

Business to Arts
Developing Creative
Partnerships



DEVOS INSTITUTE
OF ARTS MANAGEMENT
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

New Stream 2015 - 2016 Business to Arts / DeVos Institute Case Study Irish Architecture Foundation

Corporate Investment and Institutional Marketing to raise the profile of an organisation and grow their Family

The IAF is a small but ambitious not for profit organisation that exists to develop audiences for architecture and engagement in the built environment. They believe that architecture can and does transform lives. IAF runs 10 programmes a year ranging from a conversation for 25 people to a festival for an audience of 35,000. IAF aims to promote the cultural value of architecture which is not limited to the building and design sectors but open to society at large.

When IAF joined the *New Stream 18-month Capacity Building Programme* in early 2015, the Foundation had been without a building of their own and were about to celebrate their 10th birthday. They secured a commitment from Dublin City Council for a landmark cultural space on a busy street overlooking the river Liffey on Bachelor's Walk, which they moved into in mid-2016.



The Challenge

In their first decade, 2005-2015, the Foundation developed a profile as the key organisation working to communicate the value of architecture to the public. They had significant success with events such as Open House Dublin, a festival of architecture which draws large audiences; and local, national and international events including exhibitions, talks, schools' programmes and conferences, often presented with prestigious partner organisations.

Throughout this period, IAF had some sponsorship success, launching a Membership programme in 2014. However, high-profile events such as Open House Dublin did not always reflect the involvement of the Foundation as the organiser. This ultimately had an effect when increased sponsorship investment was sought. In late 2015 they lost their dedicated full-time fundraiser who had been supported by The Arts Council of Ireland via their RAISE programme.

Strategy 1 - Corporate Investment

In late 2014 IAF established a partnership with the Matheson Foundation to develop a collaborative process with Dublin City Council and the community in Ballyfermot for an international process to commission and create a Play Park for activities in the area. This represented support of €56,100 of foundation income in 2015, where none had been achieved in 2014.

The creation of a Play Park via a high-profile public commission process allowed for activities and events to be organised enriching IAF's programme. With advice from their New Stream advisors, IAF engaged the Matheson team throughout the public process, including them in activities and experiences. Engagement and keeping them in the conversation with the community was key.

The Adjudication Day to select the Architects was an incredibly rewarding experience with a Turner Prize Winner sitting alongside a member of the Matheson Legal Team and a local BMX biker. All were experts in their fields, bringing something valuable to discussions and decisions regarding the needs of the project.

Keeping Matheson engaged also led to opportunities for them to participate in events such as the *Beyond Participation Conversations*:

"That was the first time we heard our Sponsor talk about the project in a public sphere, and to hear them sum it up and how their objectives were being met, beyond hearing it informally in chatter, gave us a great feeling of confidence."

Nathalie Weadick, Director, Irish Architecture Foundation

During late 2014, a unique evening event for eight corporate targets at places of architectural interest in Dublin led to solidifying relationships with CMI and Airbnb. In 2015, Airbnb became a sponsor of Open House Dublin. In total, private investment through foundations, sponsorships and memberships in 2015 reached over €106,000. These partnerships and other activities supported a 155% investment increase on programming spend to €194,000 in 2015.



As the Play Park commission progressed into 2016, a Principle Sponsor of Open House Dublin, at the €30,000-€40,000 range, was sought. IAF realised a new approach was needed. Working with their New Stream advisors, IAF created a Corporate Circle platform to secure up to 10 companies working across the built-environment sectors to invest €5,000 each in Open House. Benefits included free passes to skip the queues, invitations to special events around Open House, and branding on site at Open House HQ and on Open House collateral for the Circle Member. The investment was set at a level which it was felt was easier to get approval on. With a short run into the 2016 event, one Corporate Circle Member was secured, with a view to pushing the focus into 2017.

Strategy 2 - Institutional Marketing for Membership Development

In Spring 2015, Dublin City Council confirmed that the IAF would move into the City Arts Centre building on Bachelors Walk. It was being used as the headquarters for the Dublin2020 Bid for the European Capital of Culture so they would not take possession until early 2016.

This meant that they had a year to plan the move, and the building was to become a large part of their institutional marketing and fundraising strategy.

“Our biggest challenge was that we were good at programmatic marketing through events like Open House, but there was little payback for the Irish Architecture Foundation as the brands stood apart. We were also physically invisible before our new building, but moving to a centrally located space, we had the opportunity to be very visible.”

Nathalie Weadick, Director, Irish Architecture Foundation

The institutional marketing strategy developed by the IAF team spanned:

1. Direct engagements with audiences through newsletters, emails and social media. Content included information on activities, events and programme updates, partnership developments & general news;
2. A series of events brought audiences into the building for parties, talks and seminars;
3. Significant engagement with media resulted in a number of national and international features focusing on the 10th birthday, new building, the Director and the future plans of the IAF;
4. The exterior of the Bachelor's Walk building is now used as a billboard, given its major visibility.

The team achieved results in all four approaches.

2015 was the Year of Irish Design, which together with 10th birthday activities, saw numbers of participants in IAF events more than double from 80,000 to over 163,000 that year.

For the 10th birthday, limited-edition tote bags and photographic prints were produced to promote joining the organisation as a member. In Spring 2016, the new permanent

home of IAF saw the creation of the ‘Wall of Support’, encouraging members to become part of a legacy, which is visible as people enter the building. Key targets in the building and architecture industries were contacted to make investments.

Both of these efforts saw a spike in Membership income from €8,000 in 2015 to €22,000 to date in 2016, helped by a re-organisation earlier this year of Membership levels following research into the market. This research identified that smaller architectural practices found the €2,500 level too high, and so a €1,000 level was introduced. A target list was identified in the built environment professions, and approaches were made by direct mail. Between March and June 2016 this targeted approach brought in 32 Members.

Planning Unique Events to Reward Donors

Invitations to the Building launch were seen as a must-have ticket and were used to reward IAF donors.

As part of the 11th Open House Dublin Festival, a special event in the Central Bank of Ireland's landmark building was used as a cultivation event for new investors. The timing of this was particularly topical as the Central Bank was preparing to leave their landmark building to move to the Docklands. A pre-invitation email went only to donors, sponsors and the highest-level members letting them know that a unique event was being developed with special access for just 60 people to the iconic Modernist Building on Dame Street. The Boardroom floor of the Central Bank is famous for its artist-designed interiors, but is not a place that members of the public have ever been or seen.

Each donor was offered the opportunity to invite six guests on the understanding that they would invite peers in business who might consider a future investment in the mission of IAF, peers whose brands they would be proud to see alongside their own.

In total, 22 companies and individuals new to IAF attended as guests of their members and sponsors. This strategy specifically follows the DeVos Institute's focus on leveraging your networks and assets to create something unique and special.

All staff and Board Members were actioned to talk about the vision for architecture in Ireland in 100 years' time, the role of IAF in building the public's interest in great design, and the role of the companies in the room in creating the skyline of the future.

“We were very excited about the Central Bank event which was very much positioned as a cultivation event. We're using the events in our calendar to work for us, communicating the mission of the IAF. This is not me out there cold-calling 20 companies, we asked the people who have recently joined the IAF Family to bring more people in – that has happened through the DeVos Institute Training.”

Nathalie Weadick, Director, Irish Architecture Foundation

Every member is being followed up with, asking them to host a further conversation with each attendee, as most appropriate.

In advance of the event, Nathalie Weadick was announced as being conferred with an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in recognition of her services to Architecture.

The Outcomes

The Irish Architectural Foundation expressed a number of ambitions in the areas of Marketing and Fundraising.

They have been particularly successful in achieving **closer integration of programming, marketing and fundraising**, given that they have only one staff member supporting both marketing and fundraising. Each activity is leveraged to enhance the other.

Successful partnerships are enhancing programming through, for instance, the creation of events around funding participatory practice where their sponsors speak. In addition, programmatic and institutional marketing are more focused and each creates a focus for conversations with existing and potential investors in IAF's programme.

IAF is successfully using the building and the assets of their partners and network to **leverage institutional marketing opportunities to cultivate new donors**, such as through the Central Bank event.

The **international profile of the organisation** has improved with events in New York, the profile associated with 'good news' such as Nathalie Weadick receiving an Honorary Fellowship from RIBA, and international speakers coming to Ireland as a key element of the Foundation's events such as the New Now Next conference.

They have successfully **diversified their audience**, through collaborations with academic organisations like DIT and UCD, and events like Beyond Participation which specifically target community players to engage in the programme. This broadening of stakeholders may influence future National Architectural Policy, as key players see the interest and engagement of diverse communities in participatory practice.

The building and other **institutional marketing opportunities** are being mined for donor cultivation, and the IAF vision for architecture is being expressed in new ways to new audiences through bold mission-driven programming. Since moving into their new home, the profile of the Irish Architecture Foundation has been raised through leveraging the space to attract media coverage, to host over 15 special events, and through word of mouth within their community. They have made new connections, made approaches for new partnerships and been approached also to open discussions on partnerships.

Cumulatively, this work has led to 22% growth in private investment in the organisation from 2015 to 2016 to date as interest in their mission grew. Income from sponsorship, membership and foundations currently stands at €130,000 for 2016. The organisation projects it will end 2016 with over €150,000 in private investment from sponsorship, membership, and foundations reflecting a 41% growth in private investment from 2015 to 2016 and a 309% growth since the start of the programme. Further, the portion of the organisation's total contributed income attributed to public funds decreased 28% (from 88% in 2014 to a projected 63% in 2016) representing a meaningful increase in the diversification of its base of contributed income.

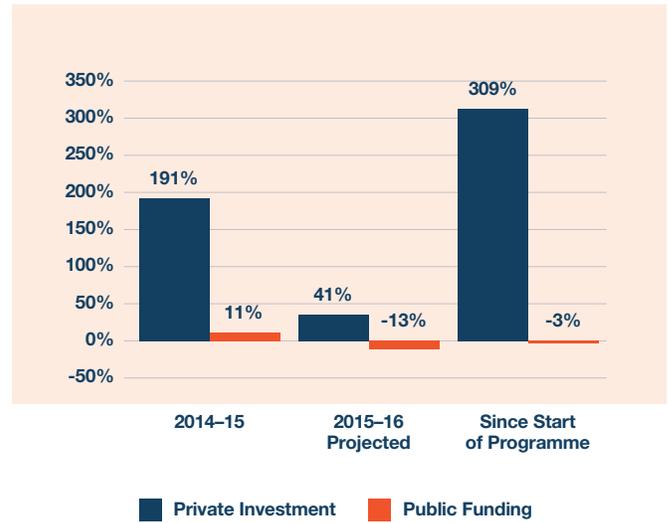
Private Investment

Year	Private Investment	Increase on Previous Year		Increase since start of Programme	
2014	€36,806				
2015	€107,120	€70,314	191%		
2016 Projected	€150,600	€43,480	41%	€113,794	309%

Public Funding

Year	Public Funding	Change from Previous Year		Change since start of Programme	
2014	€268,131				
2015	€298,945	€30,814	11%		
2016 Projected	€259,550	€(39,395)	-13%	€(8,581)	-3%

Percent Increase in Contributed Revenue over Previous Year, by Source



Sources of Contributed Income

