



ACTRA National: Six Key Priorities

Operating Plan 2009-2011

January 2009

INTRODUCTION

This Operating Plan outlines ACTRA National's priorities for the next three years – 2009 to 2011.

Our purpose in presenting this Operating Plan is:

- to propose recommendations to ACTRA's National Council on the organization's key priorities for the next three years to guide plans and budgets and provide benchmarks to measure progress over the next 36 months;
- to encourage unity of purpose on a focused set of priorities among ACTRA's family of autonomous local unions, Branches, benefits and rights organizations, our friends and coalition partners; and
- to set out to ACTRA members from coast-to-coast the practical next steps we can collectively take to promote the good and welfare of Canadian performers, to advance Canadian culture and to pursue the broader interests of our sisters and brothers in the house of labour in Canada and abroad.

Who we are

We are 21,000 artists who have come together to build the strongest cultural union in Canada. We are passionate and determined. And while we have scored many victories over our 65-year history, we cannot sit content. We must protect what we have won and constantly move our union forward.

We are only as strong as our members. Our union and our industry will face a great many challenges in the coming years. It will be incumbent upon us to foster unity and keep our membership strong in numbers and strong in spirit. We need to support one another as we build our industry and not only grow work opportunities for members, but ensure that the opportunities reflect the true gender and ethnic diversity of our country.

We are guided by the vision and acumen of our elected leaders. As we move forward, we must ensure that ACTRA is governed by an engaged, active leadership that represents the diversity of our membership as a whole.

As workers, performers are also proud of our role in the trade union movement. We will continue to strengthen our ties with our sisters and brothers in the labour movement in Canada and around the world. We will play an active and leading role as members of the International Federation of Actors and the Canadian Labour Congress and build on our Strategic Alliance with the United Steelworkers.

We are committed to strengthening our membership and reaching out to support one another. Our mutual benefit organizations - such as ACTRA Fraternal, the Actor's Fund of Canada, and performing Arts Lodges, and the new Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union - are the physical embodiments of this spirit.

Unity of Purpose on Key Priorities

ACTRA is a broad family. Our autonomous local unions, Branches, and related service organizations (APRS, AFBS, and the new Creative Arts Credit Union) are the foundations of our union.

Unity among these component organizations is critical to ACTRA's success. We will encourage unity of purpose by encouraging:

- coordinated and intensified union organizing to assert ACTRA's current jurisdiction, and look for opportunities to grow our union in emerging areas such as the video game industry;
- sharing and implementing best practices with respect to membership development and growth, communications, mobilization and ensuring the stories and roles on our screens reflect our country's rich diversity;
- sharing and implementing best practices on consistent, effective and proactive stewarding and administration of our collective agreements; and
- sharing and implementing best practices in leadership development at the local council level; ensuring our leaders reflect the diversity of our membership and investing in the women and men who will lead and govern our union locally and nationally five to 10 years from now.

SIX KEY PRIORITIES

ACTRA's mission continues to be ensuring that our union is a place of strength and safety that performers are proud to call home. We must continue to build on our experience of negotiating some of the best collective agreements for performers in the world and further ACTRA's role as the leading voice for Canadian culture.

These are lofty goals that if broadly defined would lead to failure. Like any member-organization ACTRA's resources are limited and we cannot pursue an infinite number of objectives simultaneously.

Clearly if we have 50 or 100 priorities, we have none.

Laying out a clear program of objectives has served our organization well in the past. In 2001, we developed the visionary ACTRA Plan. In the subsequent years, we have seen that bold, ambitious plan come to life. Among the many accomplishments:

- formulating a bargaining strategy for digital media to secure ACTRA's jurisdiction and establish industry standards;
- developing a National Collective Bargaining and Research Department to improve enforcement, interpretation and administration services on a national basis;
- re-designing the AFBS Insurance Plan;
- constructing a comprehensive membership database;
- establishing an ACTRA Awards program;
- reaching out to high-profile members as spokespersons for various communications projects;
- making ACTRA a leader on public policy advocacy and creating a Public Policy Department;
- enhancing communication with members by building a website and relaunching *InterACTRA*; and
- developing coalitions to inform and empower ACTRA's public policy work.

In 2008 alone, ACTRA renegotiated the National Commercial and CBC Agreements, established the Accident on Set program in partnership with AFBS, assumed responsibility for performer work histories from AFBS, became a founding member of the Creative Artists Savings & Credit Union, and helped make culture a top election issue.

Our union has come a long way. We have matured into a strong, unified organization with the tools we need to face the many challenges that lie ahead. However, we will not stand still. We must make our collective agreements even stronger and ensure they are enforced, push the CRTC to impose regulations that will create space for Canadian stories on our TVs, secure performers' copyright over their performances, rationalize our operations, and improve the safety nets available to our members.

But again, we will need to focus. While our day-to-day work of serving members and stewarding collective agreements continues, our efforts will be fixed on Six Key Priorities:

Externally we will:

- 1) Resist attempts to roll back our collective agreements and instead fight for better pay, benefits and working conditions.
- 2) Fight for Canadian culture by increasing Canadian dramatic content on Canadian screens. With this we will strive for expanded work opportunities that reflect the full diversity of our membership, including roles for women, persons of colour and performers with disabilities.
- 3) Fight global opponents globally by working with strategic and coalition partners.

Internally we will:

- 4) Improve enforcement and collection to ensure that performers are paid every cent of compensation that they are due for their work and its exploitation.
- 5) Improve upon ACTRA's retirement and insurance benefits and promote new forms of mutual aid.
- 6) Modernize and rationalize ACTRA's contract and financial administration, and communications.

RESEARCH AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

ACTRA has a reputation for negotiating some of the best collective agreements for performers in the world. We will defend and build upon this legacy with every trip to the bargaining table over the next 36 months as we fight for better pay and working conditions for performers.

Our union will stand united and fend off any attacks on our members.

In 2009 we will face attempts to rollback wages and gut hard fought-for New Media provisions as we renegotiate ACTRA's largest collective agreement. Our union will stand united and fend off any attacks on our members as we fight for better rates

and strengthen our ability to enforce the terms of the agreement through the grievance and arbitration process.

Over the next three years we will aim to expand work opportunities for ACTRA members in New Media, including the video game industry, by supporting efforts of our Branches and autonomous local unions to market ACTRA to Canadian and international video game developers, and successfully negotiate agreements. Through our participation in FIANA/ESG, we will work toward a global agreement covering work in video games.

Having boosted our capacity to provide research and support for bargaining over recent years, we now must turn to better supporting ACTRA's public policy objectives. We will build our internal capacity to provide research and reports on the industry, and provide our membership with more regular updates and organizing tools.



Research and Collective Bargaining will support ACTRA's Key Objectives by:

- 1) Supporting negotiation of ACTRA's Collective Agreements.
 - Independent Production Agreement (IPA)
 - Negotiating better rates and working conditions, and fending off attacks on the Agreement and our members

- Co-ordinating and supporting the Wages and Working Conditions Committee Conference in early 2009
 - Establishing an IPA 'front-liners' staff group to track and compile live files on grievances, and fight assaults on the IPA
 - Co-ordinating and participating in revision of forms, processes and procedures related to new terms
 - Developing processes to better track implementation of new terms and key issues
- National Commercial Agreement (NCA)
 - Editing and printing the 2008-2011 NCA and rate cards and coordinating revision of forms, processes and procedures related to the new terms
 - Motivating our industry partners to meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to our members
 - Working with our industry partners in a joint committee to monitor and research, as appropriate, developments in New Media and the impact of the temporary New Media rates on our members and the industry
 - Continuing to work with our industry partners on new models for compensating performers for the Use of commercials with the objective of agreeing on a new model for implementation in the next collective bargaining agreement
 - Coordinating and supporting the Wages and Working Conditions Committee Conference in 2010-11
 - Negotiating better rates and working conditions in 2011 and fending off attacks on the Agreement and our members
- CBC Agreement:
 - Finalizing, editing and printing the 2005-2010 CBC Agreement, rate cards and revised forms
 - Coordinating and supporting the Wages and Working Conditions Conference in 2009-10
 - Negotiating better rates and working conditions in 2010
- CTVglobemedia
 - Bargaining an agreement with CTVglobemedia
- 2) Supporting bargaining of video game agreements.
- Establishing and fostering relationships with other global unions in an effort to bargain a global video game agreement
 - Supporting efforts of our Branches and autonomous local unions to market ACTRA to Canadian video game developers, and successfully negotiate agreements

- 3) Identifying short- and long-term research and public policy objectives, including APRS research needs, and providing the research support to meet those objectives.
- 4) Providing support for ACTRA organizing initiatives.
 - Researching and tracking the use of emerging technologies
 - Producing a white paper on the challenges of organizing performers in new and emerging markets, including the video game industry

PUBLIC POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Five years ago, ACTRA set out to become one of the pre-eminent voices for culture in Canada. This goal has been achieved. When ACTRA holds a press conference, TV cameras swarm. When other unions want to take action, they look for ACTRA's cue. This success is a testament to the dogged pursuit of an aggressive public policy agenda, strategic communications, alliances with industry and labour partners, and the commitment of our members who have answered their union's call to step up and speak out.

ACTRA will face its greatest public policy challenge to date in 2009 as we take on the entire broadcasting industry to force them to put more Canadian content on our TVs and ensure a place for our stories in New Media. We have been fighting the campaign for Canadian TV drama for the past seven years. This year it comes to a head as the CRTC considers regulation of New Media and licence renewals for private broadcasters. Losing these battles will be the death knell of Canadian dramatic television, to our culture and to thousands of jobs. As we strive to expand work opportunities, we must ensure that these opportunities reflect the full diversity of our country and our membership and include roles for women, persons of colour, and performers with disabilities.

Achieving these goals will require working closely with our industry coalition partners and our brothers and sisters in the labour movement. Our collective strength will bring gains for performers and workers around the world.

Public Policy and Communications will support ACTRA's Key Priorities by:

- 1) Taking on the broadcasting industry by urging the CRTC to increase dramatic Canadian content on Canadian screens and regulate Canadian content in New Media broadcasting.
 - New Media Hearings (Winter 2009)
 - Over-the-Air Licence Renewals (Spring 2009) – working with coalition and industry partners to prepare and re-evaluate key asks for private, conventional broadcasters
 - CBC Licence Renewals (Fall 2009)



- Specialty and Pay-Services Licence Renewals (Winter 2010)
- 2) Arguing for government policies and regulations to nourish Canada's \$85 billion cultural industries and workers.
 - Calling for long-term stable funding for the Canadian Television Fund, Telefilm, and the CBC
 - Fighting all attempts to loosen restrictions on foreign ownership of broadcasting
 - Advocating for fair taxation and income tax averaging for artists
 - Increasing domestic and foreign production by increasing tax credits
 - Working with Telefilm and other industry stakeholders to increase the production, promotion, screening and success of Canadian film
 - 3) Advocating for fair copyright reform in Canada and in international forums.
 - Pressing the government to implement WIPO-compliant copyright legislation that includes improved rights for performers and an expanded private copying regime
 - Continuing to lobby for the WIPO Audio-Visual Treaty
 - 4) Encouraging member political action on a regional and individual level.
 - Creating 'Toolkits' for members so they are equipped to engage in public policy initiatives on a local and individual level
 - Improving communication with Branches and supporting their activities to the best of our abilities
 - Inviting high-profile members to present before CRTC and government committees to educate members, obtain media coverage and build member loyalty and support for the union
 - 5) Maintaining media presence and reliability as a source for media.
 - Using press releases strategically, yet aggressively and ensuring they are issued in a timely manner
 - Making creative and effective use of our members to get the media's focus
 - 6) Revitalizing and modernizing communications tools.
 - Revamping www.actra.ca to make it more effective, interactive, timely, and engaging through improved navigation and increased use of video
 - Launching a regular e-news bulletin to inform members and industry colleagues



- Using social networking and digital media tools such as YouTube
 - Redesigning and retooling *InterACTRA* and increasing member contributions
- 7) Supporting all ACTRA departments to produce professional, effective communications strategies and tools.
- Providing strategic communications advice to all departments
 - Ensuring branding consistency across the organization
 - Reviewing all mass communications materials sent to members and providing editing and design support when required

ACTRA PERFORMERS' RIGHTS SOCIETY

ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (APRS) works to ensure that performers are paid every cent of the second half of their compensation as ACTRA's DGR-based royalty provisions secured in the '90s mature and require additional reuse compensation to be paid to performers. APRS' Sound Recording Division (SRD) – which changes its

APRS can no longer be viewed as simply a back-end process.

name to Recording Artists' Collecting Society (RACS) effective March 1, 2009 – collects and distributes money to performers collected through Canada's neighbouring rights regime.

In 2009 we will continue to improve our rights administration and improve our ability to collect and enforce these payments at the table in IPA negotiations.

For APRS to truly fulfill its mandate, we need to alter how our work is perceived. APRS can no longer be viewed simply as a 'back-end' process. It is critical that APRS has a role in the front-end to ensure that we get the rights registered at the time of production rather than several years later when we go looking for reporting.

In the area of RACS, our efficiency will come from continually refining our own processes. It will also come from actively participating internationally and domestically on the work we do in the areas of copyright and international relations with other collectives worldwide.

ACTRA PRS will support ACTRA's Key Objectives by:

- 1) Improving information systems.
 - Developing a plan and begin re-writing the two APRS databases (SMARTS and ARTS) from VB6 to a new platform
 - Working with IS to get AMS and SMARTS speaking to each other to ensure efficiencies and avoid duplication of data entry
 - Working with IS on development of forms to automate processes to ensure one time entry for APRS related info from Pre-Prod's, etc.
- 2) Making claims processing more efficient.
 - Re-examining entire work flow process to ensure efficiencies
 - Keeping a close eye on strengths and weaknesses in structure and investments of the revamped Minors' Trust
 - Developing relations with other collectives around the world when it comes to joint collection of reporting with certain producers

- Re-enforcing the need for obtaining Security Agreements for all productions (except industrials) and the need for delivering files on a timely and orderly basis to APRS
 - Working with the Bargaining and Research Department to ensure the VRA process is followed to ensure APRS is aware of a new production sooner rather than later
 - Working with all ACTRA Departments and Branches on the automation of forms affecting the information required by APRS on every production
- 3) Bringing more transparency to our accounting.
- Bringing about transparency in our trust and operating accounts and develop clarity on all NKA monies available and develop proposals on funds distribution and surplus allocation
 - Improving communications and actively participating in public policy initiatives
- 4) Improving our communications so more performers know what we do.
- Rolling out new APRS website
 - Working with Communications to produce tools for public policy initiatives and materials to inform members and potential members about the work we do
- 5) Contributing to strengthening our collective agreements.
- Collaborating with Bargaining and Research on the data we have on New Media to strategize re-negotiation
 - Working on ideas, strategies and proposals for negotiation of the next IPA and work with external counsel to prepare research on the 'holes' in the IPA that do not allow APRS to have the teeth it needs in arbitrations
 - Utilizing Bargaining and Research resources for research in the areas of international collecting societies' practices activities and on behalf of both C&PP and APRS research on copyright
- 6) Strengthening and growing our Recording Artists Collecting Society (RACS).
- Raising our profile and increasing our membership through re-branding and increasing promotional activities
 - Signing a Services Agreement with the American Federation of Musicians for Canada and the United States
 - Ensuring that by June 2009 we are 'in synch' with Artisti for all payouts of all tariffs and private copying
 - Continuing to pay out all monies aggressively to ensure we are "caught up"
 - Playing a leadership role in the Neighbouring Rights Collective of Canada (NRCC) and the Canadian Private Copying Collective (CPCC)
 - Signing reciprocal agreements with at least a total of 20 countries (as at Sept. 2008 we have 8)
 - Working with Makers and Performers to develop sharing of information to facilitate payouts

FINANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

Finance, Human Resources and Administration supports all Departments within ACTRA, local and autonomous Branches, and our members. We provide advice, track spending and identify potential risks so decision-makers are equipped to make informed, responsible decisions on how to make best use of the organizations' resources and investments.

In the next three years, we can look forward to modernized and rationalized administration, enhanced financial reporting, improved member services and focused staff training initiatives.

We can look forward to modernized administration, enhanced financial reporting, and improved member services.

In 2009 we will implement direct deposits to reduce the time and cost of issuing payments to members. We will seek out new forms of mutual aid for members and transfer ACTRA's banking activities to the new credit union. We will also renegotiate ACTRA's lease at 625 Church Street and oversee

leasehold improvements to make our headquarters more efficient.

Finance, Human Resources and Administration will support ACTRA's Key Objectives by:

- 1) Modernizing and rationalizing ACTRA's organizational administration.
 - Researching electronic funds transfer with the goal of implementation by March 1, 2009 to reduce the time and cost of issuing payments
 - Creating reports showing the change in members paying dues online and timeliness of payments
 - Working with IS to modernize the process to allow members to receive invoices and pay basic dues online
 - Investigating an online referendum system with the goal of implementing by December 2010
 - Upgrading accounting by using ACCPAC to its full potential to contribute to timelier reporting and eliminate duplication of efforts
 - Working with IS to provide timely, accurate and complete reporting to AFBS
 - Improving procedures for dues refunds, tax receipts and dues invoicing
- 2) Promoting forms of mutual aid for members
 - Striving to improve ACTRA's retirement and insurance benefits delivered through our service provider AFBS

- Working closely with the Creative Arts Savings & Credit Union to supplement these benefits with a full range of cooperative financial services
 - Promoting and supporting unique services that provide critical aid and support to ACTRA members such as the Actor's Fund of Canada and Performing Arts Lodges of Canada
- 3) Renegotiating the lease at 625 Church Street
- Getting the best deal possible by minimizing rental increases and securing the best leasehold allowance for necessary improvements to our office space
 - Reviewing use of space to maximize efficiency for both ACTRA National and APRS
 - Overseeing necessary construction and repairs

4) Serving our members and helping to grow our union.

- Reviewing practices and procedures related to membership to standardize Branches' procedures
- Contributing to ACTRA's ability to identify organizing threats and opportunities by providing statistical information showing changes in the composition of the ACTRA membership



5) Identifying and nurturing employee talent.

- Promoting staff participation in political action
- Facilitating staff training staff in ACCPAC, Excel database management, AMS and RRM equipping them to use new systems
- Assessing the impact of new technologies introduced by IS on work flow and responsibilities
- Providing more opportunities for development for staff and members with strategic partners and industry partners

INFORMATION SERVICES

It isn't hard to waste a lot of money in IT. At the macro level, the implosion of the IT stock market bubble a few years ago makes this point. At the micro level, the anecdotal experience of many organizations over the past 10 years – pouring millions of dollars into unreliable hardware and software, online vanity projects with

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no value to users, and projects that overshoot their budgets by factors of two or three or more – makes the same point. But there is another story that can be told about IT.

That is that when carefully managed and planned, mercilessly cost-controlled; incrementally developed, and carefully thought through, information technology can be a core

business tool that allows staff to provide better service to members – more efficiently, accurately and quickly. We are partial to the latter story at ACTRA.

In 2009, IS will embark on a multi-year project to integrate the separate databases used by ACTRA, APRS and AFBS and institutionalize an orderly and priorities-driven approach to service issues.

Information Services will support ACTRA's Key Priorities by:

- 1) Integrating databases between ACTRA, AFBS and APRS.
 - Ensuring that ACTRA's membership, benefits and rights administration units share the same information about members and productions – empowering the union, the benefits society and the rights administration society to each deliver services accurately and effectively
- 2) Building a stable and reliable system.
 - Improving the stability and reliability of our IS systems
 - Upgrading hardware and software as appropriate
 - Enhancing our backup/emergency recovery approach
- 3) Institutionalizing an orderly and priorities-driven approach to service issues.
 - Addressing ongoing service issues in an orderly and priorities-driven manner, with first priority to service issues affecting members, second priority to issues affecting finances, and third priority to other service pressures
 - Implementing a service bureau approach to handle service issues

CONCLUSION

Let there be no doubt that achieving the Six Key Objectives we have outlined will be challenging. Making gains for performers has never been an easy task and in the current context of a global economic crisis, the pressure on our industry, our organization and our members to make concessions and retreat will be immense.

Luckily, thanks to years of hard work and commitment of our members, ACTRA is a force to be reckoned with. We have set the standards for collective bargaining for artists, and we are the leading voice for the promotion of Canadian culture. Our union has grown into a mature organization that draws on the strength of our members and our partners.

By maintaining our focus, our passion, and our unity of purpose, we will continue to move forward and provide a home for Canadian performers that we can all be proud of.