through enhanced funding for Indigenous-led collaborative projects
- Supporting sector-wide reconciliation capacity building through resource sharing and best practice development
- Reviewing and implementing Land acknowledgment protocols and territorial relationship guidelines for all PACT events and communications, based on practice consultation with local Indigenous leaders.

Sector Advocacy and Partnership Initiatives may include:

- Support sector-wide reconciliation capacity building through resource sharing and best practice development

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## Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

Guided by the values of responsiveness, equity, and sustainability, PACT's strategic plan outlines four priority areas for collective action over the next four years. These objectives reflect what we heard from members across the country and respond to the realities facing Canadian theatre today.

Each objective identifies clear focus areas and expected measurable outcomes that will guide implementation and evaluation, with specific metrics and measurement frameworks for these outcomes detailed in the Implementation and Evaluation section of this plan. These frameworks will include both quantitative tracking (attendance, engagement metrics, financial indicators) and qualitative feedback systems (regular member surveys, post-event assessments, and stakeholder interviews) to ensure comprehensive progress assessment. Together, they offer a roadmap toward a more resilient, connected, supportive, and engaged theatre ecosystem.

### Strategic Objective 1 - Build a More Resilient PACT

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PACT will strengthen its internal operations, governance, and capacity to better serve members' evolving needs. By improving consistency, transparency, and responsiveness in organizational functions, and by strengthening internal infrastructure—including staff capacity, digital tools, and meeting structures—PACT will respond more effectively to both routine and urgent issues across the sector. This pillar is about building an organization that is agile, transparent, and equipped to serve its members with excellence.

### **Strategic Focus Areas**

- **Modernize Membership Tools & Directory**

PACT will revamp its member database and public directory to improve accuracy, usability, and visibility. This includes updating outdated systems, streamlining user experience, and ensuring equitable representation across members. A more functional directory will help members connect, identify peers, and engage more easily with PACT's services.

- **Clarify Internal Communication Flows**

To enhance responsiveness, PACT will map and refine how decisions, updates, and resources are shared across the organization. This includes regularizing communication between staff, Board, committees, and members—ensuring everyone understands how to access support and how information is shared.

- **Standardize Meeting Structures and Member Engagement**

By offering clearer templates for regional meetings, town halls, and committee engagement, PACT will create more consistent and inclusive member participation across regions and company types. This will include guidance for agenda-setting, follow-up, and issue-tracking to close feedback loops.

- **Expand Staff Capacity and Member Support**

Recognizing current workload challenges, PACT will assess staffing needs and endeavour to expand capacity to better serve its members. This includes exploring new roles, shared service models, or member-facing positions that can support growth without compromising care or responsiveness. PACT will also prioritize burnout prevention through systematic internal workload assessment and professional development opportunities for executive support roles for members. As the sector evolves, PACT will also provide staff with professional development opportunities and explore how technological tools (such as Artificial Intelligence) can help address capacity issues and streamline

operations.

- **Increase Accessibility Through Small Tech Fixes**

PACT will implement targeted technical fixes that improve accessibility, reduce digital friction, and streamline participation. This may include captioning on Zoom calls, simplified login processes, or mobile-friendly event registration—ensuring all members can engage without barriers.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. **PACT operates more efficiently**, with systems that reflect member needs and expectations. Upgraded infrastructure and processes will support smoother interactions and reduce delays or bottlenecks.
2. **Members experience a stronger sense of reliability and transparency** in how PACT functions, and its mandate. Clearer structures and communication will increase member confidence in governance and operations.
3. **PACT is better equipped to respond to change** and support a diverse and growing network. Increased capacity and adaptability will allow the organization to meet emerging sector demands with agility.

## **Strategic Objective 2 - Nurture a More Connected Membership**

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In a sector fundamentally based on relationships and exchange, deeply transformed by the pandemic where traditional models of audience engagement have permanently shifted, members emphasized the value of building new forms of connection and collective learning. Rather than seeking to return to pre-2020 structures, this strategic priority focuses on designing connections that meet the sector's emerging realities and weaving a stronger fabric of collaboration that supports creative innovation, equity, and forward-looking practice. This includes building on successful models like regional caucuses that became essential during the pandemic and addressing permanently changed audience engagement patterns.

### **Strategic Focus Areas**

- **Strengthen In-Person, Regional, and Social Gathering Opportunities**  
PACT will pilot regular gatherings that bring members together through both structured convenings (regional roundtables, sector celebrations) and informal social connections (networking sessions, themed meet-ups, digital social events). These will be tailored to geographic realities and designed to be welcoming across career stage, organization size, and identity.
- **Leverage Collective Purchasing Power**

PACT will explore opportunities to offer cost savings to members through group buying programs, negotiated preferred rates, group rates for sustainable materials and eco-friendly equipment, and association discounts on items linked to core operations such as technology services and professional development resources, for as many members as possible. This builds on the existing practice of combined purchasing power for health benefits insurance and the bond program.

- **Encourage Support Systems and Year-Round Connection**

To strengthen informal networks, PACT will pilot support systems or peer-pairing models that link members formally or informally for year-long mutual support. These relationships can help reduce isolation, especially for smaller or newer companies and individuals, and foster a deeper sense of belonging within the association.

- **Develop Affinity- and Practice-Based Networks**

PACT will support the development of working groups or discussion forums organized around shared practices (e.g., touring, marketing, green theatre practices) or identities (e.g., racialized leaders, D/deaf artists, and artists living with disabilities). These spaces will offer tailored peer support and deepen sectoral understanding of diverse experiences while fostering connections across groups and ensuring integration with broader PACT programming and sector-wide initiatives.

- **Celebrate and Share Member Success**

By elevating member achievements through newsletters, social media, and curated case study showcases, PACT will celebrate the work of its community and increase its visibility. These spotlights also provide a mechanism for members to learn from each other and feel recognized for their contributions.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. **Members feel a greater sense of belonging and support** within the PACT community. Strengthened relationships and intentional gatherings foster meaningful, sustained connections.
2. **The network is more inclusive and responsive** to the diverse experiences of its members. Affinity-based and regional programs ensure all voices are heard and valued.
3. **Collaboration and mutual support increases across companies and regions**, with new models replacing outdated practices. Peer learning and experimental



artistic and operational approaches lead to innovative partnerships and solutions designed for contemporary realities rather than historical models.

### **Strategic Objective 3 - Create a More Supportive Sector**

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PACT will expand access, equity, sustainability, and artistic leadership development across the professional theatre sector. Many members—particularly those from smaller organizations, rural areas, and equity-deserving communities—called for deeper support to reduce barriers to participation and better reflect the diversity of Canadian theatre. This priority is about ensuring PACT's programs, resources, and professional development opportunities are accessible and inclusive across geography, identity, and organizational size. This includes ensuring that professional standards and labour frameworks are accessible and appropriate across different organizational models and creative practices.

#### **Strategic Focus Areas**

- **Advance Equity, Learning, and Sector Inclusion**

PACT will expand and deepen its equity work, building on existing initiatives while embedding equity more systematically into leadership development, policy review, and program delivery. This may include workshops on anti-racism, decolonial practice, and accessibility, as well as long-term strategies to support diverse leadership across the sector. PACT will also support members in navigating emergent issues within the theatre community.

- **Build Sector Capacity for Labour Relations and Professional Standards**

PACT will review and modernize its approach to labour agreements, while building member understanding and capacity to navigate different labour agreements, such as the Independent Theatre Agreement (ITA) and International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

While PACT's primary labour relations role focuses on the CTA with the Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA), we will also support members in navigating relationships with other sector partners including the IATSE, Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM), Associated Designers of Canada (ADC), and Playwrights Guild of Canada (PGC) as the broader professional theatre ecosystem evolves.

- **Expand and Diversify Professional Development**

PACT will expand its professional development offerings to serve an even wider range of staff roles, company sizes, and learning needs. These would focus on best practices, including in emerging fields such as sustainable production practices and climate-conscious programming. Building on current programming, new formats may include hybrid workshops, regional intensives, and skill-specific modules.

- **Increase Access for Early and Mid-Career Staff and Newer Practitioners**

PACT will create clearer pathways for early-career staff to participate in programs, committees, and growth opportunities. This includes intentional outreach, simplified onboarding, or sliding-scale or subsidized registration fees for individual participants when company resources are limited.

- **Clarify and Communicate PACT's Sector Role**

PACT will review and better articulate its position as a national association with a unique dual mandate: member service and sector advocacy. This includes defining clear service boundaries: members receive priority access and preferential pricing for professional development, personalized consultation, and leadership pathways, while sector-wide services include emergency advocacy, basic resources, and policy development. PACT will explore tiered models that ensure members receive tangible value for their investment while maintaining PACT's broader sector-wide advocacy role.

- **Remove Barriers to Participation (e.g., digital friction, access)**

Ongoing investments will be made to ensure PACT's offerings are accessible, leveraging new technologies, and addressing how environmental costs affect members across size, geography, and lived experiences. This will include an ongoing professional development for PACT staff to enhance program delivery and leverage internal learnings to build accessibility expertise.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. **PACT's programming and engagement reflect a wider range of voices and experiences across roles and regions.** Equity-focused initiatives model and encourage a more representative and inclusive theatre ecosystem within PACT's programming, membership engagement, and sector advocacy
2. **Professional development, leadership pathways, and labour frameworks are more inclusive and better aligned with real-world needs.** Opportunities and

standards are designed to fit diverse organizational models, creative practices, and access needs.

3. **Members—especially those who have been marginalized—feel supported, informed, and able to thrive.** A culture of care and belonging becomes embedded in all of PACT's programs and interactions.

## **Strategic Objective 4 - Cultivate a More Engaged Community**

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PACT will strengthen relationships with funders, advocacy partners, labour organizations, and the public to address the professional theatre's sustainability challenges while increasing sector visibility, recognition of theatre's essential value, and long-term vitality. With theatre organizations facing substantial cost increases, shifting audience engagement patterns, and a sharp drop in philanthropic donations, members identified an urgent need for PACT to advocate more forcefully for the value and survival of professional theatre. This includes engaging external partners beyond the theatre sector, amplifying current realities, and building coalitions that can ensure long-term sustainability.

### **Strategic Focus Areas**

- **Strengthen External Advocacy and Crisis Response**

PACT will continue to represent member voices in emergency funding discussions and long-term policy development, supporting work with all levels of government, and positioning theatre as part of climate solutions (green venues, sustainable tourism, environmental storytelling) to address the sector's sustainability. This includes documenting sector-wide impacts, building coalitions with other cultural and labour organizations, and advancing specific policy solutions such as enhanced tax credits, infrastructure support for buildings, and audience development initiatives. PACT will advocate for support for infrastructure emergencies affecting member venues, including building deterioration, safety compliance, and capital repair needs.

- **Deepen Strategic Partnerships Across Sectors**

PACT will nurture relationships with traditional sector partners while building new connections within healthcare, housing, tourism, and other sectors to ensure broad awareness of theatre's value and integration into cross-sector policy discussions. This may include inviting environmental organizations to integrate theatre into climate action discussions. These partnerships help

amplify member voices, address sector challenges, and model collaborative leadership.

- **Increase Sector Visibility through Strategic Communications**

PACT will increase storytelling across its channels and identify key moments to showcase Canadian theatre's impact through media engagement, digital campaigns, national celebrations, or advocacy weeks. This includes providing tools or toolkits that members can use for local advocacy while positioning the sector as essential to public life.

- **Champion Environmental Stewardship Across the Sector**

PACT will continue to develop resources and standards to help members adopt sustainable practices while positioning Canadian theatre as a leader in climate-conscious cultural production. This may include professional development offerings and toolkits for green venue operations, sustainable touring practices, and environmentally-themed programming, while advocating for policy support that recognizes the intersection of cultural and environmental sustainability. PACT will facilitate knowledge-sharing among members implementing innovative environmental practices and work with partners to address how climate costs disproportionately impact smaller organizations.

- **Strengthen Talent Pipeline and Educational Partnerships**

PACT will deepen engagement with educational institutions and training programs to support the talent pipeline while fostering cross-sector conversations. This outreach helps expand the pipeline of future members, leaders, and collaborators while ensuring PACT's voice is included in shaping professional theatre education.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. **PACT is recognized as a trusted and influential voice in national arts conversations.** Strategic visibility allows the organization to shape policy, funding priorities, and cultural narratives.
2. **The professional theatre community builds new bridges with funders, allies, and audiences across cultural, environmental, and social sectors.** External partnerships help secure resources and create lasting support for the sector while positioning theatre as part of broader climate solutions.
3. **The sector becomes more unified in articulating its value, vision, and future as both culturally essential and environmentally responsible.** Shared

messaging and coalition-building foster a sense of collective momentum and purpose.

4. **Strengthened talent pipeline with increased sector entry and retention for early-career professionals.** Educational partnerships and mentorship programs create clear pathways into professional theatre careers.

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## Grand Strategy Statement

PACT will continue its evolution to become a more inclusive sector hub that convenes, connects, and champions Canadian theatre. We will leverage our unique convening power to enhance collaboration, modernize professional artistic standards, and advocate for theatre's essential value while building internal resilience and authentic community across diverse theatrical practices.

This transformation requires simultaneous internal strengthening and external engagement, moving beyond traditional membership service to sector leadership while maintaining our core functions in labour relations, advocacy, and professional development.

Our approach recognizes that the sector's challenges require collective solutions that transcend individual organizational boundaries. By building stronger connections, more inclusive practices, and enhanced capacity, PACT will model the collaboration necessary for sector sustainability and growth.

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## Key Implementation and Action Plans

The following broadly outlines implementation priorities and actions for the four-year strategic plan, recognizing that several initiatives are currently ongoing and will continue. Following the approval of the plan, a robust implementation plan will be developed with PACT management.

### Year 1 (2026): Foundation Building

- **Q1:** Bylaw review and governance structure assessment
- **Q1-Q2:** Technology infrastructure assessment and modernization planning
- **Q1-Q3:** Bylaw review and revision
- **Q2:** Environmental stewardship research and member needs assessment

- **Q2:** Succession planning protocols development and board leadership pathway creation
- **Q3:** Initiate staff capacity expansion and role clarification
- **Q4:** Member engagement audit and communication system redesign
- **Q4:** Accessibility audit and program development planning
- **Q4:** Strategic partnership mapping and framework development
- **Q4:** Initiate annual reporting of strategic plan implementation and progress to Board and Members
- **Q4:** Present bylaws to membership at AGM for approval

### **Year 2 (2027): Program Development**

- **Q1:** Implementation of approved bylaws and governance protocols
- **Q1-Q2:** Launch modernized professional development programming
- **Q2:** Environmental partnership development and pilot programs
- **Q3:** Initiate labour relations modernization (agreement review and member capacity building across all labour partnerships)
- **Q4:** Establish affinity networks and regional support enhancement
- **Q4:** Accessibility program piloting
- **Q4:** Partnership pilot projects and relationship testing

### **Year 3 (2028): Sector Leadership**

- **Q1-Q2:** Expand strategic partnerships and launch environmental leadership initiatives
- **Q3:** Launch advanced accessibility and inclusion programs
- **Q4:** Evaluate and refine all strategic initiatives; mid-term strategic assessment

### **Year 4 (2029): Consolidation and Planning**

- **Q1-Q2:** Comprehensive strategic plan evaluation and member assessment
- **Q3-Q4:** Next strategic planning cycle preparation and stakeholder engagement

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## **Risk Management Framework**

PACT's transformation occurs within a volatile environment requiring proactive risk assessment and adaptive response protocols. The organization must balance ambitious

growth with operational stability while maintaining member trust through periods of change.

## **Risk Register and Mitigation Strategies:**

### **Financial Risks:**

- **Funding Volatility:** Government priorities shift (e.g. 15% reduction in government funding triggers contingency protocols), foundation interests change, corporate sponsors redirect
- **Mitigation:** Diversified revenue portfolio (50% non-membership by 2029), 12-month expense reserves, continue to maintain emergency response fund separate from operations
- **Monitoring:** Quarterly revenue mix analysis, annual funder relationship assessment

### **Operational Risks:**

- **Capacity Overstretch:** Ambitious staffing expansion without adequate systems or revenue
- **Mitigation:** Phased hiring tied to revenue milestones, shared service models, AI integration for efficiency
- **Monitoring:** Monthly workload assessment, staff satisfaction surveys, burnout prevention protocols

### **Governance Risks:**

- **Board Transition Disruption:** Leadership changes without adequate succession planning or institutional memory
- **Mitigation:** Bylaw revision (2026), succession planning protocols, board onboarding systems
- **Monitoring:** Annual board self-assessment, term renewal planning, diversity tracking

### **Sector Relationship Risks:**

- **Member Alienation:** Transformation pace exceeds member comfort or perceived value
- **Mitigation:** Regular communication, member feedback integration, transparent decision-making processes
- **Monitoring:** Quarterly member satisfaction tracking, regional caucus feedback, retention analysis

### External Environment Risks:

- **Political Shifts:** Government changes affect arts funding or cultural policy priorities
  - **Mitigation:** Ongoing relationship maintenance across political parties, non-partisan positioning, coalition building
  - **Monitoring:** Policy environment scanning, government relations strength assessment
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### Crisis Response Protocols:

- **Emergency Funding:** Protocol for rapid member support during sector emergencies
- **Communication Crisis:** Clear messaging hierarchy and spokesperson designation
- **Leadership Continuity:** Succession plans for key staff and board positions
- **Technology Failure:** Backup systems for essential member services and communications

### Contingency Planning:

- **Scenario A - Funding Cut:** 25% reduction protocol with priority service maintenance
- **Scenario B - Staff Departure:** Key position coverage and knowledge transfer systems
- **Scenario C - Membership Decline:** Value proposition reassessment and retention strategy activation

Risk assessment occurs annually with quarterly monitoring of high-priority areas. The board receives risk reports at each meeting with recommendations for mitigation strategy adjustments.

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## Human Resources

**Current State:** PACT operates with limited staff capacity relative to member needs, creating workload challenges and constraining strategic implementation capability.



**Strategic Approach:** Expand staffing strategically to address identified capacity gaps while implementing burnout prevention measures and workload assessment protocols. Governance evolution includes bylaw modernization and succession planning implementation.

### **Priority Positions:**

These strategic hires align directly with attaining and advancing the four strategic objectives outlined in this plan, ensuring organizational capacity matches ambitious transformation goals. All new positions or changes to the status of existing positions (e.g. from part-time to full-time) are contingent on achieving corresponding revenue milestones and will be phased to ensure organizational sustainability.

- Labour Relations Associate (2026)
- Fundraising Manager (2027)
- Professional Development Manager (2027)
- Digital Communications Specialist (2028)
- Equity and Inclusion Program Manager (2028)

**Professional Development:** Provide staff with contemporary skills training including social finance, audience experience design, digital engagement strategies, providing trauma-informed support services, and environmental stewardship while leveraging AI and technology tools to enhance productivity.

### **Governance Modernization:**

- Bylaw review and revision to address all membership categories equitably (2026)
- Succession planning protocols for board leadership positions (2026)
- Annual board self-evaluation process using governance best practices rubric (initiated 2026)
- Regular policy review cycle implementation (ongoing from 2027)
- Board transition from operational involvement to strategic oversight

**Governance Evolution:** PACT's governance model recognizes that committee chairs play essential operational roles in their portfolios. This governance modernization does not eliminate committee operational involvement, but rather clarifies the roles between the Board (strategic direction, fiduciary oversight, organizational accountability), Committees (operational leadership, member engagement, portfolio management), and Staff (implementation, coordination, day-to-day operations).

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## Information Technology

**Current State:** Outdated systems including spreadsheet-based member tracking and fragmented communication tools create barriers to effective service delivery.

### Strategic Priorities:

- **Database Modernization:** Implement integrated CRM-style system for member management, communication tracking, and program coordination
- **Digital Accessibility:** Ensure all systems meet accessibility standards with captioning, mobile optimization, and simplified interfaces
- **Virtual Engagement Enhancement:** Upgrade meeting platforms and create dedicated member portal for resource sharing
- **AI Integration:** Explore artificial intelligence applications for administrative efficiency and member support

### Implementation Timeline:

- 2026: Database enhancement and optimization to improve member management, communication tracking, and program coordination
- 2027: Review of member website experience and engagement and member portal re-development and launch
- 2028: Advanced digital tools and AI integration
- 2029: System optimization and next-generation planning

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## Financial

**Revenue Diversification Strategy:** Current over-reliance on membership dues requires strategic diversification to ensure sustainability and growth capacity.

### New Revenue Streams:

- **Professional Development:** Monetized certain workshops, certification programs, and consulting services including sustainability training (with preferential member pricing)
- **Corporate Partnerships:** Strategic alliances with technology, tourism, and telecommunications sectors

- **Digital Content:** Online performances, tutorials, and behind-the-scenes experiences
- **Grant Development:** Enhanced government and foundation funding for specific initiatives
- **Publication Sales:** HR handbooks, best practice guides, and sector resources for non-members and members (preferential pricing)
- **Benefit Brokerage Services:** Revenue sharing from member group purchasing programs (travel, supplies, services)
- **Project-Based Funding:** Strategic initiatives that provide member value without competing with member fundraising

#### **Reserve Strengthening:**

- Continue to strengthen reserves beyond current 6-month operating expense target through sound fiscal management (specific target to be determined)
- Annual reserve contribution minimum to maintain a 6-12 month operating reserve
- Investment strategy development for long-term sustainability

#### **Cost Management:**

- Shared services models with other arts organizations
- Technology efficiency gains reducing administrative overhead
- Strategic partnership benefits reducing program delivery costs
- Environmental cost-saving measures across operations

#### **Financial Targets by 2028:**

- 50% revenue from non-membership sources by 2029
- 25% annual growth in professional development earned revenue
- 15% increase in corporate partnership income
- Maintain healthy reserves equivalent to 12 months operating expenses

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## **Communications & Marketing**

**Current Challenges:** Member feedback indicates communication overwhelm ("drowning in emails") while others feel under-informed about opportunities and initiatives.

#### **Strategic Approach:**

- **Audience Segmentation:** Tailored communication by member type, region, and engagement level
- **Multi-Channel Strategy:** Email newsletters, social media, member portal, and targeted outreach
- **Content Strategy:** Balance sector advocacy, member spotlights, and practical resource sharing
- **Crisis Communication:** Proactive messaging during sector challenges and organizational changes

#### Key Initiatives:

- Monthly themed newsletters replacing frequent updates
- Regional communication coordinators for localized content
- Social media strategy highlighting member achievements and sector value
- Annual communication audit and member preference assessment

#### Measurement:

- 90% member satisfaction with communication relevance and frequency
- 50% increase in social media engagement and reach
- 25% growth in digital-first media distribution (website, email, search, social) while maintaining strategic engagement with traditional media for policy advocacy and reaching broader demographics

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## Programming

**Professional Development Evolution:** Move beyond "one size fits all" approach to diversified programming serving different organizational sizes, roles, and learning needs.

#### Program Categories:

- **Leadership Development:** Emerging leaders, executive transitions, board governance
- **Operational Excellence:** Financial management, marketing, audience development, labour relations, providing trauma-informed support services
- **Artistic Innovation:** New work development, creative process exploration, community engagement, digital integration
- **Sector Issues:** Equity and inclusion, accessibility, environmental sustainability

### **Delivery Methods:**

- Hybrid workshops accommodating geographic diversity
- Regional intensives with local partners
- Online modules for flexible professional learning
- Peer-to-peer mentorship and consultation networks

### **Special Focus Areas:**

- Early-career professional development with sliding-scale fees
- Equity-seeking group leadership pathways
- Small organization capacity building
- Innovation labs for experimental artistic and operational approaches

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## **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

PACT employs a practical, proportionate evaluation approach that measures strategic progress while supporting organizational learning and member accountability. The framework balances quantitative tracking with qualitative feedback, ensuring evaluation serves decision-making rather than administrative burden.

For the purposes of this framework, “participation” is measured by active engagement rather than passive membership. An organization is considered to be “participating” when they:

- Attend events (meetings, conferences, workshops)
- Use services (consultation, resources, toolkits)
- Engage in governance (voting, Board and committee service)
- Contribute to the community (peer support, knowledge sharing, collaboration)

Participation targets recognize that organizations of different sizes and capacities may engage differently. Metrics are designed to capture both breadth (how many members) and depth (frequency and quality of engagement).

### **Strategic Objective Performance Indicators:**

Objective	Key Indicators	Targets	Data Sources
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<b>Build a More Resilient PACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff capacity expansion</li> <li>- Member satisfaction scores</li> <li>- Governance stability measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 new positions by 2029</li> <li>- 85%+ satisfaction</li> <li>- Board continuity protocols active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HR records</li> <li>- Annual member survey</li> <li>- Board assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Nurture a More Connected Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional participation rates</li> <li>- Peer collaboration projects</li> <li>- Annual retention percentage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 60%+ regional engagement</li> <li>- 12+ collaborations annually</li> <li>- 90%+ retention rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Event attendance</li> <li>- Project tracking</li> <li>- Membership database</li> </ul>
<b>Create a More Supportive Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional development enrollment</li> <li>- Equity representation metrics</li> <li>- Labour framework education completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 75% member participation</li> <li>- Representative governance achieved/maintained (50-30 rule)</li> <li>- 100% completion rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registration data</li> <li>- Demographic tracking</li> <li>- Training completion</li> </ul>
<b>Cultivate a More Engaged Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media mentions</li> <li>- Strategic partnerships</li> <li>- Policy consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25% increase annually</li> <li>- 5+ new strategic partners</li> <li>- 3+ engagements annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media monitoring</li> <li>- Partnership agreements</li> <li>- Advocacy tracking</li> </ul>

### Market Penetration and Sector Impact:

Indicator	2026 Target	2029 Target	Measurement Method
<b>Professional Theatre Market Share</b>	Benchmarking required (assumes ~35% of eligible organizations)	50% of eligible organizations	CADAC data cross-reference, provincial registrations
<b>Regional Representation</b>	Proportional to population	Proportional to theatre density	Geographic membership analysis
<b>Organizational Size Diversity</b>	Represent full spectrum	Enhanced small-org participation <sup>1</sup>	Budget range analysis
<b>Sector Influence Recognition</b>	Media mentions tracking	Policy consultation invitations	External recognition metrics
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>		50% members adopting practices; Climate policy engagement	Annual sustainability survey

<sup>1</sup> Small organization participation measured by: membership retention rate for organizations with budgets under \$500K, proportional event attendance, governance representation, and use of subsidized program access.

Additional qualitative indicators will be captured through annual member surveys and targeted focus groups, designed to assess progress on outcomes not fully represented by quantitative metrics. These tools will explore dimensions such as sense of belonging, perceived operational efficiency, and organizational culture change. Results will be analyzed thematically and integrated into regular performance reviews and planning updates to ensure a balanced and holistic approach to evaluation.

## **Cross-Cutting Evaluation Activities**

### **Quarterly Internal Reviews (Staff + Board Executive)**

- Strategic progress assessment against targets
- Resource allocation effectiveness analysis
- Risk register updates and mitigation adjustments
- Course correction recommendations

### **Bi-Annual Member Feedback Survey (Fall)**

- Strategic Objective satisfaction ratings
- Program value assessment and improvement suggestions
- Communication effectiveness and preference evaluation
- Emerging priority identification

### **Annual Organizational Health Assessment (December Board retreats)**

- Financial sustainability review including reserve targets
- Staff capacity and satisfaction evaluation
- Board performance and succession planning assessment
- Strategic plan alignment with actual resource allocation

### **Mid-Term Strategic Refresh (2028)**

- Comprehensive strategic progress evaluation
- Environmental scan for emerging challenges and opportunities
- Member and stakeholder consultation on priority adjustments
- Implementation timeline recalibration for final plan period

### **External Validation:**

- **Independent Evaluation** (2027, 2029): Third-party assessment of strategic progress and sector impact
- **Comparative Analysis** (Annual): Benchmarking against peer arts service organizations nationally and internationally
- **Stakeholder Feedback** (Semi-annual): Partner and allied organization assessment of PACT's sector leadership

### **Learning Integration Protocols:**

- Monthly operational adjustments based on performance data
- Quarterly strategic review incorporating member and partner feedback
- Annual planning refresh integrating lessons learned and environmental changes

- Strategic pivot protocols for major course corrections when required

#### **Reporting and Communication:**

- **Board Dashboard:** Real-time access to key performance indicators
- **Member Updates:** Annual progress reports through regular communications
- **Annual Impact Report:** Comprehensive progress assessment for members and funders
- **Public Accountability:** Website transparency on strategic progress and organizational health

This evaluation framework transforms traditional monitoring into strategic learning, ensuring PACT remains responsive to member needs while maintaining accountability to its transformation commitments.

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## **Plan for Updating the Plan**

This strategic plan serves as a foundation, but is a living document requiring regular updates to remain relevant in a rapidly changing sector environment.

#### **Update Schedule:**

- **Annual Reviews:** Each fall, assess progress and adjust priorities for following year
- **Mid-Term Assessment:** Comprehensive evaluation in 2027 with potential priority shifts
- **Full Strategic Planning:** Next complete cycle beginning 2029 for 2030-2034 plan

#### **Stakeholder Involvement:**

- Board retreat annually including strategic direction assessment
- Member input through surveys and regional consultations
- Staff recommendations based on implementation experience
- External environmental scanning for sector trend analysis

#### **Documentation and Communication:**

- Annual progress reports to membership
- Quarterly Board updates through regular communications
- Board meeting tracking of strategic implementation
- Public accountability through website and stakeholder updates



**Flexibility Principles:** While maintaining core strategic direction, the plan allows adaptation for unexpected opportunities, crisis response, and emerging member needs. Changes require board approval and member communication but should not compromise fundamental transformation goals.

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*This strategic plan represents a collaborative vision for PACT's evolution as the essential hub for Canadian theatre. Its success depends on sustained commitment from board, staff, members, and partners to the transformation it outlines while maintaining the values and relationships that make PACT unique.*