



SOUND
DIPLOMACY

Branson Theater Health & Needs Analysis

Strategic Action Plan

Client: Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB

Final Draft / August 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	9
1.1. About the Project	9
1.2. Music Vision: Building the Case for a Live Theater Strategy in Branson	10
1.3. Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	11
1.4. A Note about the Impact of COVID-19 and Music Cities Resilience	13
2. Music Ecosystem Overview	14
2.1. Methodology and Sources	14
2.1.1. Roundtables and Interviews Methodology	14
2.1.2. Music Ecosystem Economic Impact Assessment Methodology	17
2.1.3. Mapping Methodology	20
2.1.4. Live Theater Ecosystem Surveys Methodology	20
2.2. Music Ecosystem Economic Impact Assessment	21
2.2.1. Direct Impact	22
2.2.2. Indirect Impact	30
2.2.3. Induced Impact	31
2.2.4. Branson in Comparison	31
2.2.5. Ticket sellers	34

2.3. Music Asset Mapping	35
2.3.1. Mapping Findings	37
2.4. The Branson Market: Key Roundtables and Interview Findings	40
2.4.1. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Community Leadership	40
2.4.2. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Spaces and Places	41
2.4.3. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Music Education	41
2.4.4. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Artist Development	42
2.4.5. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Professionalization of the Music Industry	42
2.4.6. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Audience Development	43
2.4.7. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Music Tourism	43
2.5. The Branson Market: Survey Key Findings	44
2.5.1. Survey Demographics	44
2.5.2. Theater and Show Operations & Practices	46
2.5.3. Live Theater Audience	50
2.5.4. Audience Interest and Attendance	51
2.5.5. Show Formats	51
2.5.6. Promotion	53
2.5.7. Third Party Ticket Sales	55

2.5.8. Support Areas	56
2.5.9. Professional Opinion	58
2.5.10. Public Opinion	60
2.6. The Branson Market: Desk Research - Regulations, Incentives, Marketing and Tourism Initiatives	61
2.6.1. Governance and Leadership	61
2.6.2. Tourism and Audience Development	63
2.6.3. Licensing and Regulations	66
2.6.4. Business Incentivisation and Tax Incentives	69
2.7. National Trends Snapshot	71
2.7.1. Live Theater Trends	71
2.7.2. Theater Pricing and Revenue Trends	72
2.7.3. Theater Audience Trends	73
2.7.4. Theater Marketing Trends	74
2.8. SWOT & Gap Analysis	76
3. Strategic Plan	78
3.1. Infrastructure	79
3.1.1. Recommendation 1: Branson Performing Arts Row with a Focus on Business Development - Attract, Grow and Retain Music Industry Companies	80

3.1.2. Recommendation 2: Performing Arts Incubator/Center:	83
3.1.3. Recommendation 3: Feasibility Study for an Arena	86
3.1.4. Recommendation 4: Small Business Loans for Theater Updates	88
3.1.5. Recommendation 5: Improved Public Transportation for a More Pedestrian Friendly Entertainment Corridor	90
3.1.6. Recommendation 6: Issue Official Branson Show Certificates	91
3.1.7. Recommendation 7: Restricting Third Party Ticket Sellers from the Use of the Label 'Welcome Center' or 'Visitor Center'	93
3.1.8. Recommendation 8: Development of a Disaster Readiness Plan	95
3.2. Innovation	97
3.2.1. Recommendation 9: Create the Office of Theater Innovation	97
3.3. Education	99
3.3.1. Recommendation 10: Offer Theater Business Workshops	100
3.4. Marketing	102
3.4.1. Recommendation 11: Create a Songwriters Festival	102
3.4.2. Recommendation 12: Create a Theater Matching Fund Program	105
3.4.3. Recommendation 13: Create a Branson Theater Passport	108
3.5. Implementation Timeline	111
4. Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success	112

4.1. Ticket Price Integrity	112
4.2. Diversification of the Show Product - Staying Relevant for a New Generation of Theater Goers	114
4.3. Continuous Investment for Continuous Success	115
4.4. Adapting for the Digital Age: Online Ticket Sales & Marketing	116
4.5. Continued Education with a Focus on Business and Marketing	118
4.6. Work Toward Equal Pay	118
4. Conclusion	120
5. Bibliography	121
6. Appendices	126

1. Introduction

1.1. About the Project

Sound Diplomacy was hired by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB to conduct a Theater Health and Needs Analysis with the objective of identifying opportunities to help overcome existing challenges. Live music, mainly in the form of theater shows, has been at the core of Branson's heritage since the 1960's and the city has been drawing millions of visitors each year with its more than 100 regularly occurring live music shows among other local attractions, recreational activities and its natural beauty. To date, the live theaters are still cited as Branson's number one attraction and tourism driver by its visitors.

But the health of Branson's theater industry has been challenged by a variety of factors, internally as well as externally. Among others, changing consumer and market trends, changes in visitor travel patterns, marketing and business challenges, lacking best practice guidelines, and loose regulations around licensing for theaters, shows and ticket sellers all add to the problem. But with an open and collaborative mindset of all parties involved, all of these challenges can be overcome to ensure a thriving theater industry in Branson.

The strategy we deliver today is a joint effort between Sound Diplomacy, the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB, its partners, such as the Branson Show Task Force, and everyone who contributed to the study in any capacity.

This strategic action plan encourages best practices rooted in research and advocates for smart economic development and collaboration between the private and public sectors so that musicians, industry professionals and organizations are actively working together, advocating for change and moving forward into a prosperous future. It outlines how smart support and best practices for the local theater industry and music ecosystem can enhance and evolve Branson's existing offering, leverage it as a talent attraction and retention pipeline, increase the economic benefit of and for the local theater industry, and ensure that the theater industry remains a driver of visitation for many years to come.

1.2. Music Vision: Building the Case for a Live Theater Strategy in Branson

At the beginning of the research process, the following goals were articulated by Sound Diplomacy to identify how Branson's music theater ecosystem and its stakeholders can be best supported from the bottom up and the top down. This vision is our aspiration for Branson if we consolidate all the recommendations in this strategy.

1. Music Connects Past, Present and Future: Celebrate and Build Upon Branson's Live Music Theater History and Heritage

- Facilitate new theater activation opportunities, but also support existing efforts, which honor the city's rich musical legacy while inviting engagement with contemporary musicians
- Improve audience appeal across multiple generations

2. Music is an Experience: Leverage Live Music Theaters to Grow Year-Round Tourism in Branson

- Stay up-to-date on consumer trends and demands, the latest theater production trends, music trends and emerging technology
- Enhance Branson's image as a vibrant music place for all ages
- Meet consumer demands through the city's proactive and strategic planning of theater shows and content
- Grow the economic impact of Branson's theater tourism through smart activation of theaters during traditionally slower months and increase opportunities for Branson musicians

3. Music is Infrastructure: Develop a Deep Understanding of Branson's Music Assets

- Understand where gaps exist in providing a rich music offering to all constituents
- Develop a roadmap for economic development, resulting in strategic growth of the live music theater ecosystem
- Build better relationships between its theaters and related businesses, breaking down silos in favor of shared interests in the existing theater infrastructure

- Provide a variety of differently-sized theaters and productions in the city, such that visitors can experience a wide variety of highly differentiated shows

4. Music Means Business: Position Branson's Theater Industry as a Continued Driver for Visitation

- Create an environment that supports existing theaters and follows best practices for economic development to meet consumer demand
- Renewed emphasis on high quality productions in Branson's theaters, creating more quality control, increased consumer interest and a steady revenue stream for theaters

5. Music Supports Talent: Develop and Support Talent and High-Level Productions

- Leverage the city's live music theater ecosystem as a tool for talent support and workforce development
- Attract high-level show productions from across the country

1.3. Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

We stress that the recommendations – and subsequent actions – of this research and its findings must be as inclusive as possible. To support this, we have coordinated and written the recommendations in line with the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on three in particular and the areas they target:

- **#5 Gender Equality**
 - **5.5** By 2030, ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life
 - **5.7** By 2030, undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

- #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors

- #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

- **11.3** By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- **11.4** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- Promote good music governance and ensure cities have safe and inclusive music spaces and night time economy
- Promote the recognition of music infrastructure within city development and urban planning

Our recommendations reflect a desire to meet these aforementioned targets, so as to promote gender equality, ensure music industry professionals and companies have access to finance mechanisms and support systems, promote and foster a diverse theater show offering, and create new globally recognized infrastructure to ensure a thriving theater industry in Branson.

1.4. A Note about the Impact of COVID-19 and Music Cities Resilience

It should be noted that the current COVID-19 crisis is wounding the music and entertainment sector with millions in losses of salaries, gigs and little-to-no-paid work for the sector at the time of writing. The live music theater strategy we present here acknowledges these challenges, but it is not intended to be a short-term fix, or provide an emergency pathway. Instead, it aims to create a long-lasting, wholesome foundation for once the clouds clear so that Branson's theater industry and music ecosystem can grow stronger and smarter. The recommendations we propose are flexible and implementation should be adapted and reassessed, at least annually, according to the priorities and achievements from the previous implementation phase.

Music Cities Resilience

In May 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sound Diplomacy published its *Music Cities Resilience Handbook*.¹ The objective was to demonstrate the value of music not just for local economies, but also for the social and cultural development of a community. At the same time, it proposed a number of cost-neutral strategies, researched and tested from our work around the world, that cities and relative organizations can take to support the stabilization and recovery of the music ecosystem and in doing that, support the wider economic and cultural recovery simultaneously.

The *Music Cities Resilience Handbook* touches on several important considerations that can also be applied to Branson. Music must be part and parcel of recovery discussions and decision making and to spur a more equitable recovery, music and cultural representatives must have a seat at the table. The data compiled in this report supports this notion and highlights the role that music (in Branson's case its theater industry) has on the wider economy.

Furthermore, the crisis demonstrates a need to produce explicit, intentional and deliberate frameworks and procedures specific to the music and theater sector, to ensure a wide and equitable recovery. Addressing the sector more directly through support programs, planning and regulation and professional development opportunities, for example, will create a strong and stable theater industry and bring more economic and social benefits for the city as a whole.

¹ Sound Diplomacy (2020)

2. Music Ecosystem Overview

2.1. Methodology and Sources

The Branson Theater Health and Needs Analysis was completed through the following process:

- **The Branson Market and National Trends Analysis:** Desk research, including an extensive literature review of the Branson market and its resources, as well as any relevant national trends, such as audience trends, live theater trends, pricing trends, and marketing trends
- **Mapping:** 96 music and theater-related assets and businesses across Branson
- **Music Ecosystem Economic Impact Assessment:** Economic Impact Analysis of the theater sector and microeconomic analysis
- **Roundtables and interviews:** In-person visit to Branson, engaging more than 60 people in roundtable discussions and interviews; attendance of eleven different theater shows, hand-picked by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB and the Branson Show Task Force to provide a taste of the city's theater product and variety
- **Surveys:** Three online surveys, conducted over six weeks, to gather information from local theater and show owners and operators, theater industry professionals, musicians and Branson-based theater fans (who engage in theater activities in Branson), as well as from visitors
- **Action Plan and Recommendations:** The strategy has been separated into four priority actions with a total of 13 recommendations, complete with case studies and best practices. Additionally, there is a section that outlines a Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success.

As a result, and based on the findings of the above outlined research, we developed a **SWOT/Gap Analysis**, which can be found at the end of the Music Ecosystem Overview's section.

2.1.1. Roundtables and Interviews Methodology

The Sound Diplomacy team's field research visit to Branson, MO for the Theater Health and Needs Analysis took place from October 17th to 22nd, 2019. Michaela Marchardt (Senior Project Manager) and Sherri McConnell (Business Development Consultant), spent one week in the city conducting a series of roundtables and interviews with local stakeholders and visiting a total of 11 live theater shows, as coordinated by Grant Sloan and Rachel Wood from the Branson Chamber of Commerce and CVB.

Schedule

During the week, Sound Diplomacy conducted eight roundtable sessions and seven interviews. They also attended 11 different theater shows - an average of two per day - hand-picked by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB and the Branson Show Task Force in order to get a taste of the city's theater product and variety. Furthermore, the client gave the Sound Diplomacy team a tour of Branson's non-theater assets, including the entertainment corridor (also often referred to as "the strip"), Top of the Rock and the Branson Landing. Overall, Sound Diplomacy met more than 60 people during this visit.

	THURSDAY 10/17	FRIDAY 10/18	SATURDAY 10/19	SUNDAY 10/20	MONDAY 10/21	TUESDAY 10/22
09:00		Roundtable: Governance: City, Tourism, CVB (Group I: Decision Makers)			Roundtable: Governance: City, Tourism, CVB (Group II)	
09:30	Arrival: Meet Grant & Rachel					Interview with Jim Barber
10:00						Interview with Steve Presley
10:30						
11:00	Roundtable: Theater Operators				Roundtable: Media, Press, Radio	Interview with Dathan Atchison
11:30		Interview with Nikki Silvis				
12:00						Client lunch & roundtable recap
12:30		Tour of Branson Landing				
13:00	LUNCH	LUNCH		LUNCH		
13:30						
14:00	Roundtable: Theater Operators/Enterta iners	Roundtable: Marketing, Sales Professionals		Show: The Petersens	Roundtable: Performers	
14:30						
15:00				Show: Dolly Parton Stampede		Show: Billy Yates' Choices

15:30			Tour: Big Cedar Lodge, Top of the Rock and their amphitheater			
16:00		Meet with Jeff Seifried				
16:30		Interview with Bill & Leah Kendall			Roundtable: Third Party Ticket Sellers	
17:00						
17:30						
	THURSDAY 10/17	FRIDAY 10/18		SUNDAY 10/20	MONDAY 10/21	TUESDAY 10/22
19:30	Show: The Haygoods	Show: Grand Jubilee			Show: Illusionist Rick Thomas	
20:00	Show: The Duttons		Show: Legends in Concert		Show: The Presleys	
20:30		Show: Creedence Clearwater Revival Tribute			Show: SIX	
21:00	Tour of the Entertainment Corridor					
21:30						

Table 1. Visit Schedule

2.1.2. Music Ecosystem Economic Impact Assessment Methodology

The economic impact analysis is macroeconomic research based mainly on official secondary sources and statistics, complemented by primary research conducted by Sound Diplomacy. It provides a reliable measure of the economic importance of the live theater and music ecosystem in Branson/Taney County's economy on three different scales: direct, indirect and induced impact.

The results contained in this report correspond with data from 2016 and previous years. This is because most of the official data sources used have a three year delay. For instance, during the research process, the most updated version available for the County Business Patterns and RIMS II multipliers was 2016 data.

ECONOMIC IMPACT	DEFINITION
Direct Economic Impact	The direct impact is economic activity directly connected to the live theater and music ecosystem, such as performers, venues and agents. Its results are the basis for calculating the indirect and induced impact.
Indirect economic Impact	Indirect impact is supporting activity of the suppliers of the music ecosystem and is related to local businesses that provide goods and services, such as advertising, transportation and legal affairs.
Induced Economic Impact	Induced impact is created when the workers of the entire performing arts and music ecosystem spend their wages on food, transportation, entertainment, etc. in their daily life in Branson.

Table 2. Impacts Definitions

The variables evaluated as part of the Economic Impact Assessment are: Live theater and music ecosystem output, employment, gross value added (GVA) and workers compensation or wages.

VARIABLE	DEFINITION
The live theater and music ecosystem output²	All produced goods and services of the live theater and music ecosystem in Branson. For example, tickets sold, agents and promoters, recording studio revenue, etc.
Live theater and music ecosystem employment³	The number of active jobs in the production of the live theater and music ecosystem goods and services.
Live theater and music ecosystem compensation⁴	Remuneration (including wages and salaries, as well as benefits such as employer contributions to pension and health funds) payable to employees in return for their music ecosystem work in a given year.
Gross value added (GVA)⁵	The music ecosystem output less the music ecosystem intermediate consumption (the costs of all inputs, for example, production costs, scenography, venue rent, equipment rented, etc).

Table 3. Variables Definitions

The Classification of Economic Activities of the North American Industry Classification System Code (NAICS) is used to calculate the economic activity in Branson that is attributable to the live theater and music ecosystem and its previously defined segments at the most detailed level of aggregation (see list of codes and descriptions in Appendix 1).

Geographical Scope

² Bureau of Economic Analysis (2016)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

The geographic scope of this assessment is limited to Taney County, ZIP codes 65615 and 65616.

Data Sources

Five main data sources have been used to conduct the economic impact analysis in Branson:

DATA SOURCE	DETAILS
County Business Patterns: 2016	This source allows for the calculation of the number of employees in the city of Branson live theater and music ecosystem.
Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II)⁶	RIMS II provides both Type I and Type II regional input-output multipliers to estimate the indirect and induced economic impact of the NAICS economic activities at the city level. Type I multipliers account for the direct and indirect impacts based on the economic dynamics of the music ecosystem supply chain. Type II multipliers account for both indirect and induced impacts based on the purchases made by employees of the live theater and music ecosystem. There is a multiplier for each of the outcomes studied (output, GVA, employment, and wages). In this sense, the effect obtained from each one of them depends on the magnitude of its multiplier.
The American Community Survey	The American Community Survey (ACS) is used to identify the average salaries of the different occupations associated with the live theater and music ecosystem.
Data provided by the client	Databases provided by the client, relating to the collection of tourism taxes, yearly capacity of theaters in the city and yearly number of theaters operating.
Sound Diplomacy primary data	This data, collected through the sectoral survey, roundtables and the mapping of agents, enables us to identify missing data or data that does not necessarily correspond to the live theater and music ecosystem but that was found in the official databases.

⁶ See definitions in Appendix 2

2.1.3. Mapping Methodology

Sound Diplomacy identified theater and live music related uses in Branson. This mapping was produced with our proprietary mapping tool and cross-referenced manually, with input from the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB and the local community. It features an interactive map and a list of places/organizations and associated addresses, in categorical order. The mapping can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/branson>. Throughout the study, it was possible for the local theater community to submit Branson/Taney County based places and organizations that were missed in the first round of mapping.

2.1.4. Live Theater Ecosystem Surveys Methodology

In order to better understand Branson's live theater ecosystem, Sound Diplomacy developed three online surveys to gather information from the following stakeholders:

- **Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey:** distributed to local theaters, show owners and operators – 24 responses collected, representing 19 theaters and 44 shows
- **General Music and Theater Industry Survey:** distributed to the local Branson community, addressed to key players of the music and live theater sector in Branson such as show performers or musicians, workers in the Branson theater industry, or a related industry (e.g. ticket sales), or theater fans/residents of Branson – 437 responses collected.
- **Visitor Survey:** distributed by H2R Market Research to their database of previous Branson visitors – 647 responses collected.

Sound Diplomacy collaborated with the Branson /Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB on the questionnaire design, distribution and promotion of the three surveys. Sound Diplomacy partnered with H2R Research to distribute the Visitor Survey to their database of previous Branson visitors. Surveys were approximately 15 minutes long and conducted from 12/18/19 to 1/31/20, with the exception of the Visitor Survey, which was conducted from 12/18/19 to 1/5/20. No incentive was provided to the participants. Results were analyzed by Sound Diplomacy.

2.2. Music Ecosystem Economic Impact Assessment

TYPE OF IMPACT	EMPLOYMENT (NUMBER OF JOBS)	OUTPUT MILLION \$	GVA MILLION \$	EARNINGS OR COMPENSATION MILLION \$
Direct	1,915	106	81	33
Indirect	197	21	24	5
Induced	176	21	12	6
Total Impact	2,288	147	118	44

Table 5. Direct, Indirect, Induced and Total Economic Impact

Branson's live theater and music ecosystem created a direct economic impact of 1,915 jobs, \$33 million in earnings and \$106 million in economic output. When including the indirect and induced economic effects, Branson's live theater and music ecosystem generated a total output of \$147 million and a Value Added (GVA) of \$118 million to the local economy in 2016.⁷ The total number of jobs⁸ generated and supported by the music sector in the area was 2,288, which accounted for 8.96% of employment in Taney County. The total earnings generated within the Branson Performing Arts and Music Ecosystem totaled \$44 million (Figure 1).

⁷ The calculations are made for 2016 as that is the most updated version of the County Business Patterns database. This data source provides relevant information to estimate the number of employees at the local level.

⁸ Total number of jobs = direct jobs + indirect jobs + induced jobs

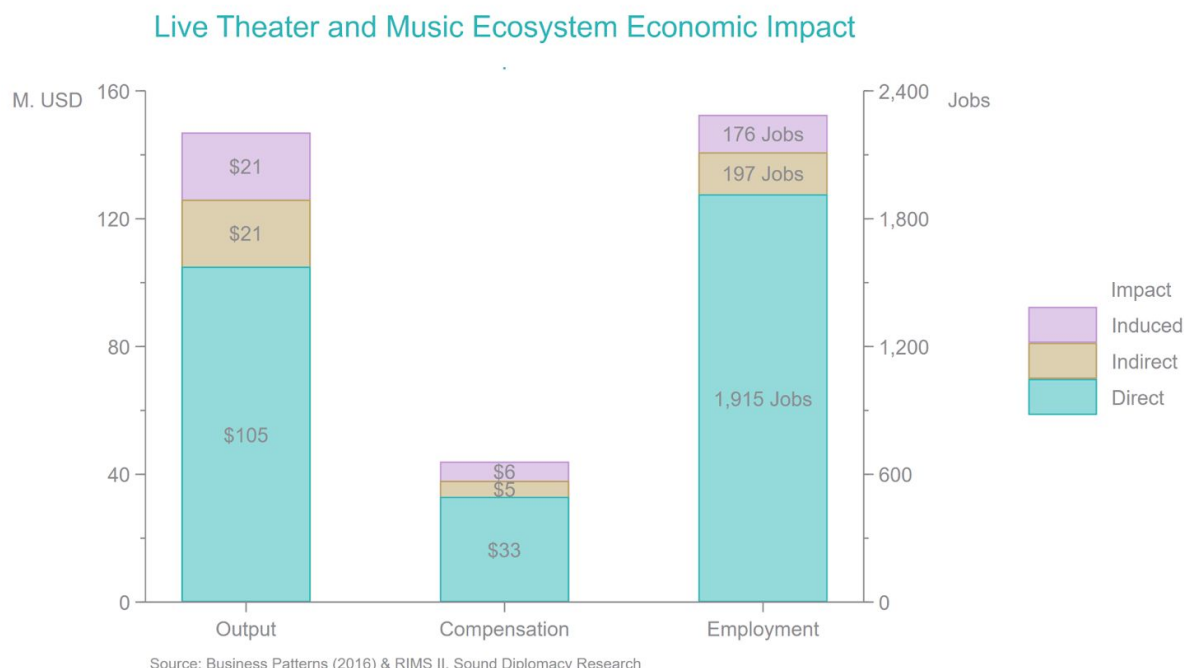


Figure 1. Branson Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Economic Impact

The majority of the economic value within Branson’s live theater and music ecosystem is created by live theaters, supporting 81% of the employment of the ecosystem, 75% of its direct output and 73% of its direct compensation.

The following sections outline how these figures were calculated.

2.2.1. Direct Impact

The live theater and music ecosystem produced a direct output of \$105 million and an estimated GVA of \$81 million. They were responsible for 1,915 direct jobs, and the compensation of these employees reached \$33 million (Figure 1). According to our calculations, the direct employment of the combined live theater and music ecosystem grew 50.6% between 2000 (1,272 employees) and 2016 (1,915 employees). However, when looking at the live theaters and music sectors separately, direct employment of live theater grew 142%, while the employment of the music sector decreased 43% during the same period.

Nevertheless, according to our estimates it was found that employment by the live theater and music ecosystem decreased over the last 3 years (-9% between 2016 and 2019; Figure 2). This

decrease coincides with the reduction of open theaters and, consequently, theater capacity (number of seats). According to the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB, there was a 36% decrease in the number of open theaters between 2012 and 2019 (from 44 theaters in 2012 to 28 in 2019) and theater capacity decreased by 38% (from 47,665 seats in 2012 to 29,705 seats in 2019). (Figure 3).

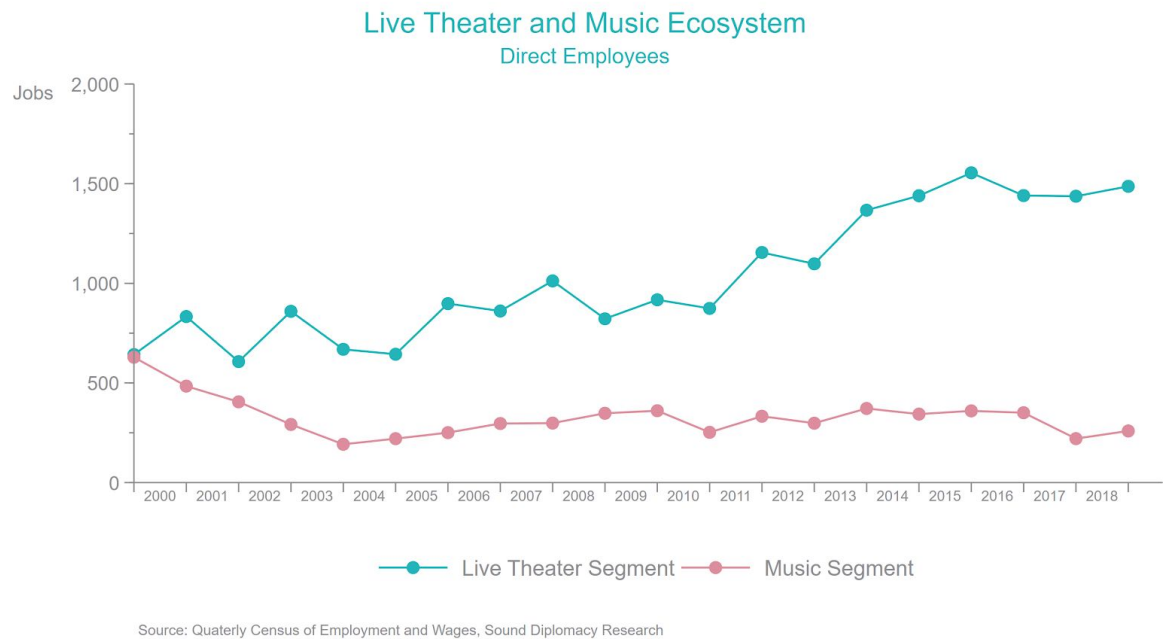
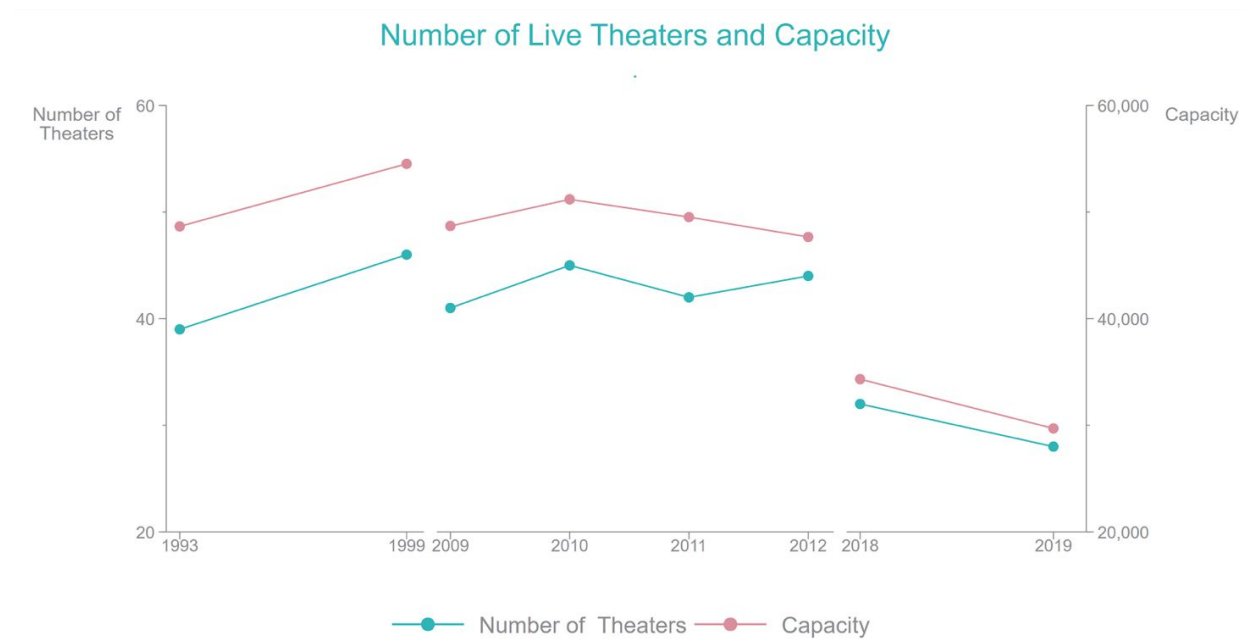


Figure 2. Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Direct Employees 2000-2019



Source: Branson Lake Chamber of Commerce, Sound Diplomacy Research

Figure 3. Number of Live Theaters and Capacity (Seats)

Data based on the City of Branson’s Tourism Tax Receipts, which was prepared by the city’s Finance Department and provided by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB, reflects a decrease in the tourism tax collected by theaters in the city in recent years. On average, it showed a reduction of 0.16% between 2001 and 2018. In contrast, the average growth in the tourism tax collected by hotels/hostels and amusements was 1.74% and 5.7%, respectively, during the same time period (Figure 4).

The decrease in the tourism tax collected by theaters coincides once again with the earlier mentioned reduction of open theaters and theater capacity (number of seats) during the same time period (Figure 3). It should also be noted that for the purposes of this analysis, no official data was available comparing the number of shows or any changes in average ticket price during that time period - all of which could have potentially had an impact on tax receipts.

Furthermore, because there has not been a significant decrease in the level of tourism (see hotel/motel tax collection), it is possible that the demand for tourism goods and services in Branson may have shifted more to the amusement sector (such as Silver Dollar City, the Titanic Museum, the ferris wheel, go-karts, etc.).

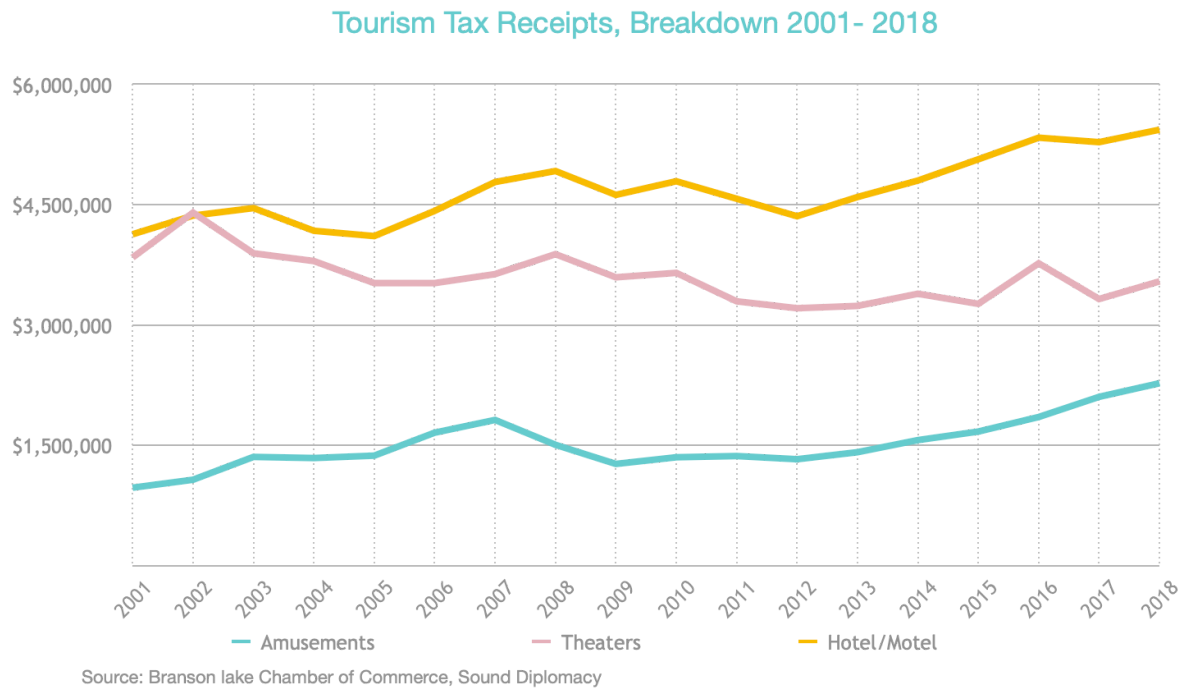


Figure 4. Tourism Tax receipts - Breakdown 2001 - 2018

When looking at the two individual segments (live theater segment vs. music segment), it showed that the live theater segment supported 81% of the direct employment, 75% of the direct output and 73% of the direct compensation generated by Branson’s live theater and music ecosystem (Figure 5).

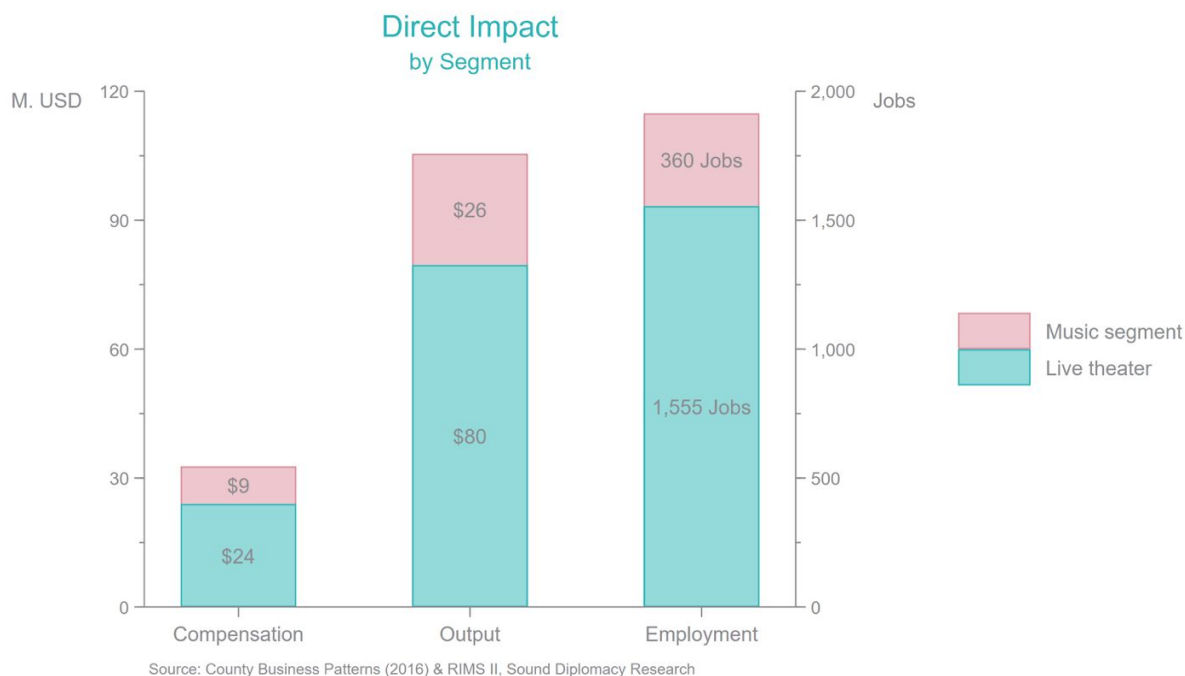
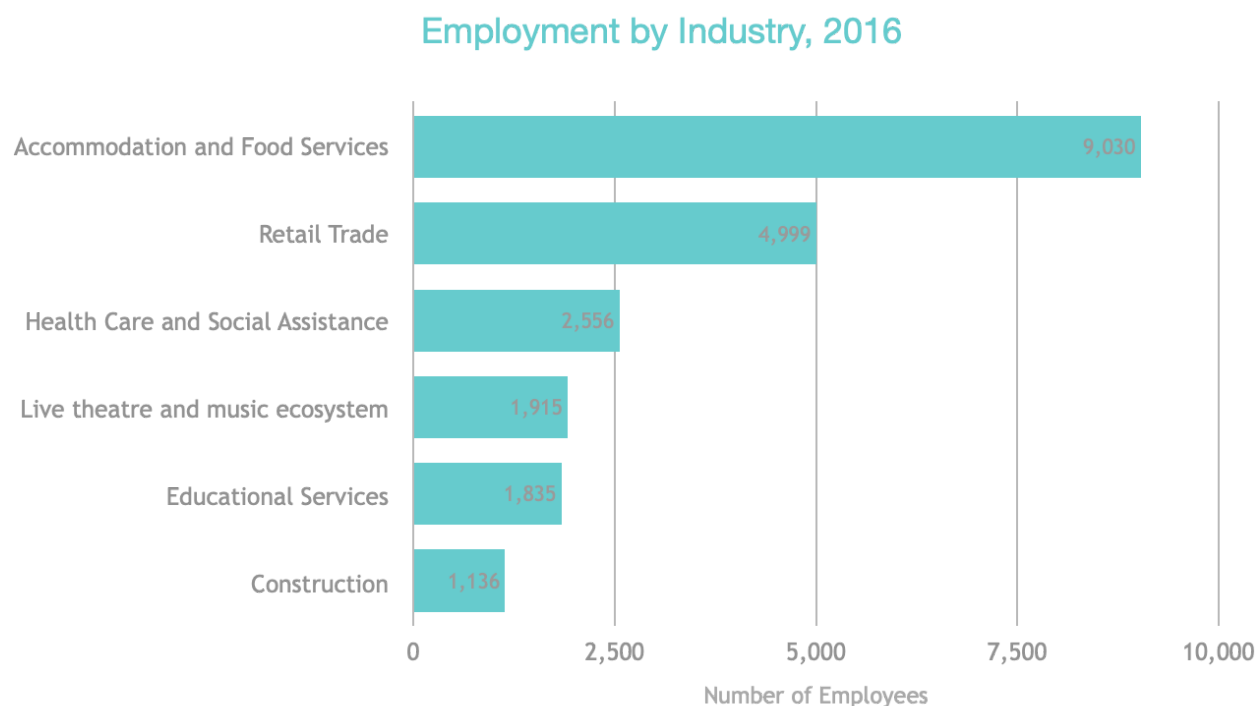


Figure 5. Direct impact by segment, 2016

Employment and Wages

The ‘accommodation and food services’ sector was the main employer in Taney County in 2016, with 9,030 jobs, representing 35% of the total county employment (25,532). The ‘retail trade’ sector employed 4,999 (20%) people, while ‘health care and social assistance’ employed 2,556 (10%). In comparison, the live theater and music ecosystem’s direct employment generated 1,915 jobs, which represents 7% of the total county employment (Figure 6).



Source: Economic Overview, Taney County, Missouri. County Business Patterns 2016, Sound Diplomacy Research

Figure 6. Employment by Industry, 2016

Based on data from the American Community Survey (2013-2017), we calculated the average wages for different subpopulations.⁹ To see whether the differences in wages were statistically significant or not, we show confidence intervals represented by the vertical lines on top of the bars (see Figure 7).¹⁰ This means that the true value for the population is somewhere in that interval with a high probability. If the intervals for values of different populations overlap, it implies that the differences are not statistically significant.

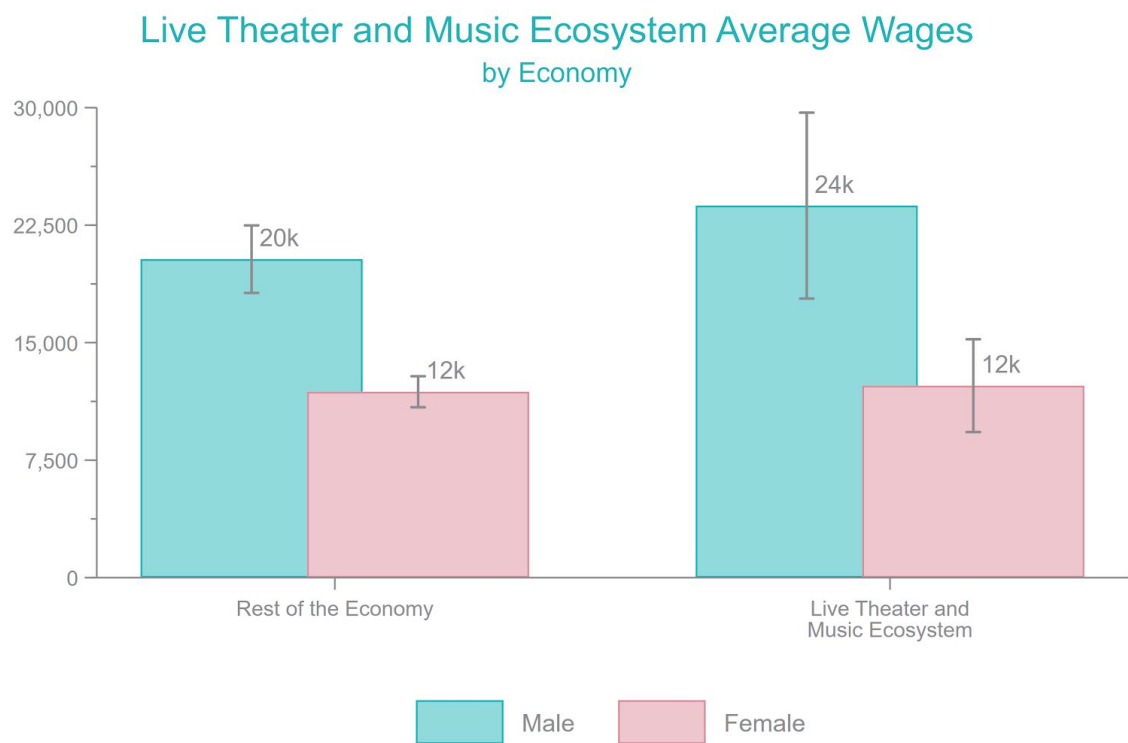
Figure 7 compares the average wages of men and women comparing the live theater and music ecosystem to the rest of the local economy. It illustrates the gender wage gap in the local economy, as men earn on average more than women in both subdivisions (\$20k-\$24k vs. \$12k, respectively). Since the vertical lines do not overlap, the difference in wages is also statistically

⁹ In order to make the estimates more robust to potentially spurious outliers, the wages are winsorized at 90 %. This means that all wages below the 5th percentile are set to the 5th percentile, and all wages above the 95th percentile are set to the 95th percentile. Furthermore, we exclude estimates with less than 20 observations.

¹⁰ More precisely, the vertical lines represent the 95 % confidence interval. The standard errors are calculated using the successive difference replication method as suggested by IPUMS USA (see <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/repwt.shtml>).

significant. While the data does not reveal the reason for this income gap, its significance warrants further investigation.

Comparing the wages between the different economies (Figure 7), the difference is not statistically significant, as the vertical lines overlap. The larger confidence intervals in the live theater and music ecosystem are due to a lower number of people occupied in these sectors and the larger variance in wages compared to the rest of the economy.

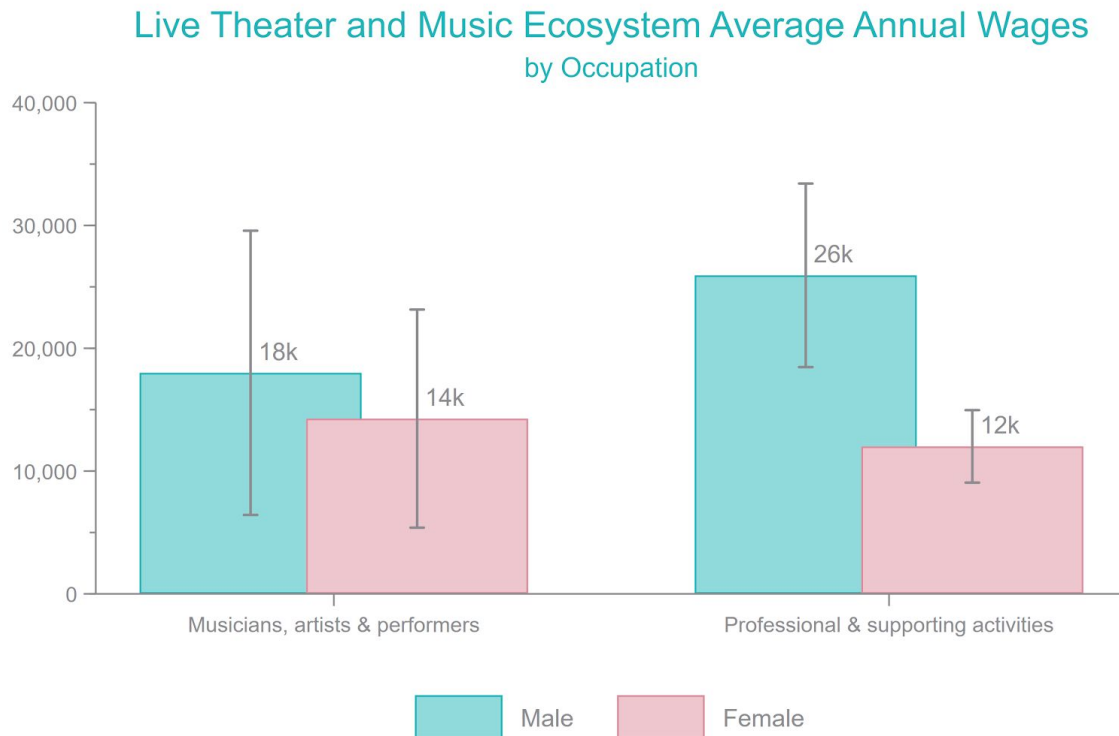


Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017, Sound Diplomacy Research

Figure 7. Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Average Wages by Economy, 2016

Figure 8 compares the average wages by gender and music ecosystem segment. It indicates that on average, men earn considerably more in Professional & Supporting Activities (\$26k) compared to men in the Musicians, Artists & Performers segment (\$18k), while women earn more in the Artistic Segment (\$14k) compared to women in the professional segment (\$12k). However, both differences are evidently not statistically significant as the confidence intervals are overlapping. The large range of the confidence intervals is due to the small number of observations and the

large variance in wages.



Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017, Sound Diplomacy Research

Figure 8. Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Average Annual Wages by Segment, 2016

Furthermore, Figure 8 shows that men earn considerably more than women in the professional segment (\$26k vs. \$12k, respectively). This difference is statistically significant. On the other hand, the differences in income between genders in the artistic segment is not statistically significant. While the data does not reveal the reason for this income gap, its significance warrants further investigation so that it can be addressed to ensure equal pay in Branson's theater industry, regardless of gender.

Figure 9 presents the history of wages from 2013 to 2017, comparing the live theater and music ecosystem to the rest of the local economy. It shows that the average wages for both economies are on a similar level and have been evolving correspondingly since 2014.

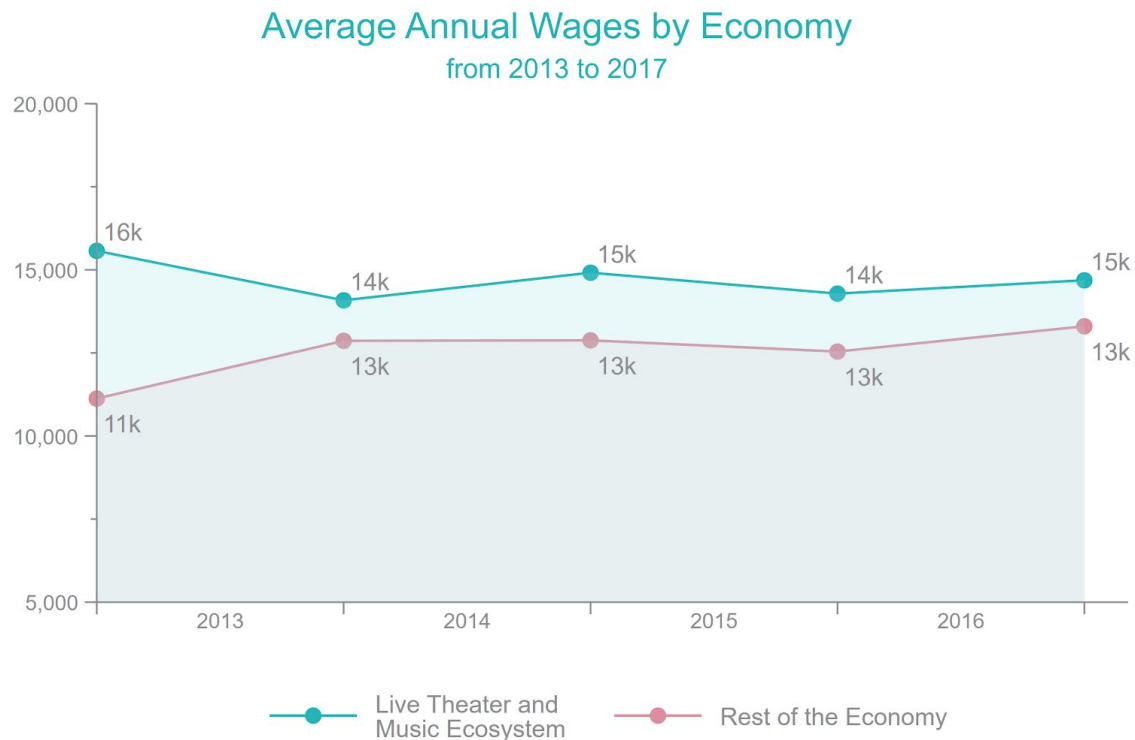


Figure 9. Average Annual Wages by Economy, 2013-2017

2.2.2. Indirect Impact

The indirect economic impact is calculated by looking at the changes in the values of output, employment and compensation driven by suppliers of the live theater and music ecosystem. It represents the jobs and output generated by local businesses that supply goods and services to the Branson live theater and music ecosystem. To calculate it, it is necessary to include the measurement of economic exchanges with suppliers that do not necessarily belong to the performing arts and music sectors, such as advertising, video production, legal services, communication and transportation, etc.

In 2016, the indirect economic impact of the live theater and music ecosystem in Branson reached an output of \$21 million, while the sum of the indirect earnings (compensation) reached

\$5 million. At the same time, it is estimated that 197 jobs were indirectly supported by the live theater and music ecosystem in 2016.

Keeping consistent with the distribution of the impact among the segments, it was estimated that 85% of the indirect employment and 83% of the indirect output of Branson's live theater and music ecosystem was supported by the theater segment in 2016.

2.2.3. Induced Impact

The induced economic impact is the economic value (output, compensation and employment) derived from “the spending of workers whose earnings are affected by a final-demand change, often called the household-spending effect”¹¹. In other words, this impact is derived from the spending of workers whose wages are supported directly and indirectly by the live theater and music ecosystem in Branson. This includes, for example, the money spent by music performers, agents, and in general, by the live theater and music ecosystem's employees on food, entertainment, transportation, etc.

The induced output of the live theater and music ecosystem in Branson reached \$21 million in 2016 and supported 176 jobs, with an induced compensation of \$6 million. 72% of the induced output, 72% of the jobs supported and 74% of the induced compensation of Branson's live theater and music ecosystem come from the theater segment.

2.2.4. Branson in Comparison

Below is a comparative exercise between Branson and other cities that have completed studies of their music ecosystems. Although in the case of Branson, the study includes not only activities related to the music ecosystem, but also all those relevant to live theater, the results still allow us to have an idea of the relative importance of the sector for the city.

A variable that allows for comparing the development of the ecosystem in different cities and regions is the contribution of music employment to the local economy. This variable is represented in Figure 10 for cities and regions that have music economic impact reports.¹² In

¹¹ RIMS II: An essential tool for regional developers and planners, page 53.

¹² The figures in the graph come from different sources that used different methodologies. Furthermore, their measurements do not correspond to the same year. However, they could be a point of reference for comparing the dimension of the music sector in the different locations. The sources are: TXP, Inc. (2016); Asheville Area Chamber of (cont. footnote 10) Commerce (2016); The Boston Consulting Group, Inc. (2017); Musicians' Association of Seattle (2015); and Siwek, Stephen E. (2018).

Branson’s case, the theater and music sectors directly and indirectly support 8.96% of the Taney County employment. This figure exceeds the contribution made by the music sector in the other cities and places that have similar reports, such as New Orleans or Austin, where the music ecosystem contribution reached 5.37% and 2.55%, respectively (Figure 10).

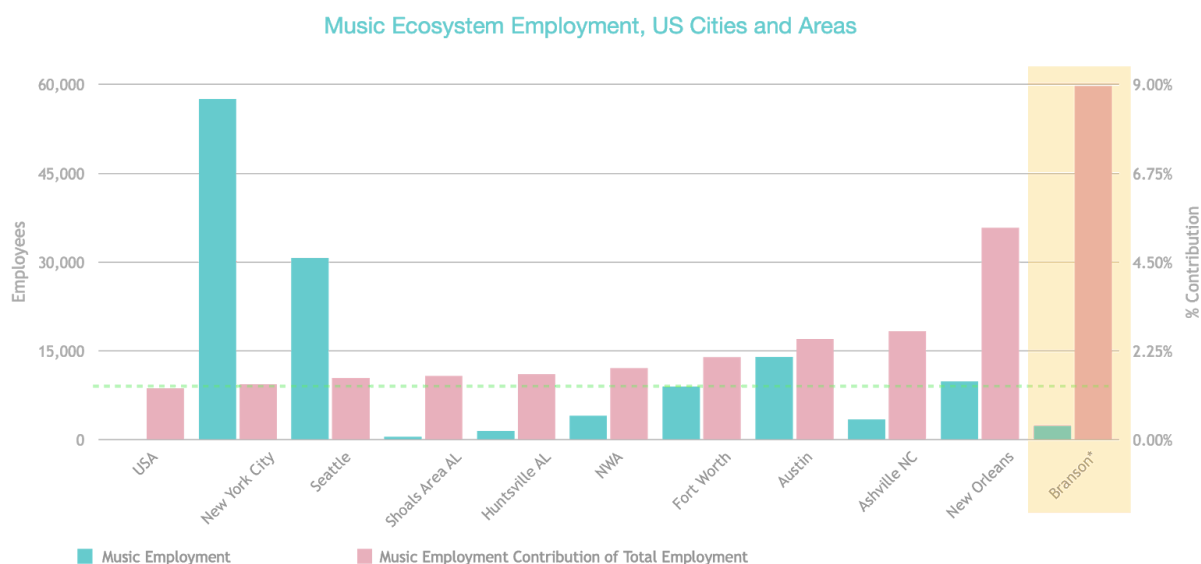


Figure 10. Music Ecosystem Employment, US Cities and Areas¹³

Furthermore, we were able to calculate the live theater and music ecosystem output per capita. This variable is calculated by dividing the output of the live theater and music sector by the total number of residents in Taney County.

It is worth clarifying that the output per capita of the other cities and regions only takes into account the music ecosystem, while Taney County’s analysis also includes the theater sector. But regardless, the sector’s output per capita allows us to identify the level of industrial development of the ecosystem, and/or how the residents of the city are involved in it, since it represents the economic resources generated according to the size of the population of a city or region.

For instance, the music output per capita of the United States is \$444, in Branson/Taney County this figure reached \$2,699 in 2016. In the case of cities such as Austin and New York, which have

¹³ Branson figure includes live theater employees in addition to music ecosystem employees

high flows of music tourism and strongly consolidated industries, this figure is \$1,899 and \$1,604, respectively (Figure 11).

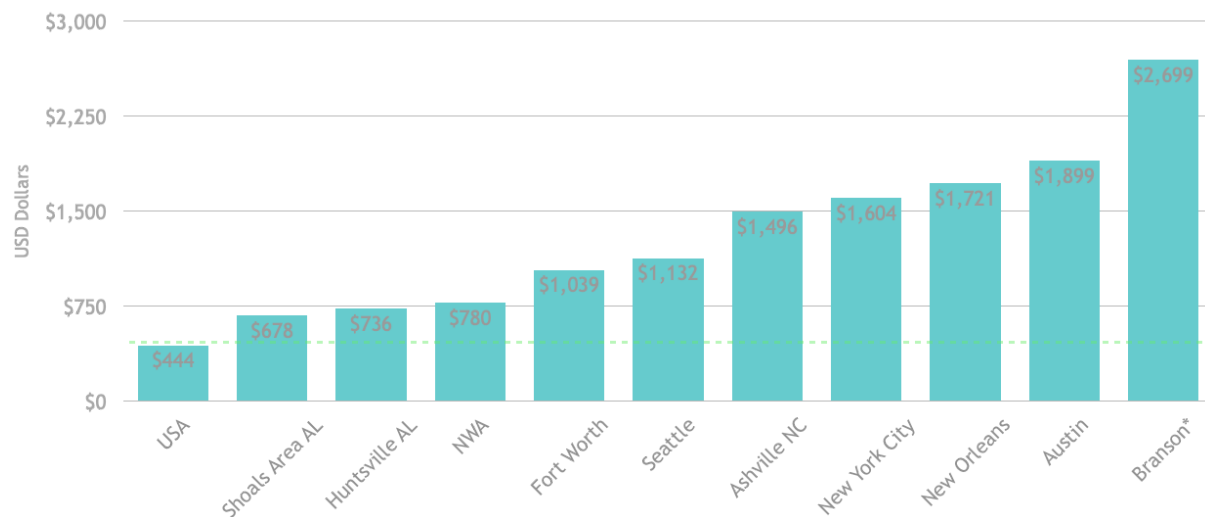


Figure 11. Music Ecosystem Output Per Capita in USD, US Cities and Areas and Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Per capita in Branson.

The number of related establishments in the county can add a better perspective about the size and impact of the live theater and music sector. Figure 12 shows the number of live theater and music ecosystem establishments in Missouri taken from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages 2016. The darker green the area, the more establishments are located in that county. For the white colored counties there is no data available. The figure illustrates the spatial agglomeration of the live theater and music ecosystem in Missouri. The clusters are mainly around greater cities like St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield and Branson.

With 126 establishments, Taney County ranks in the top 5% of counties in Missouri. The county with the highest number of live theater and music establishments is St. Louis County (709) followed by Jackson County (474), St. Louis city (277) and Greene County (214).

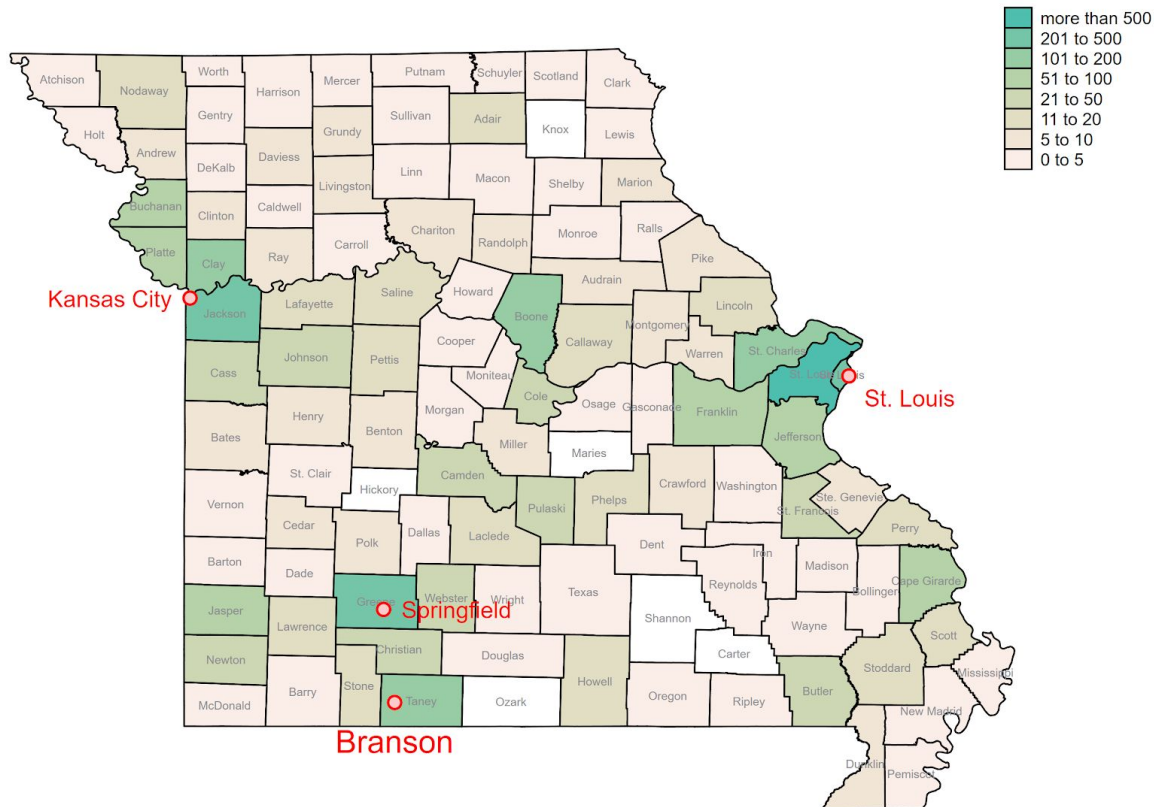


Figure 12. Number of Missouri's Live Theater and Music Ecosystem Establishments by County, 2016

2.2.5. Ticket sellers

As part of this research, it is important to give an account of the ticketing companies in Branson. While it is clear that some of them are not dedicated exclusively to selling theater or music show tickets, they are a relevant agent within the city's ecosystem. Furthermore, a large portion of the ticket sellers' impact might have been counted within the indirect impact of the ecosystem, given that they provide services to the live theater and music value chain. For this reason, and to avoid double counting its contribution to the local economy, it was considered necessary to provide a short analysis separately.

It was found that ticket sellers supported 202 direct employees, and generated a direct output of \$31.4 million, a direct compensation of \$8.6 million and a GVA of \$20 million in 2016. That means that ticket sellers, as agents involved in sectors such as tourism, amusements, theater, etc.

support approximately 0.8% of the employment in the county.

However, there is also a negative economic impact associated with third party ticket sellers, which should be mentioned. The Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey, which was conducted by Sound Diplomacy as part of the Theater Health and Needs Analysis, revealed that third party ticket sellers tend to buy tickets at an average 22% discount from theaters. This means 22% potentially lost revenue for the theaters/shows, which therefore cannot be reinvested in theater staff, products or marketing. Additionally, third party ticket sellers are only required to pay taxes on the ticket price they pay the theaters upon the initial purchase of those tickets. They do not pay taxes on the full amount of the ticket cost they then pass on to the end customer. Taking the earlier mentioned 22% discount into account, this implies a 22% tax revenue loss on tickets which are sold via third party sellers. This is tax revenue lost, which could be invested in infrastructure projects and marketing dollars for Branson. While we do not know the exact dollar amount this translates into, its undeniable impact nevertheless should not be ignored.

2.3. Music Asset Mapping

Disclaimer: This research was last amended on March 18, 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic fully unfolded. Some places may no longer be in operation.

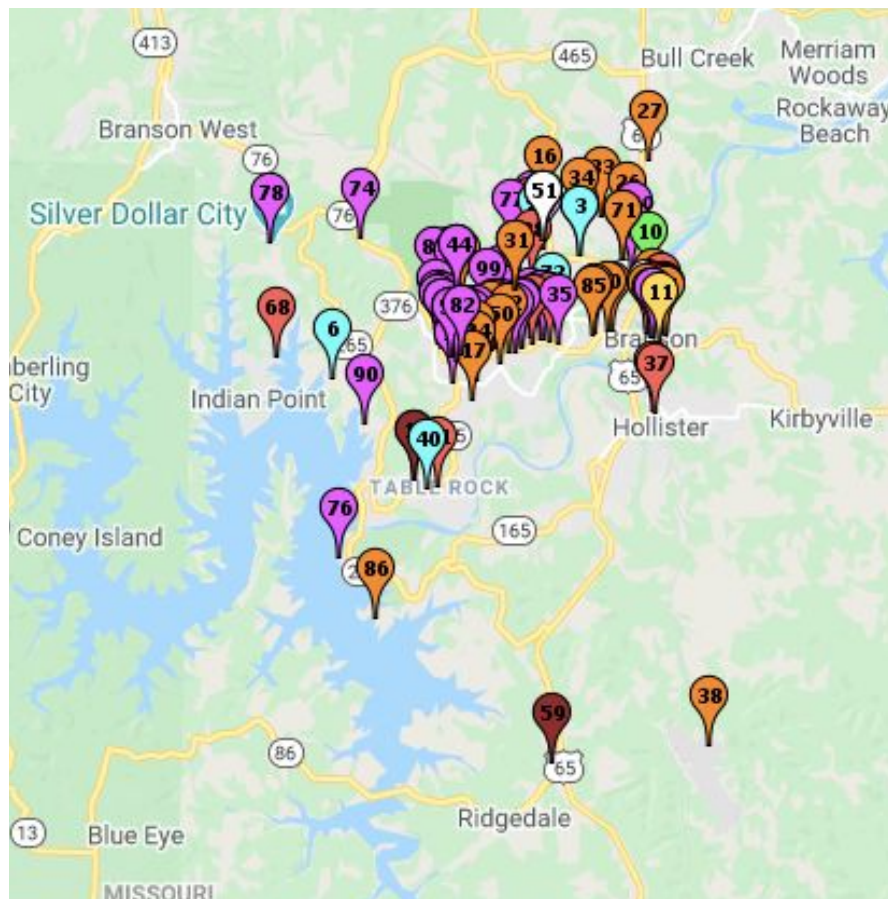
Sound Diplomacy identified theater- and live music-related uses in Branson. This mapping was produced with our proprietary mapping tool and cross-referenced manually to ensure that mapped assets are still in use today. Our extended mapping of the relevant assets in Branson has identified the following distribution thereof:

ASSET TYPE	NUMBER OF EACH CATEGORY
Performance Spaces	37 live theaters 9 bars, cafes and restaurants 1 multi-purpose venue 1 community center
Ticket Resellers	35 ticket resellers
Festivals	3 festivals with music programming

Media	4 radio stations based locally
Music Industry	4 recording studios; 2 dance studios

Table 6. Asset Categorization

Figure 13. Map of Branson's live theater and music ecosystem assets (all)



The mapping can be viewed through the following link:

<https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/branson>. Additionally, a complete list of all the mapped assets can be found in Appendix 3.

2.3.1. Mapping Findings

Our mapping shows that unlike other music cities, Branson provides a mainly theater driven and theater focused music experience. Thirty-seven of the total 50 performance spaces we identified are theaters, in comparison to only nine bars, cafes or restaurants or other venues that feature live music. Although this can be seen as a positive for the theater industry, there are several issues that could arise, including competition for ticket sales and a lack of opportunities for audiences to experience live music outside of a theater environment. Diversity of venues and cooperation among different actors in the industry are key and expanding music opportunities evenly throughout the area could help improve audience engagement.

We also identified 35 individual ticket resellers licensed in Branson. As discussed in other areas of the report, ticket reselling is an influential factor concerning the health of the local theater and live music industry. Many stakeholders mentioned it as a top concern¹⁴ and our research into the ticket reselling regulations in the area also illuminated areas in need of improvement.

Considering that there are almost as many ticket resellers as venues, this could easily result in negative effects regarding competition and miscommunication.

Missing assets included music related businesses and theater or music education programs. According to our mapping, we were not able to identify networks related to supporting the industry, especially through education. Most healthy industries have a variety of supportive business or educational programs that strengthen the skills of and opportunities for stakeholders in the network. Developing programs related to business and education could help create a more well-rounded industry with ample opportunities for performers, owners and other local stakeholders to increase their economic and social capital.

Furthermore, we only identified six production studios. As the industry is mainly theater focused, it makes sense that music production studios and rehearsal spaces would not be present, but increasing local production capabilities would improve the environment for music-based actions and could potentially lead to more connections and opportunities for cooperation between theater and music.

¹⁴ Refer to the following sections, summarizing key findings from the roundtables, interviews and surveys

Music-related festivals were also lacking, seeing how we were only able to identify three. Expansion of existing or creation of new music - and even theater-related- festivals could increase the local and tourism-related activity in the area.

All the mapped assets are visible, embeddable and shareable using Google Maps. The below figures are screenshots of the online maps provided for reference, but please use the mapping tool on the website (<https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/branson>) to zoom in on the different areas, filter assets per category and see assets' names, categories and addresses.

Figure 14. Live music venues mapped in Branson, including live theaters (purple), multi-purpose venues (yellow) and bars, cafes and restaurants with live music (red)

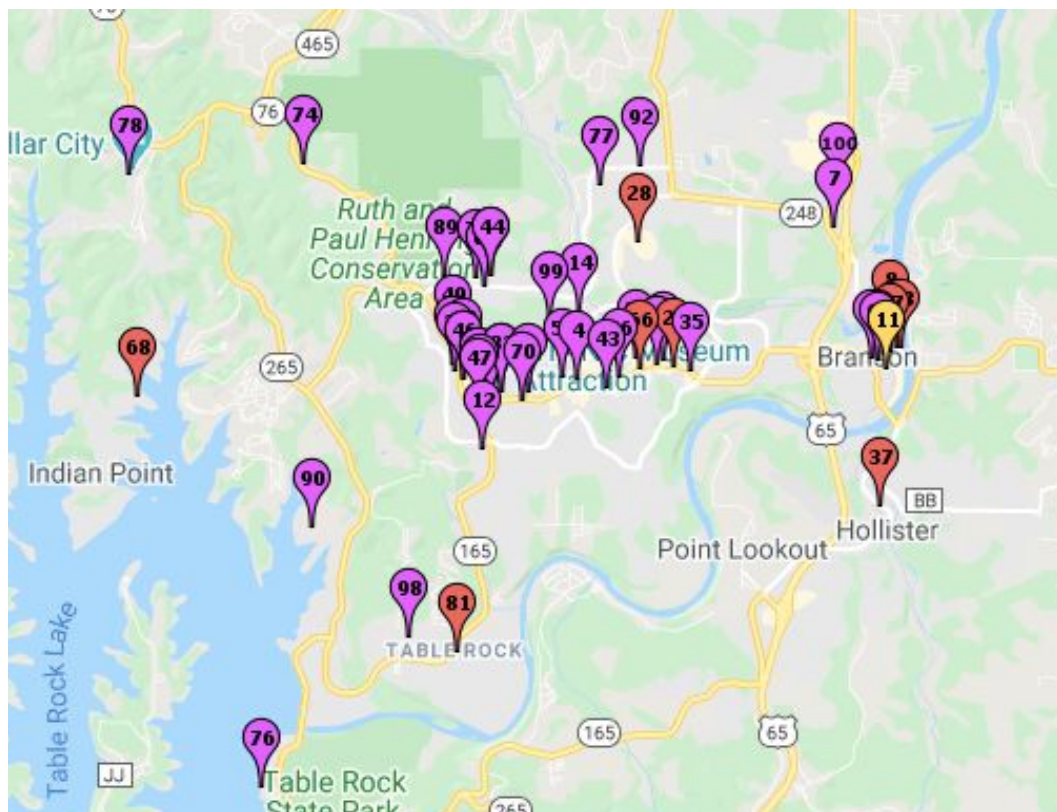
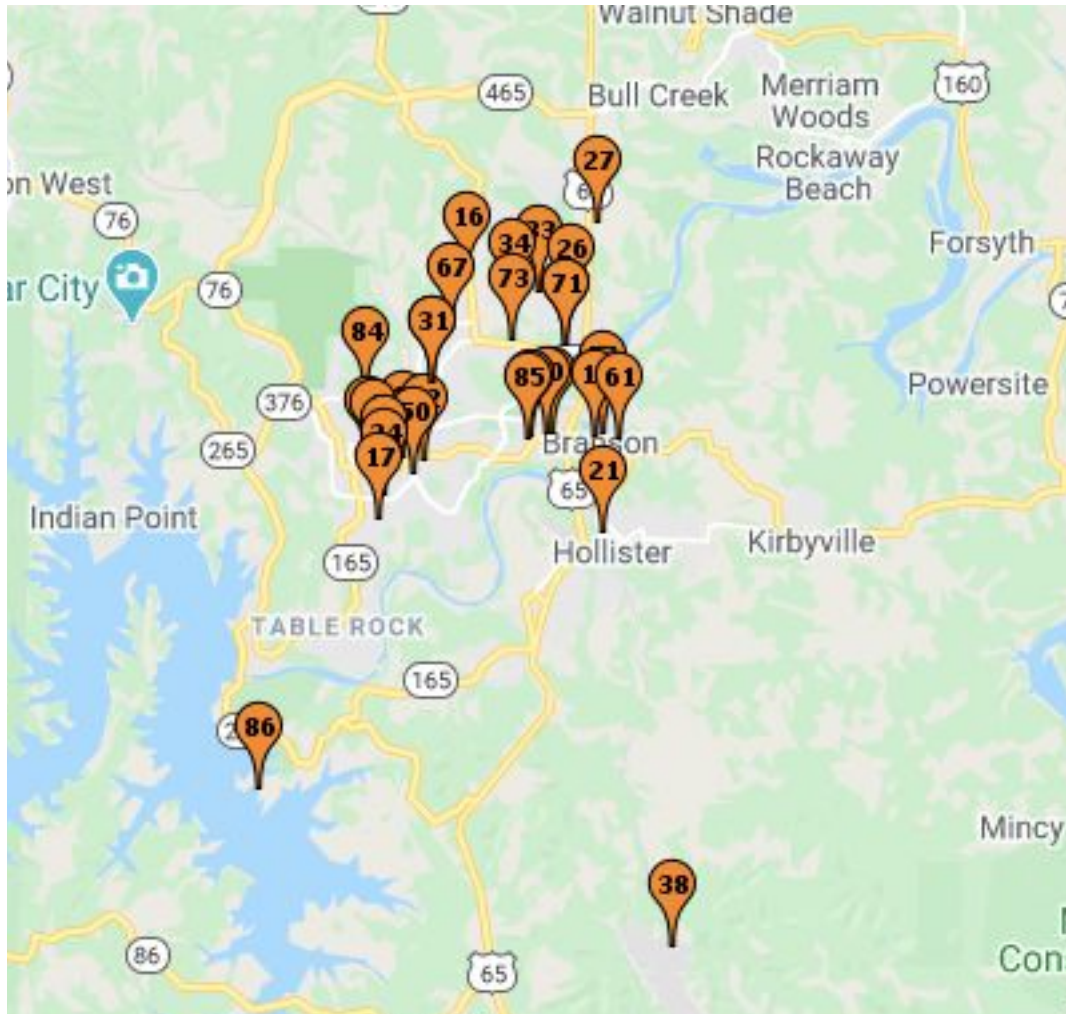


Figure 15. Third party ticket sellers mapped in Branson



2.4. The Branson Market: Key Roundtables and Interview Findings

As a result of Sound Diplomacy's visit to Branson, the team developed the below list of key findings, based on information provided by key stakeholders during the roundtables, interviews, tours and show visits.

2.4.1. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Community Leadership

Mentioned Opportunities

- Government support of the theater industry to protect and champion the city's number one tourism asset: its live shows
- Increased license requirements for shows/theaters to help ensure better quality control
- Better regulation of third party ticket sellers to create clear differentiation between the Chamber/CVB's "official" visitor centers/tourist information centers and third party ticket outlets
- An Expanded Trolley Line connecting Branson's downtown trolleys with the Entertainment Corridor (a.k.a. "The Strip") to alleviate some of the traffic congestion and enable better connectivity within the city and its tourism assets

Mentioned Challenges

- Ticket price integrity among Branson's theater industry stakeholders
- Limited availability of alcohol in theaters
- Limited public transportation
- Walkability challenges: The Entertainment Corridor or "Strip" is not pedestrian friendly
- Limited regulations concerning third party ticket sellers, and a sense that third party vendors pressure theaters into providing deeper and deeper discounts and prioritizing the sale of tickets with the greatest profit margin to end consumers, regardless of show quality
- A non-uniform and sometimes disappointing customer experience related to poorer quality shows has hurt Branson's overall theater industry image
- Some theaters and show productions are outdated and require investment

2.4.2. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Spaces and Places

Mentioned Opportunities

- Partnerships between theaters/show performers and local restaurant/bar-venues to facilitate pop-up shows helping to promote Branson's theater industry
- Addition of smaller, non-theater style venues to house current small, low-production-value shows

Mentioned Challenges

- Limited opportunities to experience live music outside of the theater show context
- Some dated theaters
- Low occupation of large theaters giving an appearance of an unpopular or unsuccessful show

2.4.3. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Music Education

Mentioned Opportunities

- Partnerships with local colleges: Collaboration between the theaters/shows and the students that attend nearby colleges, which offers programs in music and theater; potential for internship and master class opportunities
- Developing a system of workshops with local performers and aspiring musicians in songwriting, theater production, sound and set design, etc.

Mentioned Challenges

- No music education-related challenges came up during the roundtables and interviews

2.4.4. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Artist Development

Mentioned Opportunities

- The addition of more original music to diversify Branson's music product beyond cover acts

Mentioned Challenges

- Limited funding of The Branson Regional Arts Council, which offers Branson's first and only Community Arts Center with music classes and workshops
- Family-operated shows relying heavily on family for their future success
- Limited opportunities for musicians to perform outside of a theater context
- Low pay in live music for local musicians outside of a theater context; musicians are compensated by tips only

2.4.5. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Professionalization of the Music Industry

Mentioned Opportunities

- Business/Marketing training and mentoring for theater industry professionals via panels, mentorships, seminars or workshops - perhaps in collaboration with the Chamber/CVB and/or the Branson Regional Arts Council's Community Arts Center
- Develop a roadmap for best practices: revive a stalled effort by the Theater League to develop a Best Practices White Paper for Branson's theaters/shows approximately 10 years ago; interest in such a resource remains

Mentioned Challenges

- Strong reliance on third party ticket sellers to promote their shows and sell their tickets, which over time has resulted in over-discounting of tickets
- Changes in audiences and their entertainment expectations, yet many Branson shows have not adapted show content/format

2.4.6. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Audience Development

Mentioned Opportunities

- Opportunity to differentiate based on Branson's highly personable show experience due to high audience engagement, different from Broadway or Vegas shows
- Marketing messages matching visitor psychographics/lifestyles to Branson values: traditional, budget-minded, conservative, religious/faith-based and strong family-values
- Untapped potential for niche shows (i.e. Disney-like content) targeting families with young kids
- Tapping into golf audiences to develop niche shows for higher-end audiences

Mentioned Challenges

- Shrinking Theater Audiences resulting in theater closures
- Changes in Branson's theater landscape: Big music TV-star names no longer exist or want to perform in Branson
- Different travel and vacation patterns of baby boomers vs. silent generation/traditionalists: higher expectations for more varied experiences
- Increased access to free content and changing content consumption habits

2.4.7. Stakeholder Input for Consideration: Music Tourism

Mentioned Opportunities

- Increased targeting of baby boomers for shows during the shoulder season
- Possible addition of smaller venues and/or an arena to expand Branson's music offering beyond just theater shows

Mentioned Challenges

- Chamber/CVB tourism marketing shifts to target a broader audience/families have put more pressure on theaters to promote themselves to top audiences through local marketing outreach
- Lack of show format variety and original music resulting in diminishing audience appeal
- Visitor time constraints resulting in lower show attendance

- Increased competition from other attractions

2.5. The Branson Market: Survey Key Findings

Sound Diplomacy conducted three surveys as part of the Branson market analysis:

- Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey
- General Music and Theater Industry Survey
- Visitor Survey

The surveys' primary objective was to better understand local theater and show business models and the factors that impact the success of Branson's live theater industry, such as financial variables, marketing strategies, show content, ticket selling strategies, or audience behavior, among others. The results of these three surveys demonstrated the social and economic context of the live theater ecosystem in Branson. This section summarizes key insights from all three surveys, all of which guided the development of the strategic action plan. The full survey analyses can be found in the attached appendices.

Please note that for the purposes of this research, generations (or age categories) were defined as follows:

- Born 1945 or earlier: Traditionalists/Silent Generation
- Born 1946 - 1964: Baby Boomers
- Born 1965 - 1980: Generation X
- Born 1981 - 1996: Millennial/Generation Y
- Born 1997 or later: Generation Z

2.5.1. Survey Demographics

Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey

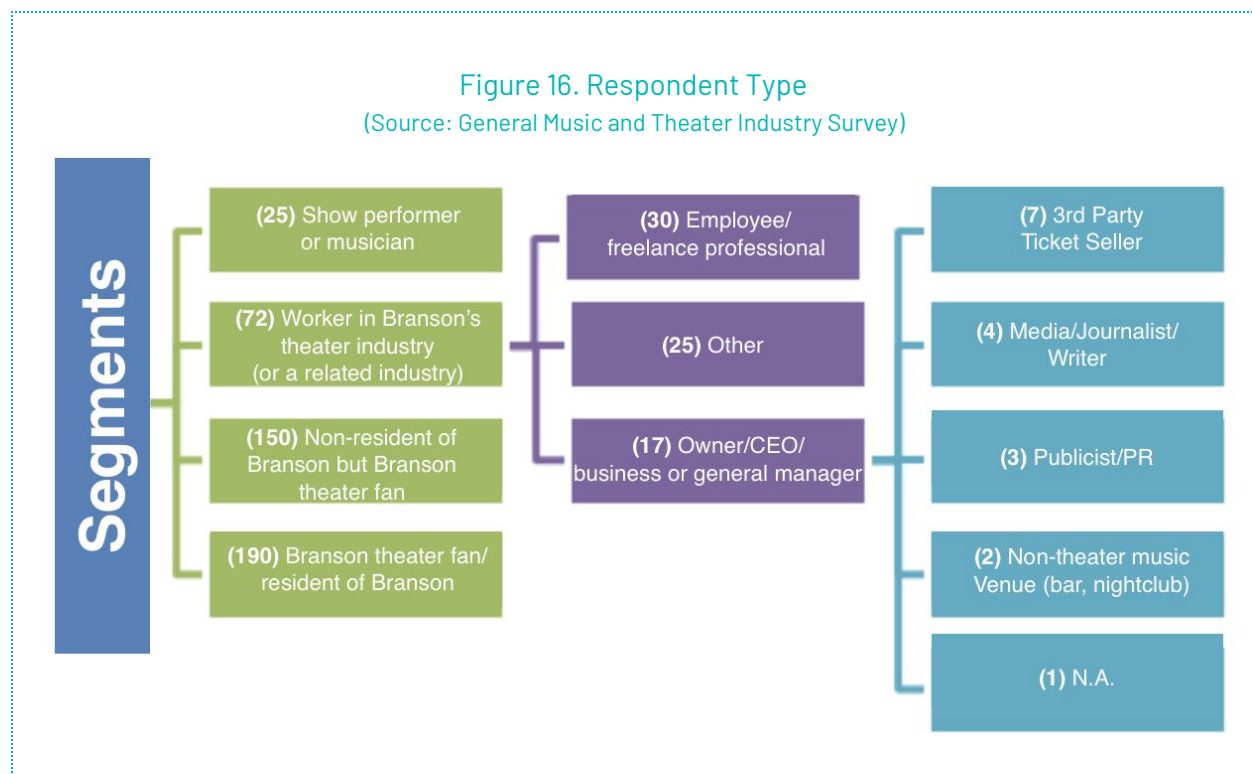
A total of 24 responses were collected, accounting for 19 theaters and 44 shows in Branson. All respondents defined themselves as white, non-hispanic or latino(a) and 71% were male versus

29% female. With regards to age, nearly half were baby boomers (45.8%), followed by one in three being Gen X (33.3%); 16.7% were millennials and 4.2% were traditionalists.

General Music and Theater Industry Survey

A total of 437 responses were collected. The sample was mainly composed of local theater fans, who were either Branson residents (190) or non-residents (150). Seventy-two respondents were workers in Branson's theater industry, while 25 were show performers or musicians.

The survey explored different employment categories in Branson's live theater industry. Refer to Figure 16 for the exact breakdown.



Based on the responses of 25 show performers/musicians who participated in the survey,¹⁵ the majority were male (64%), non hispanic or latino(a) (84%) and white (84%). Forty-four percent of them belonged to Gen X and 40% were baby boomers.

Based on the 72 survey respondents,¹⁶ workers in Branson's theater industry (or related industry) were fairly equal parts female (53%) and male (43%)¹⁷ and skew a bit older, with 52% being baby boomers, 33% being Gen X and only 8% being millennials. The majority (90%) described themselves as non-hispanic/latino(a)s and white.

Of the 340 music audience members who participated in the survey - 190 of whom live in Branson and 150 outside of Branson - 60% were female, vs. 40% male. The majority were non hispanic or latino(a) (91%) and white (94%). Nearly half (48%) were baby boomers, followed by 29% being Gen X.

Visitor Survey

A total of 647 responses were collected. Survey respondents were primarily white (93.1%), non-hispanic (90.3%), male (62.5%) baby boomers (61.4%), followed by 20.8% traditionalists. Based on H2R Market Research, the Branson/Lakes Area and CVB's long-time research partner, this demographic profile is in line with the general Branson visitor profile and representative of Branson's visitor database.

2.5.2. Theater and Show Operations & Practices

In order to get a better picture of the business side of Branson's theaters and shows, the theaters and show owners/operators were asked how they were structured, about their product, business financials, investments, costs, etc.

Most of the surveyed theaters in Branson are on the larger size with an average capacity of 1,183. This information is in line with 2020 license listings provided by the City of Branson, which revealed that of the total 33 active theater business licenses, the average capacity is about 1,000 seats per theater. However, when visitors were asked what size venue in which they preferred to see live shows, more than half (54%) said medium-sized venues, followed by smaller, more

¹⁵ Please note that this sample is fairly small and may not be fully representative of the entire population.

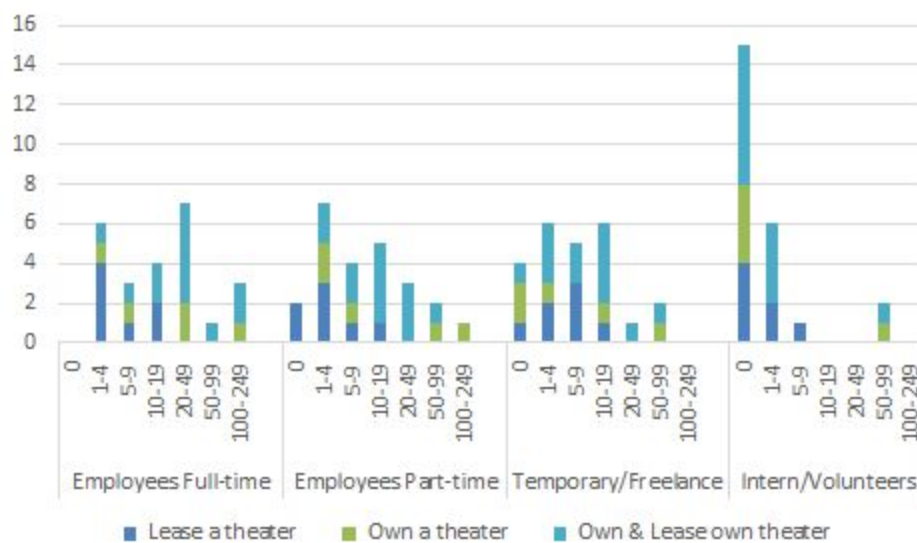
¹⁶ Please note that this sample is fairly small and may not be fully representative of the entire population.

¹⁷ 4% of respondents preferred not to disclose their sex.

intimate venues (30%).¹⁸ This suggests that Branson’s prominent venue sizes do not match up with visitor preference.

The majority of Branson’s theaters have a high level of full-time and part-time employees resulting in high fixed costs (see Figure 17). And in general, the surveyed theaters invest in their infrastructure on an annual basis, with a primary focus on sound infrastructure. Additionally, all surveyed theaters host an average of two shows with an average of 144 performances per show and sell an average of 277 tickets per show. Show content is changed either annually or every two years on average. Tickets to theaters which only operate their own shows tend to be the least expensive (average \$16), followed by shows that only rent a venue space (average \$28), while tickets to theaters that present their own shows but also lease the venue to other shows have the highest average ticket price (average \$33).

Figure 17. Employment Rates by Segment Type
(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



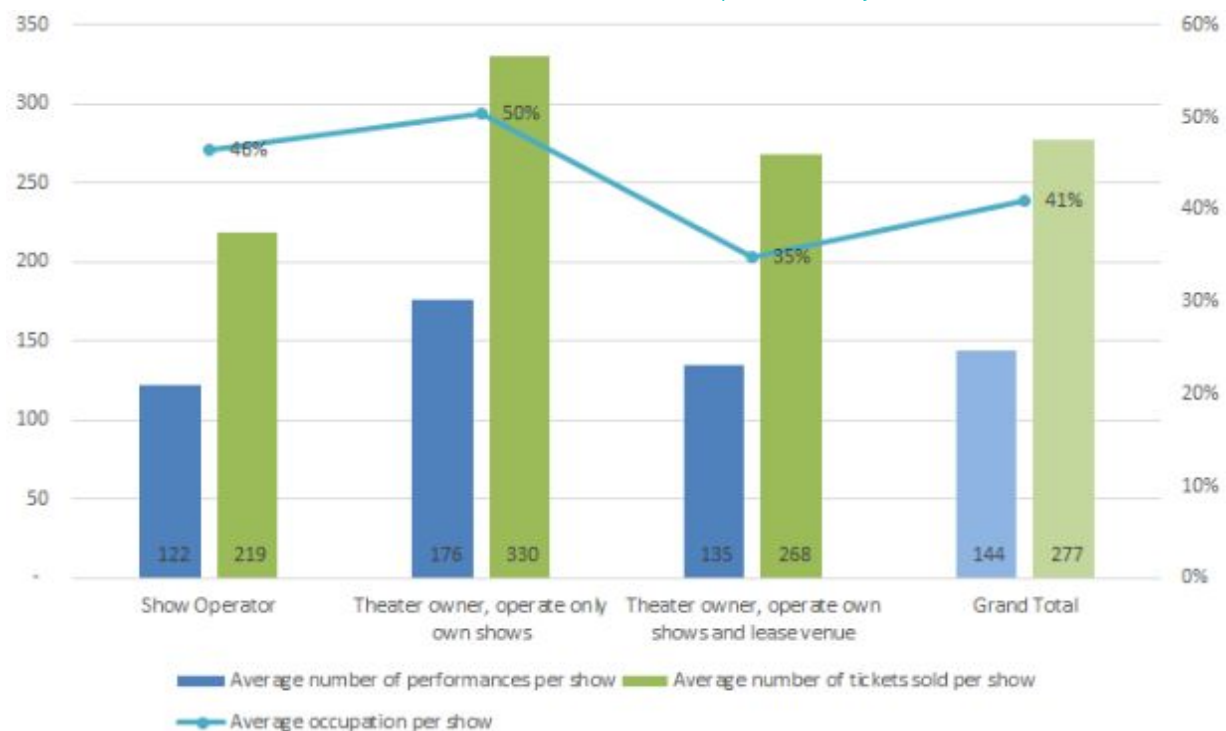
Currently, the average occupation per show is rather low at only 41%. Furthermore, most theaters/shows reported a perceived decrease in ticket sales over the last five years. Yet ticket

¹⁸ For the purpose of the study, venue size was categorized as the following: small: capacity of up to 350; medium: capacity of 350 - 999; large: capacity of 1,000-2,000; extra large: capacity over 2,000.

sales are their current main source of revenue. Together this indicates a need to increase business and revenue for theaters/shows.

Overall, theaters that only present their own shows appear to do best - most likely because they have the most control over their content and programming. They have the highest average number of performances per show (176), a higher number of tickets sold per show (330) and a higher average occupation (50%; Figure 18). When asked what factors impacted their financial success the most in the past five years, these theaters said investments in new theater productions (costumes, staff, choreographers), changing their ticket selling strategy, investing in marketing and changing their marketing strategy had the highest impact.

Figure 18. Average show occupation, average performances per show and average number of tickets sold per show, per segment type
(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



When analyzing the survey data in more detail and looking at regression models, it revealed that increased investment in overhead costs (e.g., wages, marketing, theater/show investments, etc.) during the past 5 years, often increased the occupation of a show. This indicates that investing in the business could result in higher occupation, even if it means higher overhead cost.

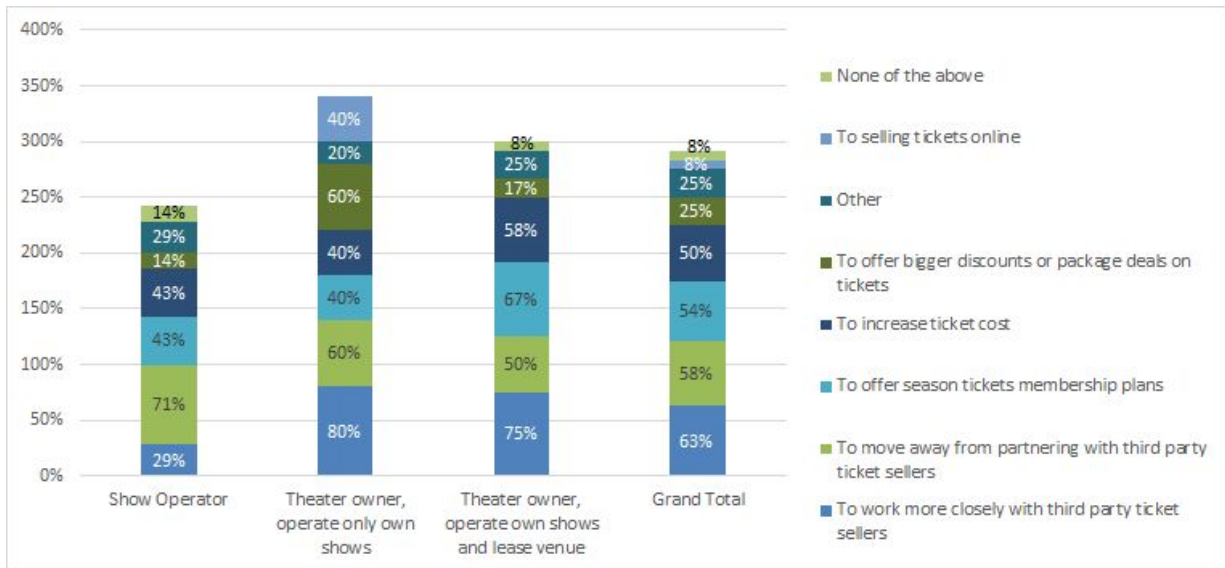
Other revenue streams could include food and beverage - which currently only contributes a very small percentage to the surveyed theaters'/shows' revenue (8% from concession sales, 2% from restaurant/bar sales). All of the surveyed theaters currently mainly sell food in the form of concessions. Dinner shows are very popular among Branson's visitors (44% cite it as their favorite show format) yet they aren't widely offered: Only 8% of surveyed theaters who only operate their own shows and 16% of theaters who run their own shows and lease their venues to other shows offer dinner shows. There seems to be an opportunity to offer more dinner food in order to increase appeal and revenue.

When looking at alcohol sales, most theaters are not interested in selling alcohol because they feel it doesn't align with their audience's values. Additionally, they believe that selling alcohol could tarnish their image as a clean family-friendly place and doing so doesn't align with their company values. But as it turns out, being able to purchase and consume alcohol also is not important to Branson's current visitor base, across all generations.

In general, when looking at ticket sales channels third-party ticket sellers are the main channel used to sell tickets in Branson (33%), except for theaters that present only their own shows, which rely mostly on advance or online sales (33%). The General Music and Theater Industry Survey revealed that music fans tend to use online search (64%) and social media (59%) to find out about shows, therefore an online sales strategy makes sense and is in line with audience behavior.

When asked about changes to their ticket selling strategies, all reported having made changes in one way or another in the past five years, from working more closely with third party ticket sellers to offering season tickets or increasing ticket cost. Only 8% reported changing to selling tickets online (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Ticket Selling Strategy Changes Over in Last 5 years, per Segment
(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



2.5.3. Live Theater Audience

Based on surveyed theaters and shows, Branson's live theater audience consists mainly of baby boomers, who primarily attend in couples (47%). This information was validated by the Visitor Survey, which revealed that 65% of people who visit Branson particularly for its live entertainment are baby boomers, followed by 27% traditionalists (born 1945 or earlier). Baby boomers also attend more shows than their younger counterparts (Gen-X). Two to three shows seems to be the sweet spot for the older generations: 33.3% traditionalists and 36.7% baby boomers. On the other hand, nearly one in three Gen Xers (29.3%) cited not having attended any shows at all on their most recent visit to Branson.

The Visitor Survey also revealed that those who visit primarily for Branson's theme parks and attractions (14.8% of surveyed visitors) are less interested in theaters, attending considerably fewer to no shows at all.

2.5.4. Audience Interest and Attendance

Overall, live theater entertainment still drives visitation in Branson (54.4%), according to the Visitor Survey. Interest in live shows remains high (83.9% of surveyed visitors are either interested or very interested).

While based on the General Music and Theater Industry Survey, the local live theater audience attends shows only once per year, the Visitor Survey revealed that the average visitor attends two to three shows during their Branson visit.

The Visitor Survey also revealed that lack of time (56.3%), high ticket prices (40.9%) and choosing other, more fun things to do (30.7%) were the main reasons for not attending more shows¹⁹. Some also expressed feelings that show content is too dated and doesn't appeal to their age group (18% of the local audience based on the General Music and Theater Industry Survey and 8% of visitors based on the Visitor Survey).

Based on the Visitor Survey, the quality of the performers (73.7%), ticket price (61.2%) and originality of show content (40.1%) are what is most important to visitors when deciding on a show.²⁰

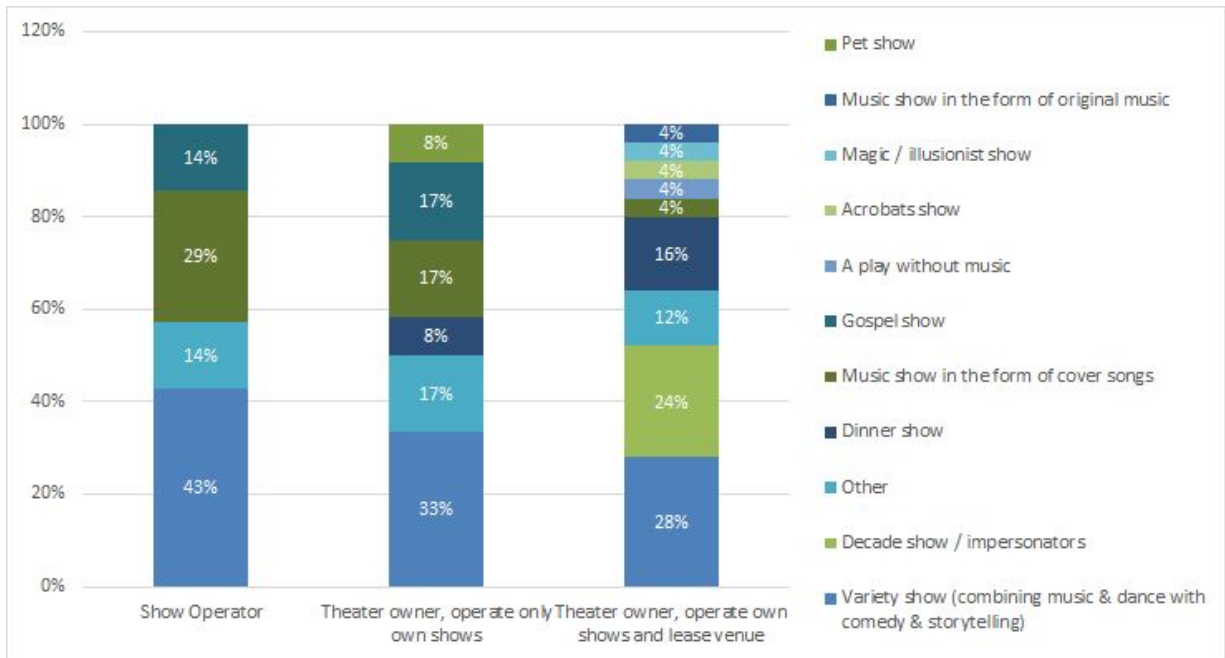
2.5.5. Show Formats

Currently, variety shows (combining music, dance and comedy) are Branson's most commonly presented show format, followed by decade shows, dinner shows and shows in the form of cover songs (Figure 20). They most frequently feature Country music (48%) and Christian/Gospel music (39%).

¹⁹ Multiple responses were possible, hence totals can add up to more than 100%

²⁰ Multiple responses were possible, hence totals can add up to more than 100%

Figure 20. Show Formats, by Segment Type
(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



This is mostly in line with visitor interests discovered in the Visitor Survey. Visitors also prefer variety shows (74.4%) and dinner shows (44.2%), but lean slightly more toward music shows in the form of original content (42.1%) vs. cover songs (34.4%).²¹ Country (47.6%), Christian/Gospel (15%) and Rock (10.1%) are their genres of choice - with Gen X and baby boomers leaning more towards Rock than their older counterparts.

Interestingly, when data from the Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey was further analyzed, regression models revealed that whenever a show indicated featuring Bluegrass as one of their main genres, occupation often increased.

²¹ Multiple responses were possible, hence totals can add up to more than 100%

In terms of preferred music era, the Visitor Survey revealed that each generation prefers the music with which they grew up. Traditionalists enjoy music from the 50's or older, baby boomers enjoy music from the 60's the most and Gen X prefer music from the 80's. The theaters' core audience leans more toward oldies, while those who visit Branson for its theme parks and attractions lean more toward current music.

2.5.6. Promotion

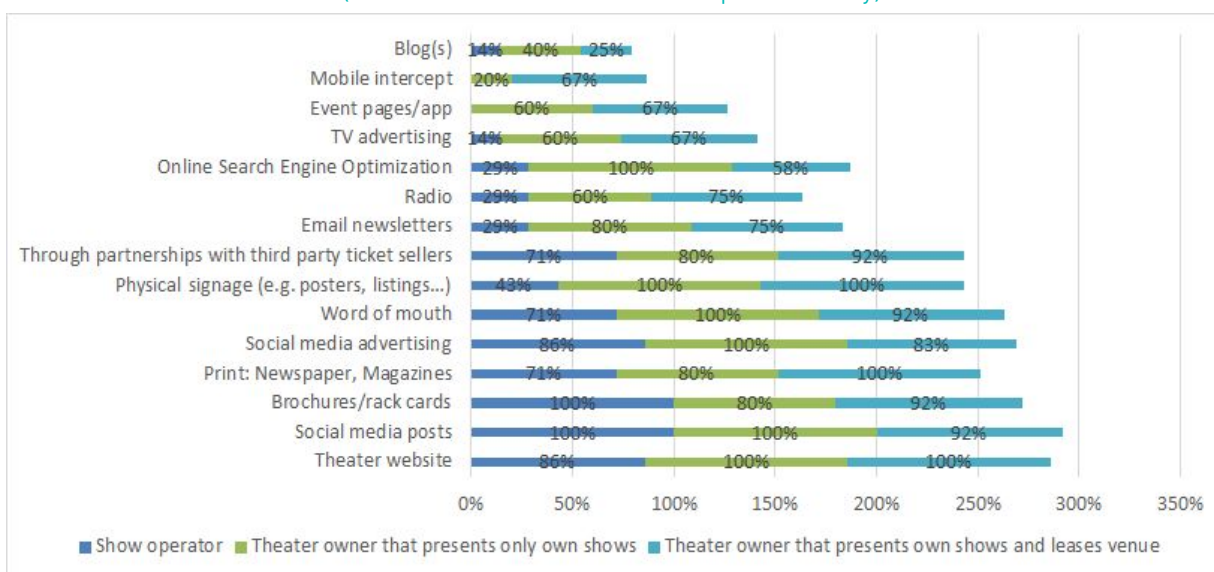
Currently, all theater owners claim to collect their customer data. On the other hand, only 57% of show operators do so; the other 43% say that their third party ticket selling partners collect this information instead. This could imply that nearly half of show operators who rent a venue do not have access to their own customer data, which limits their ability to reach out to existing customers. This likely explains why only 29% of show operators who only rent a venue promote their shows via email newsletters.

But regularly engaging with customers is important and can pay off: when running regression models, the survey data revealed that theaters/shows which reach out to their customer database on a weekly basis, can expect show occupation to increase.

In terms of marketing and promotions, most theaters/shows use a variety of ways. Among the most popular were social media posts, theater websites, brochures/rack cards, social media advertising, word of mouth, partnerships with third party ticket sellers and physical signage (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Categories to Promote Shows/Theater, per Segment Type

(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



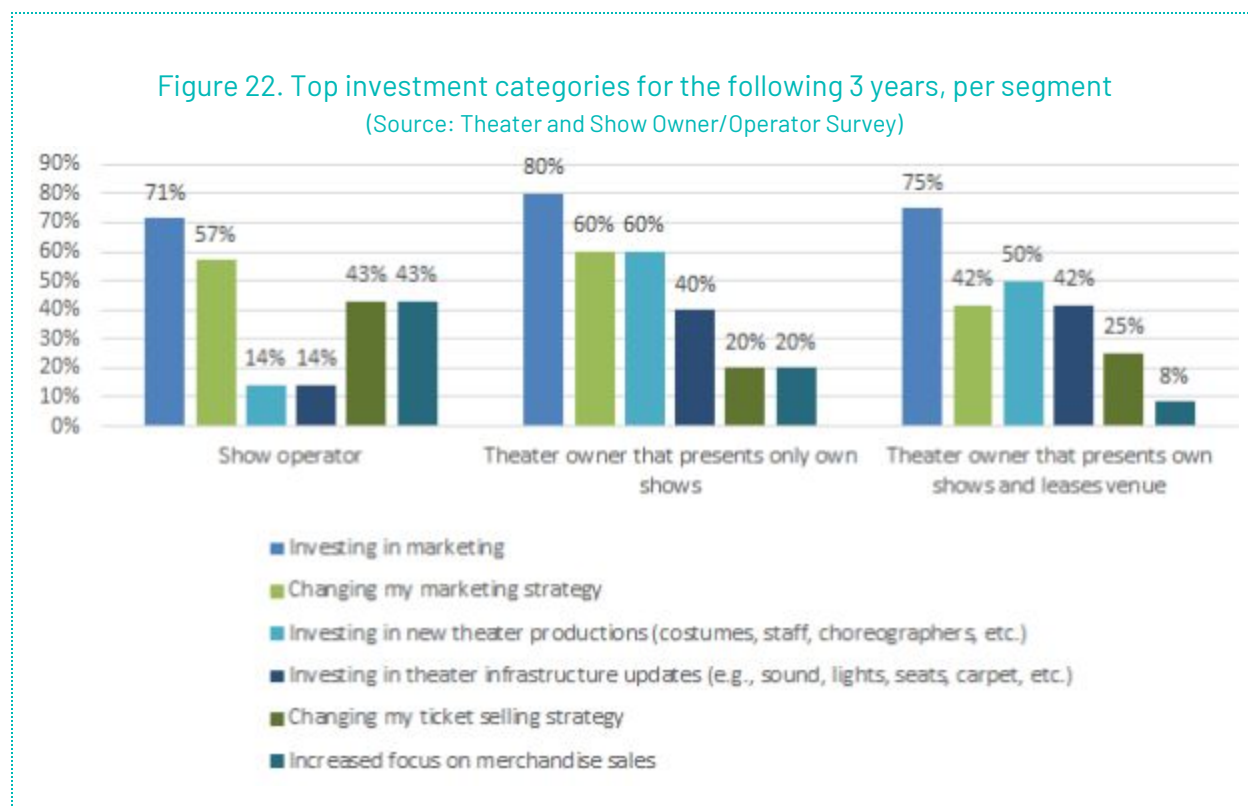
Interestingly, theater owners who present only their own shows focus considerably more on online search engine optimization (100%) compared to theater owners who present their own shows but also lease the venue to other shows (58%) or show operators who only lease a venue (29%).

Mobile intercept, which is a growing marketing tool, is currently only used by theater owners who present their own shows but also lease the venue to other shows (67%) and theaters who only present their own shows (20%).

When comparing currently employed marketing methods to customer behavior revealed in the General Music and Theater Industry Survey, we see that the theater audience relies more heavily on a combination of online media, such as search (64%), social media (59%) and theater websites (41%) than traditional media like brochures/rack cards (43%), or print (42%). Search engine optimization and a solid social media presence are therefore strong opportunities to reach the theater audience.

Running regression models on the Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey data also revealed that investing in marketing and changing marketing strategies are likely to have a positive impact

on occupation. This is good news, as most theaters/shows report making marketing investments their top investment priority for the next three years, followed by changes to their marketing strategy (Figure 22).



2.5.7. Third Party Ticket Sales

Third party ticket sellers (33%) are currently the main channel that Branson's theaters and shows use to sell tickets - more so than box office walk-ups (27%) or group sales (21%).

Based on the data provided by seven third party ticket sellers in Branson, third party ticket sales account for an average of \$23,640 annually.²² The surveyed third party ticket sellers tend to buy tickets at an average 22% discount from theaters. This means 22% potentially lost revenue for the theaters/shows, yet the majority of theaters have chosen to work more closely with third party ticket sellers over the past five years. On the other hand, the majority of show operators who rent

²² This reported average number appears to be very low; please take into consideration that this number is only based on 7 responses and may not be representative of the entire population

a space have chosen to move away from partnering with third party ticket sellers in the past five years (refer back to Figure 19).

When further analyzing the data of the Theater and Show Owner/Operator survey, regression models suggest that working more closely with third party ticket sellers can actually hurt occupation levels of a show. This explains why moving away from partnering with third party ticket sellers was named among the top three ticket selling strategy changes that theaters/shows are considering for the next three years.

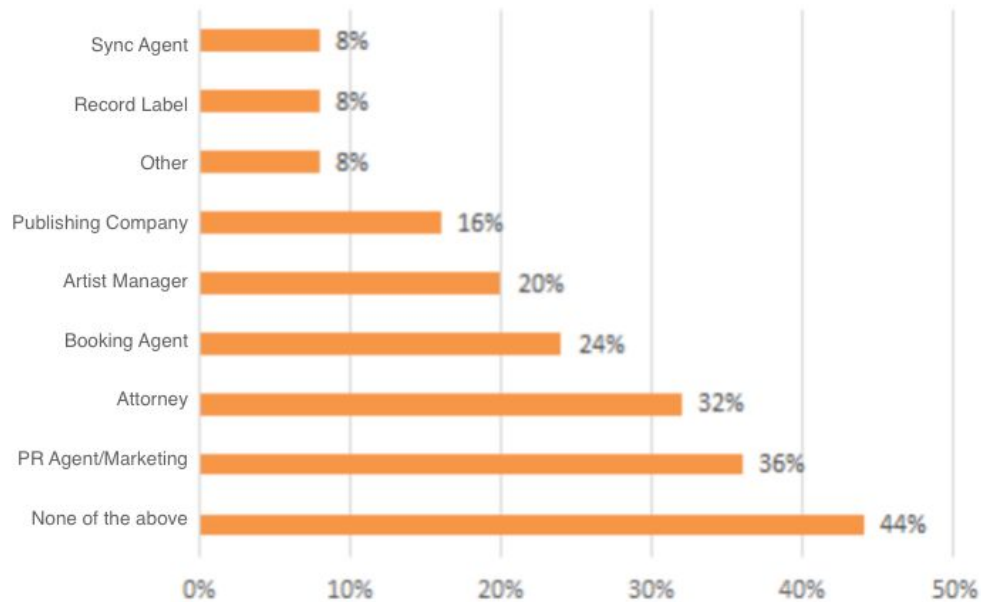
2.5.8. Support Areas

When theater industry professionals were asked about participation in existing organizations or advisory boards that support the live theater industry in Branson, only 19% of the workers in Branson's theater industry (or related industries) are members of the Theater League and 13% are part of another organization. This indicates a potential for increased involvement and consequent decision making opportunities gained via such channels.

Additionally, most of Branson's surveyed performers/musicians don't have any business relationships with supporting agents in the sector, such as PR agents, managers, etc. (Figure 23). Because most of them are already full time employees - and 68% work exclusively as performers with no other jobs on the side - they are less likely to have a need for booking additional performances or shows and hence don't require any such support.

Figure 23. Performers/Musician Business Relationships with Other Industry Agents

(Source: General Music and Theater Industry Survey)



On the other hand, most of Branson’s theater industry professionals identified common areas of interest for continued education. When asked what skills or knowledge theater industry survey participants would like to improve or learn, the majority leaned towards marketing, such as general marketing and PR, data analysis, or online/social media.

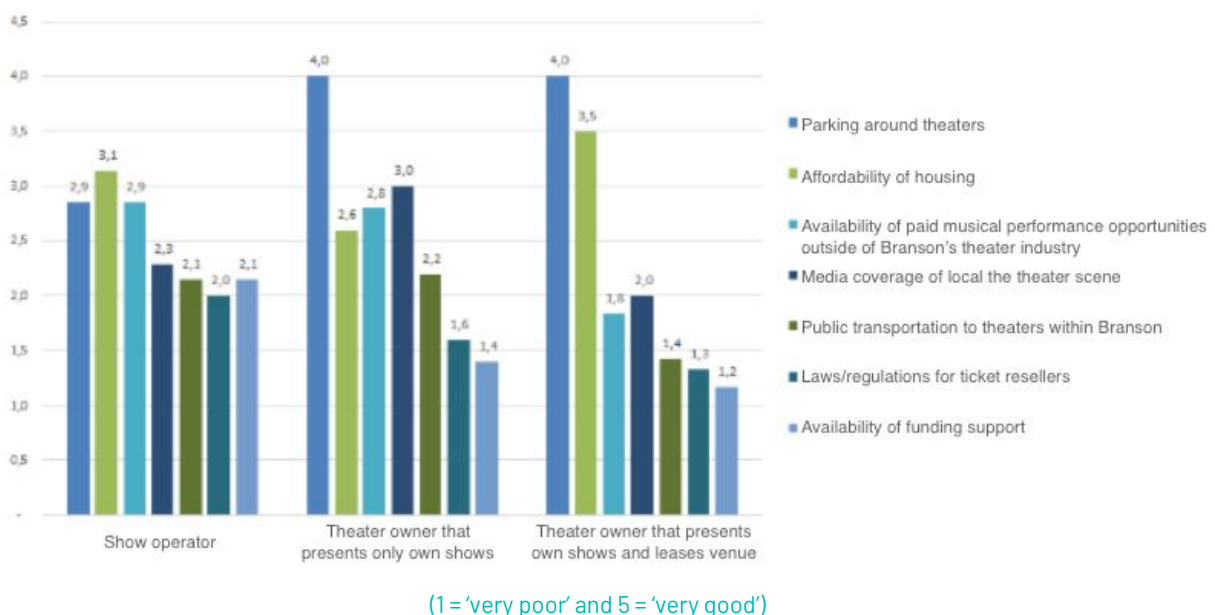
We also asked about grants and tax incentives and found out that neither theater and show owners/operators nor local industry professionals/employees were aware of any existing grants or tax incentives, or thought that there were none suitable for them.

And when asked where increased city or government support would help them or their business the most, help with promotion/marketing/tourism initiatives, improved laws, regulations and/or license requirements around ticket distribution and grants/tax incentives were their main areas of concern.

2.5.9. Professional Opinion

Survey participants were asked to rate several aspects of Branson's live theater industry, such as laws and regulations that affect the industry, funding support, transportation, parking, the city's reputation as a theater hub, etc. While theater and show owners/operators gave slightly higher ratings than employees, industry professionals and local audience members, the overall ratings across the board suggested lots of room for improvement (refer to Figure 24 and Table 7).

Figure 24. Theater and Show Owner/Operator's Ratings of Branson's Live Theater Ecosystem
(Source: Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey)



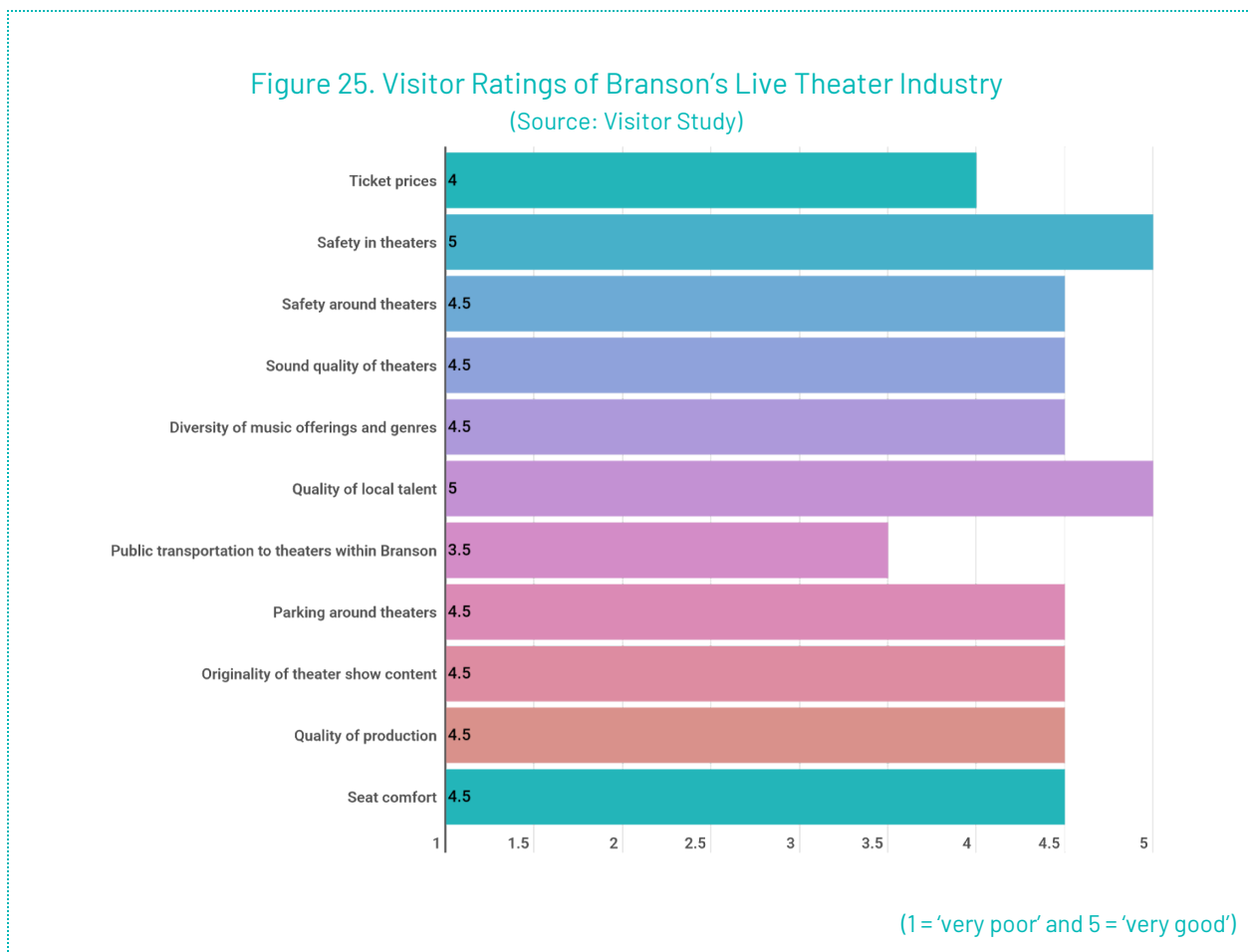
ASPECT	AVERAGE RATING		
Low rating	Performer/ Musician	Worker in theater industry	Average
Laws/regulations for ticket resellers	1.3	2.1	1.7
Public transportation to theaters within Branson	1.9	1.7	1.8
Availability of funding support	2.1	2.1	2.1
Collaboration with Branson's Convention & Visitors Bureau	2.0	2.3	2.2
Media coverage of local theater scene	2.0	2.4	
Networking/showcasing opportunities for artists and theater industry professionals	2.0	2.6	2.3
Laws/regulations for live theaters	2.1	2.6	2.3
Fair pay for musicians/performers	2.4	2.5	2.4
Availability of music- and performing arts education	2.2	2.8	2.5
Medium rating	Performer/ Musician	Worker in theater industry	Average
Collaboration/sense of community within the live theater scene	2.5	2.7	2.6
Performance opportunities for emerging artists	2.5	2.9	2.7
Availability of paid musical performance opportunities outside of Branson's theater industry	2.8	2.7	
Affordability of housing	3.4	2.3	2.8
Reputation of Branson as a theater hub	3.0	3.1	3.0
Performance opportunities for established artists	3.4	3.5	3.4
Parking around theaters	3.2	3.7	3.5
High rating	Performer/ Musician	Worker in theater industry	Average
Quality of local talent	3.4	3.9	3.6

Table 7. Theater Industry Professionals' Ratings of Branson's Live Theater Ecosystem (1 = 'very poor' and 5 = 'very good')

2.5.10. Public Opinion

The public, including the local community as well as past visitors, were asked to rate Branson's live theater sector on a series of attributes (Figure 25), including ticket prices, sound quality of theaters, diversity of music offerings and genres, quality of local talent, originality of theater show content, quality of the productions, seat comfort, safety in and around theaters, public transportation to theaters within Branson, parking around theaters, and reputation of Branson as a music place.

Overall, the theater audience was impressed, rating all of the various attributes of Branson's live theater sector well above average. Only one area was identified as a possible area for improvement: public transportation.



2.6. The Branson Market: Desk Research – Regulations, Incentives, Marketing and Tourism Initiatives

2.6.1. Governance and Leadership

City of Branson, CVB and Chamber Support/Initiatives for Theaters

In 2018, the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB launched “5 in FIVE,”²³ a business community engagement initiative aimed at identifying and addressing the five most pressing challenges in Taney and Stone Counties. Through a series of focus groups and open houses, Theater Industry Health, among other issues, was selected as an area with the greatest need for improvement to continue growing the economy. The aim is to change external perceptions, strengthen local relationships, and nurture sustainable business practices. This study, conducted by Sound Diplomacy, is a first step in that direction.

To support the theater industry, Branson formed a chamber committee called The Branson Show Task Force. It is comprised of 17 show owners and producers representing more than 26 shows. It is designed to provide a forum for the discussion of issues and coordination of strategies related to the constant improvement and preservation of live shows as a key industry in the Branson economy. The Show Task Force meets bi-monthly and its strategy is guided by the “5 in Five” Initiative mentioned above.²⁴

State Arts & Culture Strategy / Entertainment Strategy

According to the Missouri Arts Council, more than 21.4 million people attended arts and culture events produced by 491 Missouri organizations in 2015. Out-of-town visitors spent almost twice as much per person compared to Missouri residents (\$39.18 vs. \$19.87, respectively). Arts and culture were the main reason that 80% of out-of-state visitors came to Missouri and without the arts events, 48% of the visitors reported that they would have gone elsewhere. Additionally, 35% of local residents reported that if the arts event had not taken place in Missouri, they would have

²³ City of Branson Chamber (2019a)

²⁴ Branson Register (2019)

traveled to a different community in order to attend it.²⁵ This data is strong evidence that Missouri's arts events are a strong economic driver.

The three main goals of the Missouri Arts Council's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan²⁶ include engaging people in meaningful arts experiences, growing Missouri's economy using the arts and strengthening Missouri's education using the arts. The plan aims to meet the following objectives:

1. Engaging people in meaningful arts experiences:
 - a. Communicate the impact of the arts statewide and establishing strategic partnerships
 - b. Support opportunities for arts experiences through the funding of projects that encourage artistic creation and appreciation and through the support of arts experiences in nontraditional venues
 - c. Increase the strength and growth of the arts
 - d. Increase services to underserved communities or populations
2. Grow Missouri's economy using the arts:
 - a. Encourage development of arts professionals and creative industries through research, promotion and the offering of professional development services
 - b. Support communities' growth using the arts: Encourage the development of arts districts and local arts councils and promote creative communities
 - c. Promote Missouri as an arts destination
3. Strengthen Missouri education through the arts:
 - a. Strengthen the position and impact of fine arts specialists by enhancing fine arts instruction in PK-12 education and supporting professional development
 - b. Improve student achievement through arts integration
 - c. Develop teaching artists' skills and opportunities
 - d. Support the development of quality community arts education

²⁵ Missouri Arts Council (2019b)

²⁶ Missouri Arts Council (2019a)

2.6.2. Tourism and Audience Development

Tourism Strategy

As laid out in the Community Plan 2030,²⁷ Branson has a tourism strategy that focuses on six key elements:

1. Branson Brand - continue to expand beyond entertainment and celebrate outdoor recreation opportunities
2. Entertainment/Attractions/Shopping - the type and quality of opportunities will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the changing tourism demographic
3. Lodging/Accommodations - a varied type of accommodations and price points will be available and will continue to serve the tourist demand while providing a quality experience
4. Dining - a varied type of dining experiences and price points will be available and will continue to serve the resident and tourist demand
5. Visitor Services & Facilities - facilities will be ethical, informative and clear for tourists
6. Convention Centers/Meeting Facilities - facilities will continue to be an economic driver adding to the economic health of the City

The above strategy implies a focus on the evolution of the theater industry in order to meet the interests, needs and demands of a changing tourism demographic. Based on a citizen survey with 1,290 Branson area residents this is in line with the community's strong desire to ensure that Branson's entertainment offerings continue to evolve and meet the needs of all ages and demographics so as to remain a national tourist destination for years to come. When respondents were asked what the diversity of entertainment activities should include, the largest response was "cultural arts" (17%). Big name talent (13%), diversity of shows (13%) and Broadway-type theater/off-Broadway (11%) were also among the more important community outlooks.

The Community Plan 2030 furthermore breaks the above mentioned tourism strategy into two Entertainment/Attractions/Shopping sub-strategies, addressing quantity and quality, each with multiple action points:

1. Quantity of Entertainment/Attractions: Maintain destination integrity through strong quality standards in entertainment, heritage and environmental offerings.

²⁷ City of Branson (2012) Community Plan 2030

- a. Assess the collection of live theater and destination entertainment options in order to support their long-term sustainability. Conduct visitor research to determine current and future entertainment preferences
 - b. Require a certain percentage of the projected Tourism Tax revenue to be in escrow prior to issuing a new business license
 - c. Encourage the renewal and modernization of theaters and other attractions to provide unique, quality and engaging experiences
- 2. Quality of Entertainment/Attractions: Maintain the quality and wholesome character of entertainment that appeals to all ages and that reinforces the Branson brand
 - a. Support entertainment that meets the community's policies and core values
 - b. Advocate strategic revitalization and commit to new tourism investment within the City
 - c. Explore the formation of an entertainment district, regulated by the state that would make businesses within the district eligible for federal and state grants and loans
 - d. Work with property owners to renew and modernize entertainment properties that are in disrepair and that present a negative image of the City

Tourism Tax

Branson collects a tourism tax, a portion of which funds the city's tourism strategies. The tax is currently set at 4% for all lodging (hotels, motels, condominium units, timeshare interest in condominiums, campgrounds and tourist courts) and attractions and 0.5% for all food and beverage sales of restaurant establishments, bars, caterers and clubs. The collected tourism tax is paid into the city's tourism tax trust fund and is required to be expended and disbursed as follows:²⁸

- 75% Infrastructure Account: Must be solely used for the purpose of constructing and maintaining infrastructure improvements, to include sidewalks, streets, highways, roads, waterworks, wastewater, including distribution and collection, and solid waste disposal facilities
- 25% Tourism Promotion Account: Must be solely used for tourism marketing and promotional purposes

In addition, the The Branson/Lakes Area Tourism Community Enhancement District (BLATCED or "Tourism District"), which was established by a Taney County ordinance in 2001, collects a 1%

²⁸ Municode (2019c)

sales tax to be utilized exclusively for marketing the area to promote tourism to the area. The Tourism District's geographic boundaries unite the tourism community across county lines to include the City of Branson, the Village of Indian Point and tourism-oriented portions of Taney and Stone Counties, including Silver Dollar City. Businesses located in the city of Branson, which already pay the above mentioned 4% tourism tax, are exempt from the BLATCED sales tax. A seven-person, volunteer Board of Directors ("Tourism District Board"), appointed by elected officials from within the District, oversee the spending of BLATCED tax dollars. Currently, the contract to spend those marketing dollars is awarded to the Branson Convention and Visitor Bureau.²⁹

Audience Development

As previously mentioned, Branson's current visitors are primarily baby boomers (average age: 57.6).³⁰ While they share similar conservative values with the traditionalists/silent generation, who established and fueled Branson's theater scene, boomers embrace different travel patterns and different music and entertainment interests. They no longer arrive by the bus-load with fully planned itineraries that keep them busy for an entire week, hopping from one theater show to the next, year after year. In fact, based on a 2018 visitor profile study,³¹ only 3% arrive in organized groups. Instead, they prefer to travel in much smaller groups (average party size = 3), arrive by personal auto (81%), and close to half (40%) only stay for two to three days. And while 71% of visitors still visit live shows - and more than half (57%) cite live shows as their primary reason to visit - there simply is not enough time to pack in all the shows that Branson has to offer. The majority (85%) visit no more than five shows while in town - with two thirds (63%) visiting no more than three shows. The boomer visitor has to be selective.

Based on the same research study, Branson visitors read and watch a variety of local media while in town, including brochures (60%), billboards (47%), local coupon books (40%) and magazines (22%), the official Branson Vacation Guide (26%), local tourism TV (19%) and radio (6%). Of those, they cite the official Branson Vacation Guide to be the most influential when deciding on what things to do while in Branson. This indicates that theaters should consider having a (continued) presence in those media channels in order to reach their target audience.

On the other hand, 88% of visitors own smartphones and 52% use their smartphones for trip-specific functions, such as booking reservations, buying tickets, posting photos, etc. Forty percent looked up information regarding Branson on their smartphone or tablet. Online search

²⁹ Branson/Lakes Area Tourism Community Enhancement District (2019)

³⁰ H2R Market Research (2019)

³¹ Ibid.

was cited as the most influential source when deciding to visit Branson. Furthermore, 68% have social media accounts and one in five (19%) have visited Branson's Facebook page Explore Branson. This indicates that integrating technology - particularly mobile marketing technology - and digital marketing are just as important as the above mentioned traditional methods of targeting theater visitors.

But marketing alone won't ensure maintaining and growing the theater audience year over year. According to Branson's Community Plan 2030,³² Branson stakeholders expressed an interest in investing in workforce and visitor host orientation and training in an effort to deliver quality customer service and to achieve customer satisfaction. In addition, simplifying the guest experience through the integration of technology (smart phone application, wireless community, online reservations, etc.), improved signage and wayfinding, and an improved ticket sales process and experience based on ethical and truthful advertising was recommended.

2.6.3. Licensing and Regulations

Alcohol in Theaters

In general, Branson's regulations around liquor licensing go as follows: all businesses selling or permitting the consumption of alcohol on the premises must obtain a liquor license.³³ There is no existing license category that specifically applies to entertainment venues. Although there is a license available for "restaurant-bars," they are required to derive 50% of their annual gross sales from the sale of food prepared and consumed on the premises. For any alcohol selling establishment, a special license is required in order to conduct sales on Sundays and the building must be located at least 300 feet away from any church or school.

Only a select few theaters serve alcohol in Branson. As a matter of fact, many theaters have actively chosen not to serve alcohol because they state it does not align with company values, could take away from their clean family-friendly appeal and potentially alienate customers.

Entertainment Zoning

The Branson municipal code, Sec. 94-44, describes the specific zoning regulations for entertainment districts (ENT).³⁴ The Entertainment District, a key economic driver, encompasses a wide range of entertainment uses including theaters, museums, rides and other attractions.

³² City of Branson (2012) Community Plan 2030

³³ Municode (2019a)

³⁴ Municode (2019b)

Lodging and retail uses are also present in such districts. Along with entertainment zones, theaters are permitted in community commercial, mixed-use, and downtown zones.

Building Type	Lot Area (Min Sq. ft.)	Max Lot Coverage	Front	Interior	Abutting Street	Rear [2]	FAR	Max Height (ft.)
Theater	[4]	70	25	0	0	10[5]	Not to exceed 5.0	100

Table 8. Zoning Regulations for Theaters

Theater Licensing / Show Licensing

Currently, there are 33 active theater business licenses in the city of Branson,³⁵ with an average capacity of about 1,000 seats per theater, adding up to nearly 30,000 seats.³⁶ Individual shows are not required to attain a license and there is no clear definition nor any existing guidelines on what a “Branson show” is or should be. This has resulted in a wide variety of show formats in the market, ranging from singer-songwriters and two-member bands performing cover songs with minimal equipment to full on spectacles featuring professionally trained performers, full bands, elaborate choreography and high tech equipment. While offering a range of different show formats ensures variety and market competitiveness, it has also been said that a lack of consistency has resulted in relaying a confusing message to the customer (visitors) about what they can expect out of a “Branson show.” Quality control is not enforced, threatening to potentially dilute the brand.

Additionally, the large number of theaters and shows in Branson has resulted in an oversaturated market. And the large size of the theaters presents another challenge. During a time when visitors are opting for shorter weekend getaway type vacations instead of week-long vacations and choosing to travel in smaller groups than by the bus-load, there simply are not enough people to fill 30,000 theater seats every night. Branson visitors nowadays prefer smaller, more intimate shows at mid-sized venues. Some city regulation/licensing or an incentive program may be necessary to adjust the market offering to demand.

³⁵ City of Branson (2019b)

³⁶ Branson Chamber of Commerce (2019)

Third Party Ticket Sellers

There are 35 ticket reseller licenses registered for 2020 with the City of Branson.³⁷ Currently, the state of Missouri imposes a ban on any ticket resale restrictions. According to statute § 67.306 R.S.Mo, no regulation of any city, county or other political subdivision may prohibit the sale or resale of tickets at any price or prohibit charging fees in connection with the sale of any ticket.³⁸

However, Branson is allowed to collect a tourism tax. According to the Branson Municipal Code Sec. 82-93,³⁹ any person engaged in the business of selling tickets or charging admissions to private tourist attractions in the city must collect and pay the city a four percent tourism tax on the purchase price of each ticket, including service charges. But there is a loophole for third party ticket sellers.

Currently, vendors who purchase tickets from a venue in Missouri pay sales and tourism taxes on the purchase of the tickets. The company does not collect or remit sales or tourism taxes on the ticket sales they then make to final consumers.⁴⁰ This means, if a third party ticket seller purchases a ticket from a theater for \$20, but then resells it for \$40, he/she only has to pay taxes on the initial \$20 purchase price.

Seeing theater ticket sales as a lucrative business, this has contributed to a boom of third party ticket sellers. They can be found at nearly every corner in the city of Branson, including some hotel lobbies, grocery stores and even the local airport. With an increase in ticket reseller competition and a show-oversaturated market comes more pressure on the theaters to continuously lower their ticket cost to third party vendors, therefore creating a bigger (and tax-free) profit margin for the third party resellers. During the roundtables, it was repeatedly mentioned that some ticket resellers have resorted to “playing dirty,” threatening theaters/shows with a discontinuation of promotion/ticket sales unless the theaters/shows agree to a lower price, often resulting in a lack of price integrity. This was identified as a leading challenge by nearly all stakeholders.

What adds to the challenge is a lack of transparency around who is an official box office vendor, a timeshare, a reseller or an official city visitor center. Many third party ticket sellers market themselves as “official welcome centers” in and around Branson. There is no current regulation around who can claim to be an official welcome center in the city. This can mislead the consumer

³⁷ City of Branson (2019c)

³⁸ Squire Patton Boggs (2017)

³⁹ Municode (2019c)

⁴⁰ City of Branson (2019d)

who may think he/she is at an official city visitor center, such as the one inside the CVB/Chamber, getting objective information about what shows and attractions are available to him/her. Yet, at a third party ticket office, a customer may not necessarily get a full selection of all the shows that are available in the market, but only those that have struck a deal with the third party vendor. And often, the shows that present the bigger profit margins to the third party vendor are those that get promoted the most to the end consumer - regardless of show quality.

To tackle this dilemma, the city of Branson is proposing a change that would require ticket vendors located within Missouri as well as out-of-state ticket vendors that have in-state tourism sales greater than \$100,000, to pay the local tourism tax on the tickets they purchase and collect and remit the tourism tax on the final sales price to consumers.⁴¹ In addition to collecting a higher tax revenue reflective of actual final ticket cost, this would also create a more neutral playing field and perhaps help enable a natural selection process that would organically weed out the lesser quality shows in town.

2.6.4. Business Incentivisation and Tax Incentives

Missouri Economic Development Incentives

The State of Missouri offers economic development incentives⁴² including programs directed at job creation projects and downtown development. The City of Branson works closely with the State of Missouri to coordinate the economic development incentives administered by the Department of Economic Development. Typically, the Taney County Economic Development Partnership is the primary contact to begin the application process for State of Missouri economic development incentives.

- **Missouri Works Program:** Facilitates the creation of quality jobs by targeted business projects which create a minimum number of jobs at the project facility
- **Small Business Loan Program:** Makes available direct loans for small businesses at low interest or no interest in cooperation with the Missouri Development Finance Board

Enhanced Enterprise Zone (EEZ) Program⁴³

Arts, entertainment and recreation businesses (with the exception of gambling) are eligible for the Enhanced Enterprise Zone (EEZ) program. This program encourages business development and

⁴¹ City of Branson (2019d)

⁴² City of Branson (2014)

⁴³ Ibid.

job creation by granting real property tax abatement and state tax credits, through the Missouri Works Program, to business enterprises that locate or expand within the designated EEZ. Zone boundaries are established in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Economic Development and are based on areas of low income and high unemployment, the potential to create sustainable jobs in a targeted industry and the impact on local industry cluster development. Much of the City of Branson lies within the Taney County Enhanced Enterprise Zone. This zone includes most of Taney County, and includes nearly all of Branson and the surrounding unincorporated portions of Taney County.

- **Property Tax Abatement:** Qualified businesses located in the EEZ are entitled to receive local real property tax abatement on 50% of the new investment (excluding land and personal property) for a maximum of ten years.
- **State Tax Credits:** State tax credits can be applied to income taxes, excluding withholding taxes, as defined in Chapter 143 RSMo. The tax credits are refundable, and may also be transferred, sold, or assigned. Tax credits are disbursed by the Missouri Department of Economic Development at its discretion based on economic benefit to the state, the number of new jobs, wages, the amount of capital investment, and the availability of state funds. In order to qualify for state tax credits, a business must meet the qualification requirements for property tax abatement and create, on an average annual basis, at least two new jobs and \$100,000 of new investment.

Missouri Arts Council Grants⁴⁴

The Missouri Arts Council provides funding for quality arts programming to eligible applicants that include (but are not limited to) arts or arts education organizations, chambers of commerce, public libraries, government agencies, youth organizations, public school districts, private PK-12 schools, community arts organizations, social service organizations, colleges and universities, and religious organizations. It offers annual grants as well as express grants, and grant information workshops. Missouri Arts Council funds may be used for artist fees, artist travel expenses, marketing arts events, project-related educational materials, and more.

⁴⁴ The Missouri Arts Council (2020)

2.7. National Trends Snapshot

Disclaimer: This section reflects research that precedes the COVID-19 outbreak.

2.7.1. Live Theater Trends

The national theater industry is continuously changing and adapting to current trends. Perhaps one of the most impactful Broadway trends of the past decade (2000s) was the internet reshaping theater: it removed exclusivity based on location and opened up Broadway show access 24/7 to a much wider audience via online streaming videos, photo galleries, twitter, etc.⁴⁵ Consequently, the post baby boomer generation appears less inclined to attend live performances and is more comfortable with entertainment provided through the Internet and other emerging technologies.⁴⁶

Additionally, official critics' reviews have lost power as online reviews have increased in popularity.⁴⁷ Such trends are a good reminder of the importance of a strong online and social media presence in order for a theater to remain successful in today's time and age. But it also opens up opportunities to increase audience reach through (paid) streaming services.

It is also important to pay attention to the rise of family entertainment on Broadway. Recognizing that the family audience is a massive one and responsible for the multi-million dollar grosses of The Lion King, Aladdin, and more, Broadway has shifted to an increase in family entertainment - appealing to the traditional theater goer (the 44-year old female) and her kids. Shows are often based on movies with animated source material, e.g., Frozen, Anastasia or SpongeBob Squarepants.⁴⁸ And there is proof for its success: The 2017-18 Broadway season saw a record level of attendance from children and teens, according to the Broadway League's annual survey.⁴⁹ This in turn helps cultivate a new generation of theater-fans.

An analysis of Broadway musicals over the past 50 years has shown a higher share of jukebox musicals taking popular music of the past and creating songbook shows (e.g., Mamma Mia! used the music of ABBA) and a significantly higher share of musicals based on films. Those based on films also took home the most Tony Awards (26.5%). On the other hand, revues combining music,

⁴⁵ Broadway.com (2010)

⁴⁶ RAND (2001)

⁴⁷ Broadway.com (2010)

⁴⁸ The Producer's Perspective (2016)

⁴⁹ American Theatre (2019)

dance, and sketches have seen the largest decrease in total market share in recent years (2005 and later).⁵⁰ This is a particularly important observation for Branson, as the majority of its theater shows are still revues (also referred to as variety shows).

Looking ahead, there are some defining trends for which to keep an eye out in 2020. One example is productions that explore the intersection of arts, technology and engineering - in particular, finding new ways to create magical events on stage through robotics and projection. Another trend will be stylistic throwbacks: a comeback of big, classic Broadway musicals, such as the revival of *West Side Story* and *Moulin Rouge*.⁵¹

Radical revivals of classic musicals will challenge audience expectations and perhaps even alter the intent of the original authors. Biomusicals, combining the lives and songs of idols on stage, are yet another trend prediction.⁵²

The variety of things that are dealt with in musical theater has expanded from musical comedies of earlier days to tackling topical and complicated social issues.⁵³ And we will likely see more such productions, seeing how many of today's student artists are also activists looking to share a message with their work.⁵⁴

2.7.2. Theater Pricing and Revenue Trends

Overall, the theater sector continues to grow. Based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, personal expenditures on admission to the performing arts saw the highest increase in the theater sector, rising from roughly \$5 billion in 2002 to almost \$15 billion in 2014. In comparison, other sectors, such as opera, symphony, dance and music groups/artists remained mostly flat and below \$5 billion for that same time period.⁵⁵

Broadway show tickets cost an average of \$123 in 2017/18 while show tickets at not-for-profit theaters cost \$39 on average. In comparison, the average annual expenditure on plays, theater, opera and concerts per consumer was \$60.9.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ The Producer's Perspective (2015)

⁵¹ Backstage.com (2019)

⁵² Theater Mania (2019)

⁵³ American Theatre (2019)

⁵⁴ Backstage.com (2019)

⁵⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017)

⁵⁶ Statista (2018)

Plays/Musicals on Broadway were attended by more than 13 million people in 2017/18 and not-for-profit theaters are attended by more than 10 million people annually.⁵⁷

During the 2017/18 theatre season, the revenue of Broadway shows in New York reached approximately \$1.7 billion. The majority of this revenue (\$1.44 billion) was generated through musical performances. In contrast, the average income of not-for-profit theaters through ticket sales in the U.S was \$3.06 million.⁵⁸

2.7.3. Theater Audience Trends

Annually, married, college-educated Gen Xers, who have children, and who work in managerial or professional roles or are self-employed spend the most money on arts and entertainment. Millennials and Gen Xers also report the highest attendance rates of the arts and entertainment compared to their older counterparts.⁵⁹

This is in line with a recent report by the Broadway League,⁶⁰ stating that the Broadway audience is getting younger. The average age of the Broadway theater-goer in the 2017-2018 season was 40.6 - the lowest it's been since 2000. The average age at a musical was 39. And 15 percent of all theater-goers were children and teens - likely a reflection of Broadway's recent move to feature more family-oriented productions.

The Broadway audience remains primarily female (66%), white (75%), affluent (average annual household income: \$222,120), and highly educated with the majority holding college degrees and graduate degrees. On average, Broadway theater goers attend five shows per year. They tend to come in pairs or small groups of family or friends.⁶¹

Millennials drive growth in the live music industry: roughly 89% of millennials enjoy attending live music experiences, followed by 86% of Gen X, 79% of baby boomers and 63% of traditionalists.⁶²

⁵⁷ Statista (2018)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017)

⁶⁰ Broadway League (2018)

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Branded (2017)

In addition to differences in concert attendance, the generations differ in their music genre preferences. Millennials and Gen X favor alternative rock, hard rock, and pop concerts. While older community members in the boomer and silent generation tend to favor country music.⁶³

Millennial women are more likely to prefer pop, alternative rock and country music concerts than men in the millennial generation. On the other hand, millennial men prefer hard rock and hip hop/rap concerts over their female counterparts.⁶⁴

Both millennials and those who are even younger are primarily motivated to attend a live event based on artist affiliation and unique experience. Tweens (ages 8-12) are motivated more by entertainment, a sense of escape and event novelty compared to their older counterparts.⁶⁵

Finally, it is notable to mention that there is a 17.1% share of foreign visitors attending concerts, plays and musicals in the U.S.⁶⁶

2.7.4. Theater Marketing Trends

Popular theater marketing strategies for the 21st century include targeted digital ads over print advertising due to improved return on investment.⁶⁷ Particularly when targeting Generation Y (millennials), social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are found to be more effective by promoters to engage this market in online conversations prior, during and after the event.⁶⁸

The most recent study by the Broadway League revealed that 66% of Broadway show attendees purchase their tickets online, doing so an average of 43 days in advance. They also search for theater information online, using Google, Broadway.com and Ticketmaster.com.⁶⁹

It has also become increasingly important to better engage with the audience: many websites are now available in English and Spanish, advisory councils often include minority groups, and theaters are proactive about collecting audience feedback on their content. It is also increasingly important to impress the press - for example, press dinners with performers or theater leadership

⁶³ Branded (2017)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Journal of Vacation Marketing (2015)

⁶⁶ Statista (2018)

⁶⁷ American Theatre (2018a)

⁶⁸ Journal of Vacation Marketing (2015)

⁶⁹ Broadway League (2018)

during previews to ensure a more personal press experience. Finally, marketing the institution, not just the show: creating a brand around the theater that is relevant to its audience, so they will want to support it and see a higher value in the tickets rather than just a simple transaction.⁷⁰

Many theaters are furthermore making it a priority to invest in strong customer relationship management. Software, such as Tessitura, Spektrix, Theatre Manager, Blackbaud and PatronBase, can help manage box office data and customer data. Theaters are also looking at new subscription models and ticket sales models. For example, the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. got inspired by new scheduling apps and payment apps to create its own app called HERD, which allows friends to find a performance date that works best for them, lock in a price, and split the cost. Subscriptions have changed to include flexible passes, build-your-own seasons, and mini subscriptions.⁷¹

⁷⁰ American Theatre (2018a)

⁷¹ American Theatre (2018b)

2.8. SWOT & Gap Analysis

The findings below have been compiled from the desk research, roundtables, interviews and the survey analyses.

Strengths

- Big economic impact: Branson's live theater and music ecosystem created an economic impact of 2,288 jobs, \$44 million in earnings and \$147 million in economic output.
- Live theaters support 81% of the direct employment, 75% of the direct output and 73% of the direct compensation generated by Branson's music ecosystem
- Live theater entertainment drives visitation in Branson
- High number of Branson live theaters and shows result in lots of choice
- Visitors highly rate Branson's live theater industry and interest in live shows remains high
- The average Branson visitor attends two to three shows during their Branson visit
- Baby boomers are Branson's core theater audience attending more shows than their younger counterparts or those who visit for other attractions; boomers can travel year-round due to limited commitments to jobs or kids
- Visitors prefer variety shows and dinner shows, which are prominent theater formats in Branson
- Most theaters/shows report making marketing investments their top priority for the next three years, followed by changes to their marketing strategy

Weaknesses

- The local live theater audience only attend shows once per year
- Branson visitors prefer medium sized and small venues, yet most existing theaters are larger in size, often resulting in half-empty shows, which may give an appearance of an unpopular or unsuccessful show
- Lack of small, non-theater style venues which could home Branson's low-production-value shows
- Some dated theater venues
- For the younger (non baby boomer) Branson visitor, show content can feel dated and lack appeal
- Nearly half of show operators who rent a venue do not collect their own customer data, limiting their customer marketing abilities
- Low engagement of the theater industry with its related advisory boards, such as the Show Task Force or the Theater League; hence limited unity around common goals and needs
- Show/Theater license requirements do not take financial stability or quality standards into consideration
- Some theaters/shows lack marketing budgets and desire better marketing know-how
- Limited opportunities to experience live music in Branson outside of the theater show industry

<p>Strengths (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The better performing theaters/shows report that investments in new theater productions (costumes, staff, choreographers), changing their ticket selling strategy, investing in marketing and changing their marketing strategy had the highest impact on their financial success in the past five years 	<p>Weaknesses (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender wage gap: on average, men earn double what women earn in Branson's live theater and music ecosystem, particularly in professional and supporting activities • Lacking local music and theater industry support networks, such as music related businesses and theater or music education programs
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger visitors - Gen X and millennials - favor alternative rock, hard rock, and pop, which is not as prominent in Branson as Country and Christian/Gospel music • Visitors have expressed a higher interest in original music, yet many theaters primarily feature music in the form of cover songs • As consumers are moving more and more into the digital space, relying more heavily on online media like search and social media for their show information, marketing strategies should adapt accordingly • Emerging trend: productions that explore the intersection of arts, technology and engineering - in particular, finding new ways to create magical events on stage through robotics and projection 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branson's current theater audience is aging and younger generations choose other entertainment over theater shows • Lack of time: visitors take shorter vacations now than during Branson's boom, limiting their show consumption • Increased competition from other attractions result in skipping shows • Changing content consumption habits result in higher expectations of live shows and perceived value • Partnerships with third party ticket sellers aren't always mutually beneficial, yet remain the main avenue for ticket sales • Prohibitive laws and regulations around ticket distribution/third party ticket sellers • Poor walkability of the entertainment corridor or "strip," limiting its appeal to move around and explore • Lacking public transportation to theaters within Branson

3. Strategic Plan

Disclaimer: These recommendations are being submitted amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic. While the live theater and music sector have already taken large hits, it is still too early to know the exact scope and gravity of the crisis across the entire ecosystem. It is important to keep in mind that the challenges and opportunities that have been identified as part of our research will continue to be challenges and opportunities. If anything, the current crisis only further highlights existing vulnerabilities and the need to champion the live theater industry's health and needs. Addressing the identified challenges and investing in these strategic opportunity areas will help Branson's theater industry emerge from this crisis even stronger.

The following recommendations are based on the collective research that Sound Diplomacy completed for Branson as part of the Theater Health and Needs Analysis. They are critical in moving Branson's theater industry forward with an approach, attitude and a set of initiatives that establish a thriving and supported live theater and music ecosystem that stimulates economic growth and drives tourism.

The recommendations are broken out into four areas:

1. Infrastructure
2. Innovation
3. Education
4. Marketing

Each area has its own set of recommendations, which are supported by key research findings and include a short outline to assist with implementation. Each recommendation has been given a level of priority, indicating which recommendations would be best suited to kick off now (Phase 1: kick off in 1-12 months), soon (Phase 2: kick off in 12-24 months) or later (Phase 3: kick off in 24-48 months).

But first and foremost, to be able to implement many of the following recommendations in this action plan, it will require monetary investment, rooted in public/private partnerships.

As a necessary first step, assign local champions to the various action items in this plan and make it their responsibility to identify and secure dedicated funding sources from the public/private sector to effectively implement these recommendations.

Please note that funds could take 1-3 years to secure, meaning that even if an action item is kicked off now, soon or later, it may take time to successfully see it through from implementation to completion. Be patient and trust that you are on the right path to creating a prosperous future for Branson's music and theater industry that will lead to economic growth for many years to come.

In the next section of this report, we are also providing a roadmap for Branson's theater industry, outlining best practices that theater and show owners and operators are encouraged to implement themselves. In order for Branson's theater sector to grow and thrive, all parties will need to collaborate and do their part. One cannot be successful without the other.

3.1. Infrastructure

In order for Branson's music scene to flourish and theaters to thrive, the city must put an adequate infrastructure in place to help grow and elevate the sector. The city should create an environment that supports the local music and theater industry through physical and organizational structures and facilities, as well as through protective measures and policies that ensure the city's theater-related tourism product meets and exceeds visitor expectations. Our research revealed several opportunities in this area, all of which are identified and addressed in this section.

Branson currently lacks music related businesses. According to our mapping, we were not able to identify networks related to supporting the industry. It is important to keep in mind that we cannot just focus all our energy on attraction and celebration. We must also consider the incubation, development and maintenance of the various music assets that make up a thriving theater industry and music ecosystem.

Most healthy industries have a variety of supportive business programs that strengthen the skills and opportunities of stakeholders in the network. Developing programs related to business could

help create a more well-rounded industry with ample opportunities for existing and future theater industry stakeholders.

There are also challenges related to the existing variety of theater venues, particularly when it comes to size: The Visitor Survey revealed that 84% of Branson visitors prefer mid-sized to small venues (350-999 capacity), yet many of Branson's theaters are large (1,000-2,000 capacity) or extra large (2,000+ capacity). This can result in lower occupation rates and creates the impression of a poorly attended show.

In addition, several theaters have a dated appearance, falling behind on innovation - some need to make improvements to their buildings, others improvements to technology, etc. Consumer trends are quickly changing, expectations are rising, but Branson's theaters have had a difficult time keeping up. In part because they are lacking infrastructures in place that help foster innovation. Over time, the quality of the city's overall theater tourism product has suffered and following the COVID-19 pandemic, for which no one was prepared, an already declining theater industry is facing even greater challenges.

Furthermore, public transportation was identified as a leading challenge by visitors and the community. On a five-point scale with one being the lowest rating and five being the highest rating, public transportation was rated 1.8 by both theater and show owners/operators as well as industry professionals/employees, 1.1 by the local Branson theater audience and 3.5 by visitors. While downtown Branson offers a free downtown trolley with service to pedestrian friendly areas, such as the Branson Landing, it does not connect to the Entertainment Corridor. To add to the challenge, the Entertainment Corridor lies along a busy highway with narrow sidewalks and limited crosswalks and stop lights, negatively impacting its walkability.

The following recommendations address the identified challenges and will create a structurally better supported music and theater environment.

3.1.1. Recommendation 1: Branson Performing Arts Row with a Focus on Business Development - Attract, Grow and Retain Music Industry Companies

The Branson Performing Arts Row would serve the purpose of providing the necessary infrastructure to house a network of music-related businesses. It could be in the form of a small row of buildings that house businesses on the ground level and offer affordable housing for artists above.

As part of this initiative, Branson should identify and aggressively pursue business development opportunities to attract new music and theater arts related businesses, such as music publishers, recording labels, management companies, etc., that will create jobs, and stimulate further growth in the economy. This would help support existing talent, but could also serve as a talent pipeline, incentivising people to move to Branson, start a career and receive career support.

Not only would this support the theater industry, it would also assist existing music businesses and venues that are not theaters, which in turn could be leveraged as funnels for the talent development side.

Implementation Considerations:

- Work with potential developers to create a private/public partnership to fund the Branson Performing Arts Row
- Create an overarching marketing and PR campaign emphasizing Branson's music and theater industry as being ripe for further development by focusing on existing music business activities as well as future opportunities
- Organize a CEO or Executive Summit to Branson for representatives from top music companies; Potentially host at the same time as the songwriters festival (see Recommendation #11); Coordinate a tour of the city and your existing music and theater assets, demonstrating its attractiveness for such companies.
- Connect the Branson Performing Arts Row to your new Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2) for increased value and appeal
- Liaise with local colleges to connect the future workforce and future talent with your music businesses: Provide internship and master class opportunities as well as provide the injection of new ideas into the Branson music and theater scene

Timeline: Phase 2 (12-24 months)

Best Case Practice - The Music District Fort Collins, Colorado (USA)⁷²

What Is It: The Music District is a collection of five buildings totalling 57,000 sq. ft. which houses co-working spaces, a community radio station, rehearsal spaces, retail units and short term artist residencies. It operates on three pillars: Craft, Business and Community, with a focus on inspiring collaboration and creativity rather than being the 'most successful' or

⁷² The Music District (2019)

‘making it.’ The Music District’s organizational structure is composed of past or present working musicians, divided into some of the following roles:

- Director
- Community Manager
- Business Manager
- Communications Manager
- Analysis Manager
- Technical Manager
- Utility Player (5 people)

Who Is Responsible: This program was initiated by the Bohemian Foundation, a Fort Collins-based private family foundation.

What Has It Done: The Music District now includes a sample of activities and services, including a series of Youth Professional Development Workshops, Tuesday Co-working sessions; instrument maintenance classes and improv nights. Different types of rehearsal rooms are available for hire, including rehearsal rooms, acoustic practice rooms and lesson rooms.

In Their Own Words: “The Music District is designed to help anyone hone their craft, learn the business and share skills and passions with musicians and music lovers. A living laboratory, it continues to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of the Northern Colorado landscape and the wider music world.”⁷³

Relevance to Branson: A central hub that fosters and further develops the professionalism, creativity and collaboration found within a music and live theater ecosystem is a vital component to any aspiring performing arts-centric city. In fact, having numerous hubs can help ensure that working professionals, musicians and creators not only connect with their local music and live theater ecosystem, but also access relevant support systems and structures. Oftentimes, access to music professionals and businesses is cited as an issue in music cities around the world. If a hub were created, Branson would ensure that the musicians, artists and creatives of its music and theater industry do not face such a hurdle, and in turn, facilitate a thriving music and arts community.

⁷³ The Music District (2019)

3.1.2. Recommendation 2: Performing Arts Incubator/Center:

In order to restore Branson's leadership position in the theater space, we propose the development of a Performing Arts Incubator for live shows and live show technology. It would be a center that people turn to in order to learn about industry trends and new groundbreaking ideas in the theater industry. Similar to an Entrepreneur Center (which can be found in many cities and serves to connect entrepreneurs with critical resources to create, launch and grow businesses), The Performing Arts Incubator would allow people with business (start-up) ideas related to the performing arts sector to turn to this center for help, guidance, inspiration, and support. It would be the home for a variety of things, for example:

- Serve as the home for the Office of Theater Innovation (see Recommendation #9)
- Serve as the new home of the (already existing) Community Arts Center, allowing it to expand and offer more innovative workshops/networking opportunities for artists and show producers to learn about new industry and consumer trends
- Include office space/meeting space for rent for performing arts professionals

Branson should strive to create the best live shows in the world and to attract the best and most innovative people in the country/world for theater. It should be proud of and want to be the world's show capital. This Performing Arts Incubator will help establish a reputation of Branson as the Global RND (research and development) City for live theater entertainment.

Implementation Considerations:

- The Branson Chamber of Commerce / Taney County Partnership should lead this effort
- Identify an existing structure which could be re-purposed or a vacant plot of land which could be developed
 - Although not absolutely necessary, consider the proximity and location of your new Branson Performing Arts Row. Closer proximity may encourage better collaboration.
- Work with a developer to create a private/public partnership to fund the Performing Arts Incubator:
 - As an incentive, create a developer agreement tied to your identified physical location that dedicates ½ cent back to their project over a 5-10 year period, if the Incubator proves to be successful. It demonstrates that the city is willing to share in the success of an asset that drives new revenue to the local performing arts (theater) segment
- Have the Performing Arts Incubator collect a 1% fee of the total profits of those businesses/ideas/productions, etc. that are successful to create a profit model

- Partner with the Office of Theater Innovation, local colleges and the Community Arts Center, allowing them to offer innovative workshops/networking opportunities and to bring in guest speakers
- Create a marketing strategy highlighting the Performing Arts Incubator and its innovative ideas and developments to promote Branson as the industry's Global RND City for live theater entertainment

Timeline: Phase 1 (1-12 months)

Best Case Practice - 2112 - Chicago, IL (US)⁷⁴

What Is It: 2112 is Chicago's first incubator to foster businesses and entrepreneurs working on disruption in music, film/video and creative technology. The incubator was conceptualized and created in 2015 by the directors of Fort Knox Studios, the music rehearsal facility where 2112 is located. It was created in response to the lack of collaborative working spaces for music professionals in Chicago and to provide support through resources such as mentorships, education, and networking opportunities. Music businesses, music industry entrepreneurs and related creative industries (e.g. film/video, entertainment law) can apply for membership. Members are selected depending on the capacity in which the incubator can help them grow (i.e. available resources, network) and how they would benefit the existing music ecosystem.

Who Is Responsible: The incubator is independently managed by 2112, a for-profit company based in Chicago, IL. They do not receive any funding or incentives from the City of Chicago.

What Has It Done: 2112's central location within the larger music hub at Fort Knox has further proven advantageous in bringing together different music entrepreneurs and bands. Entrepreneurs and musicians come together in shared spaces and regular events at 2112. This has been reported by 2112's music tech and music industry members to be a major advantage in gaining quick feedback and access to user testing pools.

In Their Own Words: "The positive feedback from the music industry and the increasing collaboration within the sector are the best aspects highlighted by 2112's director Scott Feters. Although their business model is sustainable, 2112 wants to further support Chicago's music industry by providing access to capital funding. Securing financial partnerships in the

⁷⁴2112 Incubator Chicago (2020)

near future will allow 2112 to offer access to capital for tenants and be competitive in Chicago's accelerators & incubators ecosystem."⁷⁵

Relevance to Branson: Just like Chicago's incubator is seeking to develop and foster disruption in music, film/video and creative technology, Branson should seek to establish leadership in theater innovation, creating space for artists and theater industry and music businesses to meet through educational workshops, networking opportunities, and collaborative opportunities to learn from each other and gain inspiration. By keeping the finger on the pulse and making innovation a priority, Branson's Performing Arts Incubator can become the place industry professionals from near and far seek out to learn about the latest and greatest in theater arts.

Best Case Practice - Banff Centre For Arts and Creativity, Alberta (Canada)⁷⁶

What Is It: The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity encompasses a hub for creative industries including performing arts, visual media, indigenous arts, media & production, and literary arts. Creative studios, The Professional Development Centre, and the Max Bell building - a 330 person auditorium surrounded by 14 meeting spaces - are just some of the developments found in this creative hub. The centre also has numerous production and rehearsal facilities and is home to the annual film festival. Through education programs, community events, performing arts shows and music programming, The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity is highly regarded for its role in further developing creative industries and infusing innovation with creativity.

Who Is Responsible: Board of Governors of The Banff Centre, Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education, Alberta Infrastructure, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

What Has It Done: The Banff Centre collaborated with its partners to open the Kinnear Centre for Creativity & Innovation, hosting artistic workshops, residencies, and performances, and providing high-tech meeting spaces for The Banff Centre's Leadership Development programs, and for conferences. This 3-floor building plays hosts to new-age performing halls, one of Canada's premier arts libraries, thousands of music scores and recordings, a new Dining Centre, an art gallery and a bistro.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Sound Diplomacy interview with Scott Fetters (2019)

⁷⁶ The Banff Centre (2020)

⁷⁷ Ibid.

In Their Own Words: “Here, exceptional artists and leaders from around the world will be inspired to create and perform new works of art, share skills and knowledge in an interdisciplinary environment, explore ideas and develop solutions in the arts and leadership,”
(Mary E. Hofstetter, President and CEO)

Relevance to Branson: The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity began as a grant program offering one course in Drama, and now exemplifies how a small investment into cultural industries can inspire long-term prosperity. As such, it is clear that the initial investment in an innovation and creativity centre does not always require millions of dollars, though it does require dedication and a commitment to supporting the creative industries. From programs in music, visual arts, innovation and performing arts, the Banff Centre continues to encourage student tourism from around the world, and has become world-renowned for its progressive approach to supporting creative professionals. Initiating such programs and centres within Branson would certainly indicate that the city believes in its theater industry’s ecosystem, and in doing so, will encourage tourism, increase talent retention and prevent youth drain. Above all, it would ensure that the local artists have access to modernized equipment and resources, properly preparing them for a modern-day experience as a professional.

3.1.3. Recommendation 3: Feasibility Study for an Arena

Branson has theaters of many different sizes, but it does not have a large arena. There can be value in hosting arena-scale shows featuring big name artists to draw and expose new visitors to the area. If those visitors can be convinced to stay overnight, there could be an opportunity for Branson theaters to tap into that audience. The Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB through recent Community Leadership Visits, has been introduced to the benefits of a 9,800-seat arena – consistent with arenas they found to be interesting in Northwest Arkansas or Orange Beach – in order to attract the kind of touring acts that would fit the desired profile.

However, visitor research showed very little consumer demand (1.6%) for extra large venues (2000+ capacity). Instead, 84% of Branson visitors prefer mid-sized to small venues (350-999 capacity). Yet it should also be noted that the Visitor Survey did not specifically address visitor interest for arena-type shows outside of the theater context. Therefore, further research in the form of a feasibility study is recommended to explore opportunities around a large scale arena.

Implementation Considerations:

- A community stakeholder group, the Tourism Community Enhancement District (TCED), or City of Branson should commission a feasibility study to determine the need, benefits and profitability of a large arena in Branson. This effort can be led by the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB.

Timeline: Phase 3 (24-48 months)

Best Case Practice -SaskTel Arena and Case Studies (Multiple Locations)⁷⁸

What Is It: In March 2019, a proposal was made to create a new Sasktel Arena in Saskatchewan, supported by numerous case study examples exemplifying the different sizes and impacts of arenas around Canada. Operationally (including tourism), an expanded/renovated SaskTel Centre is expected to add \$21.9M to provincial GDP annually, \$18.7M to City GDP, and sustain 314 jobs per year provincially and 266 locally. Construction is estimated to add between \$75M and \$266M to Provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP), \$45.5M and \$161M to local GDP, and create between 635 and 2,312 person-years of employment provincially and 342 and 1,213 person-years locally, depending on the construction scenario chosen. Within the proposal was an assessment of the Spokane Arena (Washington, USA), Wells Fargo (Iowa, USA), and Budweiser Gardens (Ontario, Canada). The findings of these assessments, in summary, are as follows:

- Spokane Arena: seating capacity of the arena is roughly 8,000-11,000 depending on the event. Concerts, productions and sporting events contributed significantly to the over \$350 million in revenues in 2015
- Budweiser Gardens: Seating capacity ranges between roughly 3,000-10,000 depending on the event. In 2016, paid attendance reached 586,919 with 119 events out of 142 pertaining to music/entertainment performances
- Wells Fargo: Wells Fargo has a seating capacity of up to 17,000 and in 2015, reached a net income of over \$3 million. In the same year, attendance reached nearly 800,000 across all events, with music and sports entertainment as the main appeal

Who Is Responsible: HLT Advisory, Conventional Wisdom was responsible for conducting the analysis and case studies

What Has It Done: The proposed project is yet to be completed

⁷⁸ HTL Advisory (2018)

In Their Own Words: “The venue not only strives to meet the needs of the community through diverse programming, but it also stands as a landmark of city civic pride and community accessibility, promoting a sense of vibrancy and culture while also providing a wide range of public sports and entertainment.” ⁷⁹

Relevance to Branson: The addition of a new arena, facility, or event center undoubtedly enhances the social and cultural value within a city. Employment and GDP are also likely to increase, while overall economic returns may take longer to arise. When referring to building new music spaces, there is no one size fits all; careful planning, strategic action, and long-term commitment are perhaps the most consistent factors. Nonetheless, it is critically important that audiences and productions of all sizes are welcomed in Branson, and doing so will certainly be a valuable asset to the music ecosystem.

3.1.4. Recommendation 4: Small Business Loans for Theater Updates

Some of Branson’s theaters are falling behind on innovation - some need to make improvements to their buildings and others, improvements to technology, etc. Theaters and show operators should be encouraged to invest in their buildings to preserve a “top notch” theater image of Branson.

As a solution, we propose that the Branson/Lakes Area provide small business loans for theater updates. Identify specific areas of improvement/innovation that need to be prioritized and create a revolving loan fund at favorable terms for theaters and show operators to enhance or reinvest in the identified improvement category. The category could change every two years. We propose that the initial category be for theaters to create their own online ticket sales portals to help better control ticket price integrity and avoid deep discounting associated with third party ticket sellers. Seat updates would also make a recommendable priority item, as seat comfort was important to 90% of visitors. Future selected categories could address other room improvements (e.g. new lights and sound systems), new modern technology (e.g. the incorporation of augmented reality, hologram technology, laser light shows), etc.

This action item supports the City of Branson Community Plan 2030,⁸⁰ which "encourage[s] the renewal and modernization of theaters and other attractions to provide unique, quality and

⁷⁹ HTL Advisory (2018)

⁸⁰ City of Branson (2012) Community Plan 2030

engaging experiences" and recommends "work[ing] with property owners to renew and modernize entertainment properties that are in disrepair and that present a negative image of the City" as part of the Community Plan's quantity and quality control of entertainment and attractions.

Implementation Considerations:

- Tap into existing microloan programs for curb improvement, where applicable
- Create a revolving loan fund at favorable terms for theaters and show operators to enhance or reinvest in their theaters
- Set specific rules for completion timelines in order to qualify
- Create an outreach campaign promoting this program to the local theater community

Timeline: Phase 2 (12-24 months)

Best Case Practice - Music Venue Assistance Loan Program Austin, TX (USA)⁸¹

What Is It: The Austin City Council created the Music Venue Assistance (MVA) Loan Program which is intended to provide low-interest loans for Eligible Sound Mitigation Costs to venues that demonstrate: a significant sound impact to residential areas, the physical need to implement sound mitigation technologies, and the financial need to implement sound mitigation technologies, amongst others. The MVA Program is available only for the following types of commercial uses: Theater, Cocktail Lounge, Indoor Entertainment, Outdoor Entertainment, Restaurant General (General), and Restaurant General (Limited). Loans can reach up to \$35,000 depending on the length or term of the microloan.

Who Is Responsible: The Austin City Council

What Has It Done: The MVA Program initiated a case study assessment to help minimize the number of noise complaints surrounding music and entertainment venues. The City of Austin Music Division participated in the installation of technological and architectural sound mitigation measures at the case study venues. The results were very positive, yielding improved containment of sound levels (reduction of 10-18 dBA), and a drastic reduction in sound complaints. An important consideration is that a 10 dBA reduction in sound level is perceived to the listener as halving the sound level.⁸²

⁸¹ The City of Austin (2012)

⁸² *ibid*

In Their Own Words: “In response to a recent survey sent out to local music venues, the majority of respondents said that they would use sound mitigation loans to construct sound buffering walls/enclosures or would purchase directional, narrow pattern PA systems. Based on the positive results from our case studies, these sound mitigation measures have proven to be very effective.” (The Austin City Council)

Relevance to Branson: There is a need to cater to the development and progression of theater in Branson. The Music Venue Assistance (MVA) Loan Program exemplifies how a loan or aid can not only support the sustainability of a music ecosystem, but also inspire further assessment on how a city can position music into policies and procedures. In this particular case, the protection of music spaces was identified as a priority. The opportunity to do the same is prevalent in Branson. It is evident that the city has much enthusiasm and passion for its theater sector. Utilizing these interests, a program such as the MVA could be adapted to address the infrastructure improvements Branson’s theaters and shows need.

3.1.5. Recommendation 5: Improved Public Transportation for a More Pedestrian Friendly Entertainment Corridor

The City should design a more pedestrian-friendly Entertainment Corridor and improve public transportation options between the Entertainment Corridor and downtown in order to better connect the two areas and enhance tourism appeal.

The good news is that Branson already formed the 76 Entertainment CID (Community Improvement District) in 2016, a public/private partnership effort to improve the safety, accessibility and attractiveness of Highway 76 (the Entertainment Corridor). Among other improvements, the 76 Complete Streets Plan includes the creation of a multi-modal corridor with wide pedestrian walkways, an intelligent transportation and traffic control system and mass transit options.⁸³

Implementation Considerations:

- Amend the 76 Complete Streets Plan to fund the expansion of the trolley service to connect downtown Branson with the Entertainment Corridor and alleviate some of the traffic congestion on Hwy 76

⁸³ Branson Forward (2016)

- Improve the walkability of the Entertainment Corridor to encourage more pedestrian traffic: wider sidewalks and more crosswalks with stop lights
- The Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB should collaborate with the 76 Entertainment CID board to amend and implement the 76 Complete Streets Plan

Timeline: Phase 2 (12-24 months)

3.1.6. Recommendation 6: Issue Official Branson Show Certificates

There is a need for better show quality control in order to preserve Branson's image of high quality entertainment. During the roundtables and interviews a concern was raised that there is no general agreement of what "makes a Branson show." Sometimes lower-cost productions were said to result in visitor disappointment, negative word-of-mouth and consequently tarnish the entire Branson show image. Quality is important to visitors, who cite 'quality of the performers' and 'originality of show content' as leading deciding factors. Since theater shows remain Branson's number one tourism driver, it is important to guarantee some sort of quality control.

To accomplish this, we propose that the Branson Show Task Force work with the City of Branson to offer a peer-to-peer review service, offering free-of-charge reviews of new productions, including their business plan, marketing strategies, and financial resources/marketing funds. The goal would be to help new businesses/productions understand their challenges before going to market and to provide feedback and recommendations to help overcome them. If a new production checks all the boxes, an Official Branson Show Certificate is issued by the Show Task Force.

While the service cannot be mandatory because it would inflict on the free market, promoting it as an invaluable free service to businesses to help them make informed business decisions and set them up for success would likely create strong appeal. To further encourage new productions to make use of this new service, the city may consider the following:

- Allow certified show productions to qualify for the Theater Matching Fund Program, which reimburses part of the production's promotional (marketing) budget (see Recommendation # 12)

- Promote certified productions on the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB's website as Branson Certified Shows, signaling to visitors that the show is of high quality and Branson CVB recommended

Implementation Considerations:

- The City of Branson, through its "Open for Business" program, and the Show Task Force should create a peer review process with agreed-upon standards, in line with the Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success (refer to the next section of this report)
- Require a business plan, marketing strategy and proof of financial resources and a secured adequate marketing budget for the certification
- Promote this service through the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB

Timeline: Phase 1 (0-12 months)

Best Case Practice - The International Association of Venue Managers, Venue Professional Competency Standards Coppel, TX (USA)⁸⁴

What Is It: The International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) represents public assembly venues from around the globe including managers and senior executives from: auditoriums, arenas, convention centers, exhibit halls, stadiums, performing arts centers, university complexes, amphitheatres and fairgrounds.⁸⁵ IAVM designed the Venue Professional Competency Standards, among many other frameworks, to ensure venue-actors are providing quality services and experiences to their guests. From leadership standards to concession stands and stage operations, IAVM now encompasses 6,800+ members. The Venue Professional Competency Standards are separated into 6 different scales; Criticality, Frequency, Level of Difficulty, Time to be Proficient, Dependency and Autonomy. These 6 scales are then ranked and graded on an A - I system.

Who Is Responsible: The International Association of Venue Managers

What Has It Done: This IAVM program has facilitated, or inspired, numerous programs that support music and entertainment venues. This includes a Certification Program, a Mentor Program, a Save Public Venues Now initiative, and the initiation of a Venue Management School, among many others.

⁸⁴ IAVM (2014)

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

In Their Own Words: “These standards describe the knowledge and abilities commonly required of venue professionals. The standards define what is expected of a proficient and experienced venue professional who is adept in their area of responsibility, is able to work in a diverse range of venue contexts, and understand how the employees and tasks they manage affect the venue’s overall performance.”⁸⁶

Relevance to Branson: Live music and performance are crucial components in a music ecosystem. This is especially true for music cities that intend to cultivate a thriving, long-term music industry. In addition to safety policies and procedures, the quality of a venue and quality of a performance will dictate the relationship between the music actors and music-enthusiasts. More specifically, if music fans are not able to access quality events, their engagement and relationship with the music community will be negatively affected. For this reason, standards, competencies and even certification programs that oversee/rate the quality of venues and performances can be invaluable in a city like Branson. Moving forward, and through the use of a program similar to the Venue Professional Competency Standards, Branson can not only benchmark its theater venues, it can also establish its own grading and ranking system. This in itself would allow Branson to become a trendsetter for music cities around the world.

3.1.7. Recommendation 7: Restricting Third Party Ticket Sellers from the Use of the Label ‘Welcome Center’ or ‘Visitor Center’

The city should better regulate how third party ticket sellers market themselves. Third party ticket sellers who present themselves as visitor centers or welcome centers mislead Branson visitors into thinking they are at the official Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB welcome center. Branson stakeholders even expressed this concern in the City of Branson Community Plan 2030, recommending an “improved ticket sales process and experience based on ethical and truthful advertising.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act provides a stable argument that deceptively operating under false pretense is considered a malpractice and hence unlawful.⁸⁸ There should be a clear distinction between the official visitor center and a third party ticket outlet.

Implementation Considerations:

⁸⁶ IAVM (2014)

⁸⁷ City of Branson Community Plan 2030 (2012)

⁸⁸ Missouri Revisor of Statutes (2017)

- Include a regulation in third party ticket seller licenses that restrict the use of the label welcome center or visitor center
- Require third party ticket sellers to conspicuously display their license that identifies them as a third party ticket outlet and clearly informs the consumer that they are not at an official box office
- Require a licensed reseller conducting business through the internet or any retail ticket purchasing website, application, phone system or other technology used to sell tickets, to conspicuously display a hyperlink to a copy of the license on their site or system and to post a clear and conspicuous notice on the website that the site is for the secondary sale of a ticket
- Issue a “cease and desist” letter from the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB and/or the City of Branson to any non-complying third party ticket seller
- Create a label for the theaters’ official box offices that helps clearly identify them as such

Timeline: Phase 1 (0-12 months)

Best Case Practice - Third Party Ticket Resellers in New York

What Is It: The N.Y. Arts & Cult. Aff. Law §25.19, introduced in 2018, regulates ticket resales. Among other things, it stipulates that first “a licensed reseller must conspicuously display its license at all times in its principal office” and that “if a licensed reseller conducts business through the internet or...through any retail ticket purchasing website, application, phone system or other technology used to sell tickets, the reseller must display in a conspicuous manner on the site or system a hyperlink to a copy of the license.”⁸⁹

It also requires that “websites or other electronic services that facilitate resales, or resales by way of auction, would be required to post a clear and conspicuous notice on the website that the website is for the secondary sale of a ticket.” This regulation is based on the UK market, which strictly enforces a disclosure requirement for secondary ticketing websites.⁹⁰

Who Is Responsible: The New York State Senate

What Has It Done: It has taken steps to protect consumers from exploitative ticket reselling practices and also support primary ticket sellers in their often losing battle with secondary

⁸⁹ Missouri Revisor of Statutes (2019)

⁹⁰ IQ Mag (2018)

outlets. It provides clear guidelines for disclosure between resellers and their customers, and therefore limits any potential deceptive business practices.

In Their Own Words: “Countless New Yorkers are being denied fair access to tickets by resellers who distort the market, obscure information that allows for better purchasing decisions and gouge fans with excessive prices and fees,’ said Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell, chair of the Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development. ‘This bill will reform the system to create a fairer and more transparent marketplace for all New Yorkers.’”⁹¹

Relevance to Branson: Currently, Branson has an abundance of third party ticket selling outlets. Some present themselves as “official welcome centers,” or “official visitor centers” or even “official box offices”, all of which can be confusing to visitors. By regulating the way third party ticket vendors can market or present themselves, the city would remove some ambiguity and take the burden off the visitor to be able to make informed decisions.

3.1.8. Recommendation 8: Development of a Disaster Readiness Plan

The current COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a hard lesson on how vulnerable the music and live theater sector are to national disasters that impact travel and tourism. As a response, the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB launched an Emergency Task Force to help address some of the current challenges. We propose this Task Force collaborate with local emergency services personnel, the Taney County Health Department, Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG), and others to help prepare for the possibility of future disasters and develop a Disaster Readiness Plan.

Part of the responsibilities would include monitoring the music sector’s and theater industry’s response to the current pandemic and building case studies of successful recovery plans from which Branson can learn. Sound Diplomacy has a current database of such programs/initiatives and could be your future partner in this effort.

Furthermore, we propose that the Emergency Task Force set up a Theater Emergency Fund, which theaters and show businesses pay into during “normal times,” when tourism and business is going well. The funds would build up over time and could be tapped into when the local market is facing an unexpected and unpredicted disaster that stunts Branson’s theater sector resulting in

⁹¹ New York Assembly (2018)

a need for financial aid to help offset lost revenue and prevent them from closing their doors forever. The goal of this program is to protect Branson's theater industry - the city's number one tourism driver - from unexpected financial hardship due to natural disasters so they can be armed to survive hard times and continue to be tourism drivers once the dust settles.

Implementation Considerations:

- The recently created Emergency Task Force should lead this effort with the help of local emergency services personnel, the Taney County Health Department, and the Southwest Missouri Council of Governments (SMCOG), among others
- Assign a dedicated person or hire a consultancy to collect case studies of successful recovery plans that could be applied to Branson and have them develop a future Disaster Readiness Plan for Branson (Sound Diplomacy would be a great partner to facilitate the preparation of this plan)
- Collaborate with the Branson Show Task Force to establish the Theater Emergency Fund and create buy-in from the local theater and show community

Timeline: Phase 1 (12-24 months)

Best Case Practice - Creative Space Relief Fund, Austin, TX (USA)

What Is It: The Austin City Council approved Resolution No. 20200423-040 on April 23, 2020, to provide \$1 million for the Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program. This grant will provide direct support to for-profit live music venues, performance spaces, art galleries, arts-focused non-profits and individual artists facing temporary or permanent displacement. Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000 toward unpaid commercial rent and to defray rent hikes, property acquisition costs, or other space-related needs such as facility improvements or relocation-related expenditures.

Who Is Responsible: The Austin City Council, and a Joint Working Group of the Music and Arts Commissions

What Has It Done: This program, in addition to the Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund, has now enticed the city to contribute another \$7.5 million to fund creative sector assistance grant programs.⁹²

In Their Own Words: "Not only are arts organizations facing enormous declines in public funding, but we have also lost all of our revenue from ticket sales, events, fundraisers, site

⁹² Savana Dunning (2020)

rentals, and public programs. An investment of \$5 million now, could mean avoiding a loss of over \$40 million over the next five years.”⁹³

Relevance to Branson: Just like Austin prides itself on its vibrant music scene, Branson prides itself on its many theaters and live shows, which have been the city’s most significant tourism driver for many consecutive decades. Programs like Austin’s Creative Space Relief Fund are imperative to help vulnerable yet important industries, such as the music and theater industries, overcome unforeseen challenges that could trickle down and quickly cripple a place’s entire tourism industry. Although events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be predicted, preparing a Disaster Readiness Plan and setting up relief funds in advance will enable Branson to act quickly and funnel much needed aid to its theater industry in the event of a disaster. Such an initiative would help protect the city’s number one tourism driver.

3.2. Innovation

In order for Branson’s show industry to remain relevant for years to come, it is important to move forward in innovative ways. Technology and engineering are finding more and more creative ways to merge with the arts sector. While some of Branson’s shows have started to incorporate newer technologies into their productions, many are still stuck in their old ways and show formats. The once booming Branson theater industry has fallen into decline and is slowly losing more and more relevance and appeal, particularly to the younger generations of theater-goers.

While it is true that Branson’s visitors are still wholesome, traditional, family-focused and enjoy the simpler things in life, a new generation of Branson visitors is quickly growing up with constant access to technology and exposure to innovation. Branson needs to find a way to bring inspiration and new thinking to the theater sector. We already touched on this in our recommendation about a Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2).

3.2.1. Recommendation 9: Create the Office of Theater Innovation

To funnel innovation and progress into Branson’s theater industry, we propose the formation of the Office of Theater Innovation. This office should be at the core of the Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2). It should be a not-for-profit member-supported organization

⁹³ Ibid.

dedicated to bringing theater innovation and support to Branson. The office would fulfill the following needs:

- Provide consultation services to theaters about theater best practices related to operations, marketing and communication challenges
- Be in charge of a data observatory that monitors consumer and industry trends and market trends
- Provide mentoring services for new show development and/or theater technology innovation, based on industry research
 - Consider partnering with the music and theater programs of local colleges
- Establish a Theater Development Fund, similar to Broadway's Theater Development Initiative, funding innovative theater groups through grants (see case study below)
 - Set an annual grants budget of \$50,000 to support 3-4 performing arts start ups, which use technology creatively
- Funnel grants by the Missouri Arts Council to qualified recipients (or help them apply)

Implementation Considerations:

- Hire a full staff person to take on the responsibilities of this new office. This person should report to the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB
- The Office of Theater Innovation would be member funded and include membership groups such as students, full-time teachers and theater/performing arts professionals, for example
- Ideally, this office should be housed in the new Performing Arts Incubator, but until the Incubator is built, it can live at the Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: Phase 1 (0-12 months)

Best Case Practice - Theater Development Initiative for Broadway, NY⁹⁴

What Is It: Founded in 1968, the Theater Development Fund (TDF) is a not-for-profit member based organization dedicated to bringing the power of the performing arts to everyone. It now provides support to more than 900 plays and musicals and returns over \$2 billion in revenue to thousands of Broadway, Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway music and dance productions. Membership is restricted but includes a range of qualified groups, such as students, full-time teachers, performing arts professionals and members of the armed forces.

⁹⁴ Theater Development Fund (2019)

Who Is Responsible: Theater Development Fund

What Has It Done: The TDF has created a variety of successful initiatives including:

- The Costume Collection, with 80,000 high-quality costumes and accessories for rent at affordable prices
- The TAP Accessibility Grants, where eligible organizations in New York State can receive up to \$5,000 through a partnership with the New York State Council of the Arts to add accessibility services to their events
- Accessibility programs including special performances adapted for audience members with hearing loss, vision loss and autism
- The Broadway Show Finder, a website that receives over 500,000 unique visitors every week that can search for performances by genre, time and venue
- Educational programs including the playwriting residency in NYC high schools
- Veterans Theatergoing Program, providing tickets at no cost to local veteran groups through a \$135,000 grant from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and the NYC Council
- The TDF Subsidy Program, which awards up to \$12 per ticket to new Broadway productions that may be slow to attract audiences during the first 8 weeks

In Their Own Words: “TDF envisions a world where the transformative experience of attending live theater and dance is essential, relevant, accessible and inspirational.” ⁹⁵

Relevance to Branson: Programs such as this demonstrate how a place identifying theater as a key economic factor can support this industry by providing resources that help foster it. Increased access and awareness through membership, funding and grants benefits both the theaters and the audience.

3.3. Education

Our mapping revealed that Branson currently lacks theater or music-related education programs. The development of music and theater industry professionals is important. Healthy industries generally offer educational programs that strengthen stakeholders’ skills and opportunities. As a

⁹⁵ Theater Development Fund (2019)

matter of fact, we strongly recommend continued education as a best practice for local theaters later on in this report.

There is local interest for continued education. When asked what skills or knowledge local theater industry survey participants would like to improve or learn, common areas that peaked high interest included marketing, such as general marketing and PR, data analysis, or online/social media. Developing educational programs that cater to those needs will create a highly skilled industry that makes smart business decisions and is able to lead Branson's theater industry into a prosperous future.

3.3.1. Recommendation 10: Offer Theater Business Workshops

We propose a series of annual workshops, which are specifically targeted to help the theater industry stay current and overcome challenges tied to marketing or business know-how. Some workshop examples which would draw immediate interest based on community feedback include:

- How to properly design and implement a marketing plan
- Building user friendly and results-driven websites
- Online/social media and mobile marketing classes
- Public relations classes
- How to build, maintain and effectively use a customer database
- Data collection and analysis: How to conduct consumer and industry research to stay on top of current trends

Implementation Considerations:

- The Office of Theater Innovation should plan and implement these workshops
- Host the workshops at the new Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2)
- Set aside an annual budget for these workshops, potentially funded through sponsorships and/or Office of Theater Innovation membership fees. Workshops should be affordable to attend.
- Hire local experts and/or create partnerships to bring experts to Branson to host workshops
- Create a membership/class program to encourage buy-in and regular attendance (similar to enrolling in a college program). Make it an official, Branson-certified program that

industry professionals graduate from at the end of each year as a way to incentivize enrollment & graduation

Timeline: Phase 1 (0-12 months)

Best Practice Case Study - Cincinnati Music Accelerator Cincinnati, Ohio (USA)⁹⁶

What Is It: A non-profit organization investing in developing the careers of Cincinnati music creatives since 2017. The program involves two two-hour classes per week over four weeks around topics such as marketing, media, entertainment law, finance, monetization, storytelling and content creation. Participants can apply online and are selected based on their community involvement and development potential. Selected candidates must be 18 years or older (no age limit) and pay a \$250 fee to enroll.

Who Is Responsible? Cincinnati Music Accelerator (CMA) is spearheaded by its founder, native Cincinnati musician Kick Lee. It was launched with the help of a \$10,000 project grant from People's Liberty, a Cincinnati-based family foundation.

What Has It Done? As well as accelerating over 20 artists since its launch, CMA is constantly looking for collaborations. One of these was the Street Stage Project developed with the Cincinnati Center City Development Corp., a 2019 pilot program featuring 30 pop-up performances per week with local musicians, who were CMA alumni, across the city.

In Their Own Words: "CMA's goal is to teach entrepreneurship to music creatives while simultaneously working to end starving artists. We do this by teaching them how to monetize their talent and learn all aspects of the business at a level that's catered around their craft." Kick Lee, founder of CMA⁹⁷

Relevance for Branson: This learning itinerary and format is relatively inexpensive to produce compared to accredited university courses, and the fact that participants are pre-selected (and pay a symbolic fee) incentivizes them to remain engaged and motivated throughout the course. It is worth exploring the possibility to create a similar program to benefit Branson's theater industry.

⁹⁶ Cincinnati Music Accelerator (2020)

⁹⁷ Kdriscoll (2019)

3.4. Marketing

Marketing was identified as a leading challenge during the research phase of this project. To some, the challenge is rooted in limited marketing knowledge (which we address in Recommendation #10 through workshops as well as in the report's Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success). To others it is a sense that there just can never be enough marketing, yet budgets are often tight. Consequently, some theaters and show productions lean on third parties too much to handle their marketing (which we also address in the report's Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success)

It is true that marketing is an important component that - when done correctly - can boost business and build a reputation of a music and theater destination. But keeping up with ever-changing consumer demands is of the utmost importance to have a good product that is worth marketing. If your customer does not like what you're offering, marketing won't solve that problem. It is therefore important to address business problems first, before addressing marketing problems. It is advisable to frequently consult research about consumer and industry trends, which can be accessed at the Office of Theater Innovation (see Recommendation #9) and to make sure that business practices follow the Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success outlined later in this report.

Secondly, you have to create an environment with infrastructures and opportunities in place that foster a healthy theater (and music) industry and build Branson up to become a place that attracts global attention due to its innovation and state-of-the-art support networks (see Recommendations 1-10). This will strengthen Branson's reputation as a music and live theater place.

It should also be noted that marketing does not just come in the form of traditional advertising. Events, for example, are also a powerful way to create exposure and promote an area. And some may even argue that word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing there is. Below are some considerations that address marketing and promotion of the area and its theater and music assets:

3.4.1. Recommendation 11: Create a Songwriters Festival

Branson should encourage the inclusion of more original music and create exposure to such. Many of the existing show productions prioritize cover songs over original tunes. Yet, the Visitor Survey revealed that there is consumer demand for more original music. As a matter of fact,

music shows in the form of original content ranked in the top three categories for preferred show format by 42.1% of visitors - above music shows in the form of cover songs (34.4%).

Create a songwriters festival to bring more original music back to Branson. This would consist of three actions:

1. Create the songwriters festival during Branson's off season. Not only would it serve as a tourism driver during a generally slow month, it would also funnel new talent to discover Branson and its music career opportunities and serve as an initiative to help create original music. Engage the local theaters and use their existing theater spaces during the off season to host this songwriters festival throughout the city of Branson.
2. Host a Branson Songcamp as part of the festival, inviting songwriters & companies to host workshops with local stakeholders with the purpose of creating new original music.
3. Consider implementing a local version of the popular NBC show Songland, which is a televised songwriting competition. Create the Branson Songwriter Award for the top performers. Award them with a special appearance/feature opportunity in one of the city's great shows during the peak season. Perhaps the winner even gets sent to compete on the next season of Songland.

Implementation Considerations:

- The Office of Theater Innovation should be in charge of organizing this event - or of identifying a company that could organize it and provide all the necessary facilities
- The Branson/Lakes Area of Commerce and CVB should apply for the Missouri Arts Council Grant for the funding of this event
- Partner with local theaters to use their spaces
- Reach out to cities like Nashville and Austin and their music businesses to invite music professionals and successful songwriters to host Songcamp workshops; another resource could be local colleges' music departments
- Consider partnering with the NBC show Songland to send winners of the Branson Songwriter Award to compete in the show

Timeline: Phase 3 (24-48 months)

Best Case Practice – Ozark Regional Songwriters Association & The Power Of Music Festival⁹⁸

What Is It: The Ozark Regional Songwriters Association (ORSA) is a community of songwriters working together to further the opportunities for all songwriters in the area. It is hosted under the I'll Fly Away Foundation, a regional sector stakeholder that funds songwriting programs to unlock children's creative potential. The ORSA organizes songwriter events for both the public and association members, namely a monthly songwriter showcase (open for members and non-members) and a monthly song-share event for members. The song-share event helps members gain feedback from their peers: every participant gets to play one of their songs while the rest listen and engage in a positive discussion afterwards to help the writer improve the song that was presented. Meanwhile, the monthly songwriter showcase helps up to 8 songwriters (members and non-members) present an original song in front of an audience, who will then vote for their favourite song. The winner from each month gets to perform at the Power of Music Festival in front of national music industry professionals who give feedback on the songs.

Who Is Responsible: I'll Fly Away Foundation and The Ozark Regional Songwriters Association (ORSA)

What Has It Done: Due to its success, The Power of Music Festival just reformatted for its latest edition in 2019, and now also includes a retreat for two songwriters from Nashville, Tennessee. This is made possible through a new partnership with BMG Nashville, the third-largest music publisher in the world. Writers relocate for one week to Northwest Arkansas to find inspiration to write new hits for current country artists, and the songwriters present a show at the Power of Music Festival. The festival itself lasts for a weekend and includes concerts and activities for the general public as well as masterclasses from active musicians. The event is a nonprofit initiative, and access to most activities is free of charge, with the exception of the updated masterclasses and the ORSA songwriters showcase.

In Their Own Words: "There are two main points to feature in the Power of Music Festival. The main purpose is to entertain the public and generate money to help support the I'll Fly Away Foundation and our songwriting program. Our second purpose is to inform and educate local musicians on the inner workings of the music industry. The music industry is so much more than getting on stage and playing music for people to enjoy."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ I'll Fly Away Foundation (2019)

⁹⁹ I'll Fly Away (2018)

Relevance to Branson: The uniqueness of The Power of Music Festival is much greater than the ability to compete and perform in front of an audience. In its entirety, the festival facilitates peer-feedback, cohesion and inspires expression, creativity and collaboration. All of which are fundamental components for any art form. In Branson, there is a keen vested interest in the many facets of the performing arts sector, making Branson's ecosystem a unique one. Having said that, the consumer demand for original content in Branson could be accommodated by hosting similar songwriting events and showcases throughout the year. In turn, this would increase opportunities for local artists to display their talents and further improve their skill sets. Not to mention, it would create a network of supporting artists who share a passion for content creation.

3.4.2. Recommendation 12: Create a Theater Matching Fund Program

Throughout the project, we have learned that many of the theaters struggle with marketing and therefore lean heavily on the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB or third party ticket sellers to promote them. We propose the creation of a Theater Matching Fund Program to help theaters offset some of their initial marketing expenses and become more self-sufficient. However, the program would be tied to specific qualifiers, requiring the theaters to put "skin in the game."

This program could mimic Wisconsin Dells' Joint Effort Marketing Program (JEM grants), which reimburses part of a production's promotional (marketing) budget for productions that can produce a solid business and marketing plan and budget, appeal to Branson's target audience and hence drive tourism. Grants may only be used to fund promotional/marketing costs and should prioritize the online marketing space and mobile marketing space, such as email, internet, social media, press releases, and mobile intercept marketing, seeing how visitors primarily turn online for their trip planning and information, 88% of visitors own smartphones, 52% use their smartphones for trip-specific functions and 68% have social media accounts.¹⁰⁰ Yet, some traditional media outlets that visitors frequently turn to for information should also qualify, including brochures (60%), billboards (47%), and local coupon books (40%).¹⁰¹

To be approved, projects must have developed an advertising plan and budget, should undergo the Branson Show Certification review process, coordinate their project with the Branson/Lakes

¹⁰⁰ H2R Market Research (2019)

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB's tourism marketing strategy, appeal to Branson's target audience, and generate tourist visits and expenditures, be able to pay its share of the project costs and, if the project is a continuing event, have the potential to be self-sufficient within three years. Branson could impose additional qualifiers, such as requiring productions to use innovative technology, for example.

Not only would the Theater Matching Fund Program motivate local theater productions to establish solid business and marketing plans and practices, the program may very well also attract new high quality productions from outside of the local theater industry to move to Branson.

Implementation Considerations:

- The Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB should lead this effort
- Offer grants that reimburse up to 75% of the total promotional (marketing) budget for the first year of a project, up to 50% for the second year of a project, and up to 25% for the third year of a project - yet do not exceed 50% of a project's total annual costs.
- The Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB should explore funding options and establish a maximum annual cap of the Theater Matching Fund program
- Funding mechanisms to be explored include state and federal programs, expanding the existing tourism taxing district, existing taxes, or new funding initiatives

Timeline: Phase 3 (24-48 months)

Best Case Practice - Grants in Wisconsin Dells

What Is It: The Joint Effort Marketing (JEM)¹⁰² program offers grants for destination marketing, new events, sales promotion, existing events and one time events. The grants may reimburse up to 75% of the total promotional (marketing) budget for the first year of a project, up to 50% for the second year of a project, and up to 25% for the third year of a project (although not all types of JEM grants are eligible for multiple years of funding). JEM grants must also not exceed 50% of a project's total annual costs.

JEM grants may be used to fund promotional costs related to magazines, newspapers, radio, television, email, internet, direct mail, media kits; and billboards. Operational costs, local

¹⁰² Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau (2019)

advertising and posters or brochures that are not direct mailed are not eligible for funding. To be approved, projects must have developed an advertising plan and budget, coordinate their project with the statewide tourism marketing strategy, have a broad appeal and target markets outside the local area, generate a substantial increase in tourist visits and expenditures, be able to pay its share of the project costs and if the project is a continuing event, it has the potential to be self-sufficient within three years.

Additionally, the Arts Board provides Creation and Presentation Grants for nonprofit arts organizations to assist with their operations or creation and presentations of arts programming. Eligible recipients must have conducted artistic activities for at least three consecutive years before application. Their primary goal must be to create artistic works or performances that benefit the general public and illicit public participation. If offering performances, they must present at least four performances from artists outside the presenters' communities and must also provide an equal match of funding.

Who Is Responsible: The Wisconsin Department of Tourism

What Has It Done: Some of the previously funded projects include the Cameron Bluegrass Festival, a local production of 'How The Grinch Stole Christmas: The Musical', Lancaster Brews and Blues and The Nutcracker. In 2017-18 the awarded grants totaled \$1,149,127.

As of December, 2018, total appropriations of match-eligible state funding for Arts Board related grants were \$763,000 in 2018- 19, including \$738,100 GPR and \$24,900 tribal gaming PR.

In Their Own Words: "We love this application because it's about branding," Klett said. "Since (the State Tourism Department) changed our brand, based it on research and got away from slogans, we're up \$5.3 billion, 35 percent so we know that once you embark on this, the same thing is going to happen."¹⁰³

Relevance to Branson: Although Missouri has grants for arts programming, Branson already has a multitude of existing programs that are mostly struggling to keep hold of a stable audience. Focusing on improving the marketing of existing programs could help improve their quality and success and boost Branson's success overall, while at the same time supporting the creation of new high-quality programs.

¹⁰³ Northwoods Star Journal (2017)

3.4.3. Recommendation 13: Create a Branson Theater Passport

Our research revealed that local audiences do not regularly attend theater shows. They only attend one show per year on average. Despite the local appreciation discount, which in recent years has been expanded to reach beyond the local borders of Branson to fill theater seats during the off season, locals still are not participating.

Word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool. Branson's locals - particularly your frontline personnel - should always be up to date on the current theater shows so they can provide informed recommendations to visitors. Create local ambassadors by exposing them to your top tourism product: your shows.

Create an app, the Branson Theater Passport, which allows locals to check in and collect digital stamps from the shows they attended. Signing up for the passport requires a local ID. As an incentive, offer rewards along the way to encourage ongoing participation: free popcorn, a signed poster, a meet and greet, a signed instrument, etc. Gamify the experience for continued engagement: create leagues so participants can compete against each other. Whoever can check off two shows a week advances to the next league. Through broad exposure to the wide variety of Branson theater shows, the city's frontline personnel can truly familiarize themselves with the city's leading tourism product and provide well informed feedback to visitors.

On a side note, if this program proves to be successful, it could be expanded to allow visitors to participate in the experience. However, we strongly feel that as a first step, it is important for the city of Branson to create a local ambassador program.

Implementation Considerations:

- The Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB should lead this effort and hire a company to develop the app
- Create buy-in from the local theater community and ask them to contribute prizes to participating Branson Theater Passport holders. Make sure to include some compelling prizes in order to spike local interest and participation
- Promote the app to Branson's front line personnel in your local establishments, such as hotels, restaurants and third party ticket outlets
- Regularly update the app to make sure all current shows are included

Timeline: Phase 1 (0-12 months)

Best Case Practice - New Music Passport Toronto, Ontario (Canada)¹⁰⁴

What Is It: The New Music Passport program allows music and arts enthusiasts to explore some of the new music being presented regularly throughout the city of Toronto, spanning over the course of a single year. By paying a one-time fee of \$25 to purchase the passport, an individual is then offered one discounted ticket to one concert by each participating organization during a performing-arts season. This program, initiated in 2014, has now inspired a new Passport Program and not-for-profit live music event series, which has developed into separate winter and summer sessions. It is designed to occur during slow periods of the year in midsummer and midwinter in order to boost economic activity and improve venue sustainability.

Who Is Responsible: Toronto Music Advisory Council and the Canadian Live Music Association

What Has It Done: The influence of the Toronto Passport sessions has helped initiate the night-time economy and further enrich the social and cultural value of Toronto. The passport sessions have allowed venues to extend their hours of operation from 2 AM - 4 AM on select dates, which allows for additional live music programming and an extra incentive for patrons to attend social venues during otherwise slow times of the year.

In Their Own Words: “Approximately half of participating venues apply for extended licensing, and have repeatedly given testimonials that their businesses would have suffered losses or faced closure if not for this unique event series that was prompted by the venue closure crisis of early 2017. The wake of closures subsequently stopped due to important measures, such as this series, that assist venues precisely when they need it most.” (R. D. Spencer Sutherland, Co-Chair to Toronto Music Advisory Council)¹⁰⁵

Relevance to Branson: The purpose for initiating a passport to live events or music performances will vary across each unique music/theatre ecosystem, however, the common factor that results from such a program remains the same - greater audience participation leading to an increase of exposure to a place’s creative industry. Branson may consider leveraging such programs to support its music/theater industry, while also yielding the associated benefits - increased awareness, increased exposure to local talent, promotion

¹⁰⁴ Continuum Contemporary Music (2013)

¹⁰⁵ City of Toronto (2019)

through word-of-mouth, and consequently increased economic growth being just some of the positive outcomes.

3.5. Implementation Timeline

RECOMMENDATIONS	PHASE 1 (0-12 months)	PHASE 2 (12-24 months)	PHASE 3 (24-48 months)
INFRASTRUCTURE			
1. Develop the Branson Performing Arts Row - Attract, Grow and Retain Music Industry Companies			
2. Performing Arts Incubator/Center			
3. Feasibility Study for an Arena			
4. Small Business Loans for Theater Updates			
5. Improved Public Transportation for a More Pedestrian-Friendly Entertainment Corridor			
6. Issue Official Branson Show Certificates			
7. Restricting Third-Party Ticket Sellers from the Use of the Label 'Welcome Center' or 'Visitor Center'			
8. Development of a Disaster Readiness Plan			
INNOVATION			
9. Create the Office of Theater Innovation			
EDUCATION			
10. Offer Theater Business Workshops			
MARKETING			
11. Create a Songwriters Festival			
12. Create a Theater Matching Fund Program			
13. Create a Branson Theater Passport			

4. Roadmap for Branson's Theater Industry Success

During our comprehensive research, we were able to identify several challenges the theater industry faces. We analyzed national theater, audience and marketing trends and surveyed Branson's current visitors to see how Branson's industry matches up with audience interests and with what is happening on a national scale. Based on this collective research, we identified several opportunities that would help Branson's theater industry grow and prosper.

Approximately ten years ago, the Theater League tried to develop a Best Practices White Paper for Branson's theaters and shows.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, it was never completed, yet interest in this resource as a guideline for success remains. Below you will find our recommendations for Best Practices for Branson's Theater Industry. These are areas of improvement that the sector can own and where it can implement necessary adjustments as needed in order to remain competitive for many years to come. The Strategic Action Plan will only work if you - Branson's theaters and show owners and operators - take action, too.

Not all theaters and shows face the same challenges, but the below recommendations address overarching themes and pain points that emerged during our research. Each recommendation in this roadmap is supported by research findings. We hope that this portion of the report can be widely shared and distributed so that it will be applied now and in the future. Not only will these guidelines help existing theaters and show productions become more successful and promote longevity, they will also help set future businesses coming to the market up for better success. Taking into consideration that this roadmap could live as a stand-alone document, we felt it was important to include detailed background information under each recommendation, even if it appears repetitive within the context of the entire report.

4.1. Ticket Price Integrity

The Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey revealed that 77% of the theaters' and shows' monthly revenue comes from ticket sales. Third party ticket sellers (33%) are currently your main ticket selling channel - more so than box office walk-ups (27%) or group sales (21%).

¹⁰⁶ This information is based on interviews and roundtable findings.

Currently, there are 35 ticket reseller licenses registered for 2020 with the City of Branson.¹⁰⁷ In comparison, there are only 33 active theater business licenses and hence official box offices.¹⁰⁸ This shows how strong of a hold the third party ticket selling industry has on Branson's theater industry. Generally, third party ticket sellers tend to buy tickets at an average 22% discount from you, indicating a 22% loss on ticket revenues for you.¹⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, during the interviews and roundtables, many of you raised the concern that discount rates were not uniform and that you are often pressured into providing deeper and deeper discounts to third party vendors in exchange for marketing and the promise to sell those tickets to end users. During a time when most theaters and shows are already reporting a decrease in ticket sales by performance, deep discounting is cutting into your already shrinking bottom line.

The state of Missouri imposes a ban on any ticket resale restrictions, meaning the government's hands are tied in this matter for the time being. It is therefore up to you - the individual theater and show owners - to take control of this situation, reassess your existing partnership agreements with third party ticket sellers, and adopt ticket price integrity.

The Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey revealed that working more closely with third party ticket sellers can actually negatively affect occupation levels of a show. This provides even more of a reason to reevaluate existing business partnerships and establish stronger mutual benefits. Doing so will benefit your bottom line in the long-run.

The good news is that many of you already named moving away from partnering with third party ticket sellers as one of the top three ticket selling strategy changes you are anticipating for the next three years, indicating a willingness to change and explore alternate options that better support your business.

Action Items:

- Reevaluate partnership agreements with third party ticket sellers and any existing discounting practices
- Collaborate with city government to lobby against state-imposed ticket reseller protections, and push for price caps above purchase price

¹⁰⁷ City of Branson (2019c)

¹⁰⁸ City of Branson (2019b)

¹⁰⁹ Please note that this number is only based on seven responses of third party ticket sellers who participated in the survey (out of the total 35 registered ones) and may therefore not be reflective of the entire third party ticket seller industry's discounts.

4.2. Diversification of the Show Product – Staying Relevant for a New Generation of Theater Goers

It is true that your current core theater audience is made up of baby boomers who attend in couples. However, nearly half of all Branson visitors (47.1%) are younger than baby boomers, with roughly one in three of them being minors.¹¹⁰ This suggests that there is a whole pool of younger Branson visitors, who remain largely untapped. While all of Branson's theater shows are family friendly, the Visitor Survey revealed that your current content does not always appeal to today's Gen X/millennial families. Broadway has taken big steps to tap into the younger family market with content that strongly appeals to children – mainly in the form of productions based on movies with animated source material.¹¹¹ And they have successfully lowered the average age of the Broadway theater goer to 40.6 (and 39 for musicals), with 15% of the audience being children and teens.¹¹² There is no reason to believe that you could not accomplish the same with a little bit of work.

Millennials are driving the growth in the live music industry,¹¹³ but their genre tastes differ from their older counterparts. Millennials and Gen X favor alternative rock, hard rock, and pop concerts, while boomers and traditionalists tend to favor country music.¹¹⁴

Adapting show content to these new consumer trends will help you bring in more of these untapped Gen X/millennial visitors and their children - who have expressed interest in Branson shows, but currently do not attend many of them, often because they favor other fun things to do while in town (as revealed in the Visitor Survey).

You can feel confident that doing so will be successful because there is proof that investing in new productions positively impacts financial success: The Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey revealed that investing in new theater productions (costumes, staff, choreographers, etc) was the leading factor impacting financial success the most in the last five years (rating of 3.8 out of 5).

Action Items:

- Include show productions that appeal to Branson's younger family audience (as opposed to baby boomers): 40-something year old females and their kids.

¹¹⁰ H2R Market Research (2019)

¹¹¹ The Producer's Perspective (2016)

¹¹² Broadway League (2018)

¹¹³ Branded (2017)

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

- Consider shows with niche appeal, which currently cannot be found in Branson, such as productions based on movies with animated source material¹¹⁵
- Include more modern rock and pop music to appeal to the younger generations
- Include more original music in productions: Music shows in the form of original content ranked in the top three categories for preferred show format by 42.1% of visitors - above music shows in the form of cover songs (34.4%)
- Produce marketing materials promoting these new productions to the younger target audience

4.3. Continuous Investment for Continuous Success

Running a business means continuously looking for ways to improve. There is no room for stagnation in this highly competitive world. Those who smartly invest in their business grow their business. Our research revealed that many of you are falling behind on innovation - some need to make improvements to their buildings, others, improvements to technology, etc. For example, the Visitor Survey showed that 84% of visitors prefer smaller to medium-sized venues, yet many local theaters are quite large. You should consider ways to reimagine and repurpose your existing theater spaces. Seat comfort is also important to 90.1% of Branson's theater audience.

You can feel comfortable that investing in your theaters and show productions will pay off. Data based on the Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey showed that investments in overhead cost (e.g. marketing, theater/show investments, wages, etc.) can lead to an increase in occupation. The more successful shows in Branson have stayed on top of new technology, invested in their theaters/shows, modernized their show content and have become smart about their marketing.

The theater audience is slowly changing, and so are their expectations of entertainment. Today's consumers can stream content on TVs, laptops, iPads and mobile phones and often watch shows for free on YouTube. Therefore, their expectations of a live show have heightened. Yet, many of you still rely on an old business model, serving up the same show format from 20 years ago, ignoring changes in the show industry. Watching someone perform cover songs on stage alone may not be sufficient in the long-term.

¹¹⁵ We were made aware that a previous production of Shreck failed in Branson. However, when probing for reasons why, there did not seem to be a clear understanding, indicating that some follow-up research may be needed to better understand why this production failed despite market trends indicating that shifts in this direction have proven successful in other markets. One possible reason may be that the price point was simply too high for the typical Branson visitor - a consideration that would need to be addressed for any future kid-centric productions.

Research showed that leading emerging industry trends include high tech spectacles: productions that explore the intersection of arts, technology and engineering and find new ways to create magical events on stage through robotics and projection, for example.¹¹⁶ You must think about what you can add to create an unforgettable experience that makes it worth a customer's time and monetary investment.

Find clever ways to invest in the theater or show product and add a bit more "spectacle" to the experience. This will tremendously help shape your future success - beyond the "Branson theater boom" associated with traditionalists and baby boomers.

Action Items:

- Frequently consult the Office of Theater Innovation (see Recommendation #9) at the Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2) to help you stay on top of theater industry, technology and audience trends
- Invest in new technologies and/or theater or production updates
 - Closely watch emerging trends such as robotics and projections and find ways to implement them in your productions
- Apply for a small business loan/microloan with favorable terms for theater updates (see Recommendation #4)
- If necessary, find ways to reimagine, resize and repurpose existing theater space to create a more intimate experience for the customer

4.4. Adapting for the Digital Age: Online Ticket Sales & Marketing

Based on the 2018 Visitor Profile Study,¹¹⁷ online search was cited as the most influential source when deciding to visit Branson. Furthermore, 68% of visitors have social media accounts, 88% of visitors own smartphones and 52% use their smartphones for trip-specific functions, such as booking reservations, buying tickets, posting photos, etc. Forty percent looked up information regarding Branson on their smartphone or tablet.

Approximately half of you (54%) cited changing over to selling tickets online as your main ticket selling strategy in the next three years. But truthfully, all of you should do this, if you haven't already. It will help you bump up your box office sales, requiring less reliance on third party ticket sellers.

¹¹⁶ Backstage.com (2019)

¹¹⁷ H2R Market Research (2019)

Marketing investments are already a top priority for all of you. Marketing strategies should follow consumer behavior. As consumers are moving more and more into the digital space, relying more heavily on online media like search and social media for their show information, you must adapt your marketing strategies accordingly.

Organic search engine results take time to build, but can be boosted with investing in SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Branson's online space is cluttered with a variety of ticket vendors and it's not always clear which ones are official box offices and which ones are third party vendors. You should own your space online and make sure that a search for your business produces a listing of your business at the very top of the search results - hence sending customers and their dollars directly to your official theater box office.

Furthermore, newer technology offers the opportunity to capture audiences with marketing messages via their mobile phones when they're within near proximity of your business. Seeing how 88% of visitors own smartphones, this presents a great opportunity you should explore to catch eyes and attention.

Finally, in order to improve digital marketing capabilities, an essential information source is the collection of customer data. The Theater and Show Owner/Operator Survey revealed that while all theater owners are already on top of this, only 57% of show operators collect this information, the other 43% say that their third party ticket selling partners collect it instead. This means nearly half of show operators do not have access to their own customers' data. It's important for all live music show professionals to collect this information. It creates an easy channel to connect with your existing customers on an ongoing basis at a low cost. As a matter of fact, the same survey data suggests that weekly engagement has the potential to increase occupation.

Action Items:

- Set up an online ticket sale portal on your website to facilitate selling tickets directly to your customers when they are planning their entertainment itinerary
- Set up a customer database and collect your customers' information; then engage them weekly through newsletters
- Consider investing in strong customer relationship management software to help manage box office data and customer data; examples include Tessitura, Spektrix, Theatre Manager, Blackbaud and PatronBase
- Invest in targeted digital marketing, such as social media, your website, and mobile intercept - it is often more affordable than traditional print advertising and can result in better ROI
- Invest in SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to make sure your website ranks high in search results, directing visitors to your official box office

4.5. Continued Education with a Focus on Business and Marketing

Most theater and show owners/operators have shown common areas of interest for continued education. When asked what skills or knowledge you wanted to improve or learn, the majority of theaters and show owners/operators picked marketing, such as general marketing and PR, data analysis, or online/social media as top areas of interest. However, other topics, such as national and international contracts, technology, grant writing and business and financial management were also of interest to roughly half of you.

Your local theater industry employees and freelancers were mainly interested in advancing their marketing and online/social media skills while your theater performers and musicians were primarily interested in marketing/data analytics/audience insights, online/social media and technology.

Continued career advancement is an important part of business success. It helps ensure that you and your theater employees keep pace with new skills and developments in the industry. It can also offer a fresh perspective to overcoming business challenges.

Action Items:

- Provide education resources to your theater employees and allow time off for training and advancing their business and marketing skills
- Enroll in Branson's Theater Business Workshops (see Recommendation #10) at the Performing Arts Incubator (see Recommendation #2).
- Consult local colleges and Branson's Community Arts Center for additional opportunities and resources

4.6. Work Toward Equal Pay

Our Economic Review identified a statistically significant gender wage gap in Branson's live theater and music ecosystem. Based on 2016 data, men earned on average double what women earned in the sector: \$24,000 for men vs. \$12,000 for women annually.

When further analyzing the data by type of occupation, it showed that men earned considerably more than women in professional and supporting activities within the live theater and music ecosystem (\$26,000 for men vs. \$12,000 for women). This difference was also statistically

significant. While the gender wage gap was not as large for musicians, artists and performers, women still earned less (\$18,000 for men vs. \$14,000 for women).

The gender wage gap is not unique to Branson, nor to the theater or music sector, but you should nevertheless address it to create a more fair playing field for all employees in your industry, regardless of gender.

Action Items:

- Invest in your employees and make sure that they are happy with their current roles and compensation; this helps avoid turn-over
- Conduct a payroll review of your business to identify any striking gender wage differences and review the reasoning behind those gaps; then make the appropriate adjustments to ensure that people get paid the same rate for the same type of work, work responsibility and work experience

4. Conclusion

This report is the culmination of 12 months of research, stakeholder engagement and investigation. The four areas of priority and 13 recommendations are aimed at ensuring that Branson develops into a city with a world class theater industry. It demonstrates the significant value that the theater industry has to Branson's economy, as a sector representing over 8% of the county's total workforce.

While there are a great deal of actions to take, the opportunity to boost the theater industry and ensure that it remains a strong tourism driver for years to come is significant. The one thing that is difficult to manufacture - great music - happens every day in Branson. The rest is process and strategy, all of which can be delivered successfully through these actions and recommendations.

Our objective is that this report is seen as the beginning of a process, rather than a race. Especially, considering the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are aware that some of these recommendations have to take the back-seat to more pressing issues at hand. But remember that these recommendations are intended to strengthen Branson's music and theater ecosystem for a long time. They are without a doubt comprehensive and extensive. Implementing this plan will take time, but the foundation is now in place.

Acknowledgments

The writers of this study would like to thank every individual who worked with us, took an interest in the report, responded to the survey, attended a roundtable and shared information. Your participation and input has been invaluable and the work could not have been completed without it.

5. Bibliography

American Theatre (2018a): Smith, Kelundra. "Market to New Audiences: 4 Tips for Bringing Theater Marketing into the 21st Century." American Theatre, 23 Oct. 2018. Online at <https://www.americantheatre.org/2018/10/23/market-to-new-audiences/> - accessed 8-30-2019.

American Theatre (2018b): McBride, Dara. "Remove Box Office Barriers." American Theatre, 23 Oct. 2018. Online at <https://www.americantheatre.org/2018/10/23/remove-box-office-barriers/> - accessed 7-22-2019

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce (2016) "Music Industry, Asheville-Buncombe County Economic Impact". Online at https://www.ashevillechamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Music-Study-Infographic-for-Buncombe-County_2016.pdf accessed 7-22-2019

Austin Monitor (2020) Dunning, Savana "Arts Commission endorses letter requesting \$5M in economic relief for art nonprofits" 19 Jun. 2020, Online at <https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2020/06/arts-commission-endorses-letter-requesting-5m-in-economic-relief-for-art-nonprofits/>. Accessed 8-13-2020

"Background, Legislation and Tax Rates." Branson/Lakes Area Community Enhancement District; online at <http://www.blatted.com/background-legislation-tax-rates> - accessed 10-12-2019

Banff Centre (2020) Meet + Connect Online at <https://www.banffcentre.ca/conferences/meet-connect>. accessed 7-22-2019

Banff Centre (2010) "Banff Centre Open Kinnear Centre" Online at <https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/banff-centre-opens-kinnear-centre-creativity-innovation-july-10-2010> accessed 7-22-2019

"Branson CVB 2018 Visitor Profile Research." H2R Market Research, Feb. 2019.

Branson Forward (2016) "76 Entertainment CID Property Owners Vote Approval." Online at <http://www.branonforward.com/news/75-entertainment-cid-tax-overwhelmingly-approved> accessed 8-8-2020

Bureau of Economic Analysis (2019) "Regional Accounts (GDP) by Metropolitan Area". Online at <https://apps.bea.gov/itable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=70&step=1> accessed 7-22-2019

Bureau of Economic Analysis (n.d.) "RIMS II, An Essential tool for Planners, Section C-1". Online at https://apps.bea.gov/regional/rims/rimsii/rimsii_user_guide.pdf accessed 7-22-2019

Bureau of Economic Analysis (2016) "Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, U.S. and States 2016". Online at <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/arts-and-cultural-production-satellite-account-us-and-states-2016> accessed 7-22-2019

"Chamber Theater seats 2018-2019." Branson Chamber of Commerce, 2019.

City of Branson (2012) Community Plan 2030. Online at http://bransonmo.gov/DocumentCenter/View/261/FINAL_ComPlan2030_0312?bidId= - accessed 9-12-2019

City of Branson (2014) Economic Development Incentives. Online at <http://cityofbranson.org/DocumentCenter/View/3671/City-Incentives-Policy-Manual?bidId=> - accessed 9-12-2019

City of Branson Chamber (2019a) 5 in Five Strategic Plan. Online at <https://www.bransonchamber.com/5-in-five-strategic-plan/> - accessed 10-12-2019

City of Branson (2019b) "License Listing by Business Name - All Licenses - Year 2020 - Dept: Merchant Licenses - Class: Theater." City of Branson, 2019.

City of Branson (2019c) "License Listing by Business Name - All Licenses - Year 2020 - Dept: Merchant Licenses - Class: Tour and Ticket Sales." City of Branson, 2019.

City of Branson (2019d) "Board of Aldermen Study Session." City of Branson, Apr 30, 2019. Online at http://www.cityofbranson.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_04302019-1438 - accessed 10-12-2019

Continuum Contemporary Music (2103) "The New Music Passport" <http://continuummusic.org/news/the-new-music-passport>. Accessed 08-13-2020.

Data USA (2019) [Website]. Online at <https://datausa.io> - accessed 5-16-2019

Davenport, Ken. "Trend Alert: What these 3, nope, FOUR, shows mean for Broadway's future." The Producer's Perspective, 23 March 2016. Online at https://www.theproducersperspective.com/my_weblog/2016/03/trend-alert-what-these-3-nope-four-shows-mean-for-broadways-future.html - accessed 8-30-2019

Davenport, Ken. "50 Years of Broadway Musical Source Material. A By The Numbers Infographic." The Producer's Perspective, 20 Nov 2015. Online at https://www.theproducersperspective.com/my_weblog/2015/11/50-years-of-broadway-musical-source-material-a-by-the-numbers-infographic.html - accessed 8-30-2019

The Boston Consulting Group, Inc. (2017) "Economic Impact, Trends, and Opportunities Music in New York City". Online at https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mome/pdf/MOME_Music_Report_2017_DIGITAL.pdf - accessed 7-22-2019

"The Demographics of the Broadway Audience." The Broadway League, Oct. 2018. Online at <https://www.broadwayleague.com/research/research-reports/> - accessed 3-1-2020.

Dc Theatre Scene (2017) Bring The Herd <https://dctheatrescene.com/2017/09/22/bring-herd-woolly-mammoth-entices-audiences-age-technology/> - accessed 11-3-2020

Evans, Suzy. "A New Golden Age for Broadway Musical?" American Theatre, 26 March 2019. Online at <https://www.americantheatre.org/2019/03/26/a-new-golden-age-for-the-broadway-musical/> - accessed 30-8-2019

"Grants for the Arts in Missouri." The Missouri Arts Council, 2020. Online at <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/grants/> - accessed 6-2-2020

Groman, Gary. "Branson Show Task Force Intends to Help Grow Branson's Show Industry." Branson Register, May 8, 2019. Online at

<https://www.bransonregister.com/branson-show-task-force-intends-to-help-grow-bransons-show-industry/> - accessed 7-1-2020

HTL Advisory (2018) "An analysis of new and /or expanded event and convention center" Online at https://tcuplace.com/about/final_report/. Accessed 8-13-2020

I'll Fly Away (2018) "Why do a festival?" 30 Nov. 2018, online at <https://illflyawayfoundation.org/2018/11/30/why-do-a-festival/>. Accessed 8-13-2020

IAVM (2014) "Venue Professional Competency Standards" Online at https://www.iavm.org/sites/default/files/images/iavm_venue_professional_competency_standard.pdf. Accessed 8-13-2020

I'll Fly Away Foundation (2019) "Ozark Regional Songwriters Association". Online at <https://illflyawayfoundation.org/events/orsa/> accessed 5-6-2019.

Kaye, Kimberly. "Broadway.com at 10: The 10 Biggest Broadway Trends of the Decade." Broadway.com, 10 May 2010. Online at <https://www.broadway.com/buzz/152360/broadwaycom-at-10-the-10-biggest-broadway-trends-of-the-decade/> - accessed 8-30-2019

Kruger, Martinette and Saayman, Melville. "Music Preferences of Generation Y." Journal Of Vacation Marketing, May 2015. Online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277966592_Music_preferences_of_Generation_Y - accessed 6-11-2019

Lock, S. "Theater & Broadway in the U.S. – Statistics and Facts." Statista, 27 Aug. 2018 Online at <https://www.statista.com/topics/1299/theatre-and-broadway/> - accessed 2-1-2020.

Miles, Kristen. "Millennials Drive Growth in the Live Music Industry." Branded, 21 Nov. 2017. Online at <https://gobranded.com/branded-poll-millennials-driving-growth-in-live-music-industry/> - accessed 6-11-2019

Mink, Casey. "The 2019 Theater Trends You Should Absolutely Know About." Backstage.com, 18 Jan. 2019. Online at <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/theater-trends-broadway-2019-66726/> - accessed 8-30-2019

Missouri Arts Council (2019a) Strategic Plan. Online at <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/strategic-plan-2017-2020/> accessed 10-12-2019

Missouri Arts Council (2019b) Cultural Tourism. Online at <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/most-recent-missouri-data/> accessed 10-12-2019

Missouri Revisor of Statutes (2017) Unlawful Practices, Penalties and Exceptions. Online at <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=407.020&bid=23002&hl=> - accessed 8-13-20

Musicians' Association of Seattle (2015) "Seattle's Working Musicians". Online at <https://www.afm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FTM-Report.pdf> - accessed 8-13-20

Municode (2019a) Alcoholic Beverages. Online at https://library.municode.com/mo/branson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH6ALBE accessed 10-12-2019

Municode (2019b). Zoning. Online at https://library.municode.com/mo/branson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH94ZO_ARTIIIIZODI accessed 9-12-2019

Municode (2019c) Tax. Online at https://library.municode.com/mo/branson/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MUCO_CH82TA_ARTVITOTA accessed 9-12-2019

Nichols, Bonnie. "BLS Spotlight on Statistics: Expenditures on Admissions to the Arts, Movies, Sporting Events, and other Entertainment." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017. Online at https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2997&context=key_workplace - accessed 11-12-2019

"The Performing Arts: Trends and Their Implications." RAND, 2001. Online at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB2504/index1.html - accessed 8-30-2019

Rickwald, Bethany; Gordon, David; Levitt, Hayley; Hempstead, Pete and Stewart, Zachary. "5 Predictions for the Theater in 2019." Theater Mania, 1 Jan. 2019. Online at https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/news/5-predictions-for-the-theater-in-2019_87357.html - accessed 8-30-2019

"Secondary Ticket Marketplace: Guide to US Ticket Resale Regulations." Squire Patton Boggs, July 2017. Online at https://www.squirepattonboggs.com/-/media/files/insights/publications/2017/07/secondary-ticket-marketplace/2017_us_ticket_resale_law_guide.pdf - accessed 6-2-2020

Siwek, Stephen E. (2018) "The US Music Industries: Jobs & Benefits". Online at <http://www.riaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/US-Music-Industries-Jobs-Benefits-Siwek-Economists-Inc-April-2018-1-2.pdf> accessed 7-22-2019

Sound Diplomacy (2020) Music Cities Resilience Handbook. Online at <https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/better-music-cities>

The City of Austin (2012) "Music Venue Assistance" Online at <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=188569>. Accessed 8-13-2020

The City of Toronto (2019) "Toronto Music Passport." Online at <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/cc/comm/communicationfile-89126.pdf>. Accessed 8-13-2020.

The Music District (2019) "About Us" Online at <https://www.themusicdistrict.org/> accessed 5-6-2019

TXP, Inc. (2016) "The Economic Impact of Music". Online at <https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/EGRSO/TXP-Austin-Music-Impact-Update-2016-Final.pdf> accessed 1-4-2019

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) "County Business Patterns". Online at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html> accessed 7-22-2019

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). Online at <https://data.bls.gov> accessed 7-22-2018

U.S. Census Bureau (2016) "American Community Survey". Online at <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2016/> accessed 7-22-2019

U.S. Census Bureau (2018) "American FactFinder". Online at
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk accessed 5-22-2019

US News (2019) "Dallas-Branson Saw the Biggest Population Growth Among All U.S. Cities in 2018". Online at
<https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2019-04-22/census-data-shows-dallas-fort-worth-experienced-biggest-population-growth-in-2018> accessed 10-07-2019

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Music ecosystem activities - NAICS Codes

DESCRIPTION	NAICS CODE
Live Theater Segment	
Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	7111
Theater property rental or leasing, not operating theater	5312
Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events	7113
Theatrical employment agencies	56131
Theatrical scenery manufacturing	33999
Other Performing Arts Companies	7119
Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	72241
Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events without Facilities	7114
Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	7115
Fine Arts Schools (Theater Schools)	611610
Theater construction	23622
Music Exclusive Segment	
Sound Recording Studios"	51224
Other Sound Recording Industries	51229
Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores	45114
Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	7224
Radio Broadcasting	51511
Musical Groups and Artists	71113
Ticket offices	561599

Appendix 2: RIMS II Multipliers definition

“RIMS II is based on a set of national input-output (I-O) accounts that show the goods and services produced by each industry and the use of these goods and services by industries and final users. Like most other regional I-O models, RIMS II adjusts these national relationships to account for regional supply conditions”¹¹⁸.

Type I Multipliers: “Multipliers that account for only the interindustry effects (direct and indirect) of a final-demand change”¹¹⁹.

Type II Multipliers: “Multipliers that account for both the interindustry effects (direct and indirect) and household-spending effects (induced) of a final-demand change”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Bureau of Economic Analysis. RIMS II, An essential tool for regional developers and planners, Page 31

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid

Appendix 3: List of Mapped Assets

DESCRIPTION	ADDRESS	SUB-CATEGORY
VENUES		
Branson Convention Center	00 S Sycamore St, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Multi-purpose venue
Branson Community Center	201 Compton Dr, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Community Centers
Americana Theatre	2905 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Andy Williams Moon River Theatre	2500 W 76 Hwy Branson, MO 65616	Live Theatre
Billy Yates' Choices Concert Hall	440 State Hwy 248, Branson, Missouri 65616, United States	Live Theatre
Branson Famous Theatre (Baldknobbers)	645 MO-165, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Branson Hot Hits Theatre	206 S Commercial St, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Branson Murder Mystery Dinner	2849 Gretna Rd. Ste. 200 Branson, Missouri	Live Theatre
Branson Tribute Theater	3310 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Caravelle Theatre	3446 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Celebrity Theatre	3425 MO-76, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Clay Cooper Theatre	3216 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Dick Clark's American Bandstand Theater - Legends in Concert	1600 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Dolly Parton's Stampede	525 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Grand Country Music Hall	1945 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Hall of Fame Theater (Branson Mall)	2206 W 76 Country Blvd Ste F202 Branson, MO 65616	Live Theatre
Hamners' Variety Theater	3090 Shepherd of the Hills Expy, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre

Historic Owen Theatre	205 S Commercial St, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Hughes Brothers Theatre	3425 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Jackie B. Goode's Uptown Cafe and Dinner Theater	285 MO-165, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Jerry Presley's God and Country Theatre	1840 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Jim Stafford Theatre	440 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
King's Castle Theatre	2701 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Magnificent 7 Variety Show	3090 Shepherd of the Hills Expy. Branson, Missouri, United States	Live Theatre
Mickey Gilley Grand Shanghai Theatre	3455 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Mowtown Downtown	208 S Commercial St, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Number 1 Hits of the 60's	3216 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Pierce Arrow	3069 Shepherd of the Hills Expy, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Presleys' Country Jubilee	2920 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Shepherd of the Hills	5586 W Missouri 76, Branson, MO 65616, United States	Live Theatre
Showboat Branson Belle	4800 MO-165, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Sight & Sound Theatres	1001 Shepherd of the Hills Expy #8007, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Silver Dollar City (Echo Hollow Amphitheatre)	399 Silver Dollar City Pkwy, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
The Dutton Family Theater	3454 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
The Little Opry Theatre	3562 Shepherd of the Hills Expy, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre

The Majestic	200 Majestic Cir, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
The Mansion Theatre	89 Expressway Ln, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Welk Resort Theatre	1984 State Hwy 165, Branson, MO 65616	Live Theatre
White House Theatre	2255 Gretna Rd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Live Theatre
Black Oak Grille	601 Branson Landing Blvd #2089, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Branson's Center Stage Grille & Kaffee Haus	1810 W, MO-76, Branson, MO 65616, United States	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Bucketlist Restaurant and Bar	4580 N Gretna Rd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Downing Street Pour House	24 Downing St, Hollister, MO 65672, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Landshark Bar and Grill	915 Branson Landing Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Outback Pub	1924 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Parrots Pavilion Tiki Bar (Rock Lane Resort)	611 Rock Lane Road , Branson, MO 65616	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Star Bar Grill	100 Fall Creek Dr, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
The Paddlewheel	9 S, N Boardwalk, Branson, MO 65616, United States	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music
Waxy Oshea's Irish Pub	235 Branson Landing Blvd, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Bars, Cafes and Restaurants with Music

RECORDING & REHEARSAL		
Artists in Motion Dance Studio	5571 Gretna Rd STE D, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Dance Studio
Sonshine Dance and Fitness	2005 W 76 Country Blvd Ste 103, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Dance Studio
Anders Fredlund Production	1440 State HWY 248 Q110 Branson, MO 65616	Recording Studio
Atlantis Recording	226 Sherman Way, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Recording Studio
Haage Music Productions	280 Terrace Rd 65616 Branson, Missouri	Recording Studio
Roller Music Pro Recording Studio	1616 Miller Dr, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Recording Studio
The Mansion Studios	189 Expressway Ln, Branson, MO 65616, USA	Recording Studio
MUSIC RADIO STATIONS		
KRZK 106.3	225 Violyn Drive, Branson, Missouri, 65616	
KLF 88.1	205 W Atlantic, Branson, MO 65616	
KCAX 1220	225 Violyn Dr., Branson, MO 65616	
KOMC 100.1	225 Violyn Dr., Branson, MO 65616	
FESTIVALS		
Branson Music Fest	Welk Resort (1984 State Hwy 165 Branson, MO 65616)	Festival
Legends of Golf Concerts	150 Top of the Rock Rd, Ridgedale, MO 65739, USA	Festival
Taneycomo Festival Orchestra		Festival
THIRD PARTY TICKET SELLERS		
All Access Branson	3005 W. 76 Country Blvd. Suite C, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers

Bluegreen Vacations Unlimited	4960 CONFERENCE WAY BRANSON MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson 2 For 1 Tickets, LLC	1100 W. 76 Hwy Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson's Best Reservations	2875 Green Mountain Drive Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson.com	220 Branson Hills Parkway Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Ticket & Travel	2743 State Hwy 248 Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Ticket Deals	700 Blue Meadows Rd Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
BransonTravel.com/Branson Saver	150 Corporate Place Suite R Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Travel Group	3630 W STATE HWY 76 BRANSON MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Travel Office	118 N. Commercial Street Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Vacation & Tourism	PO Box 1314 Hollister, MO 65673	Ticket Sellers
Branson Vacation Company	2315 Green Mountain Drive Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Branson Visitor Center	907 W MAIN ST 100 BRANSON MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Connect to Branson	103 Rue De Villas CIR Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Choose Branson	3179 N Gretna Rd Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Deetours LLC	1457 Bird Rd. Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Fly Branson Travel	4000 Branson Airport Blvd Hololister, MO 65672	Ticket Sellers
Hab Condominium Association Inc.	2929 GREEN MOUNTAIN DR BRANSON MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Half Price Tickets & More	2715 State Hwy 76 #102, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Just Tickets	200 S Wildwood Dr. Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers

Lakeside Ticket Sales	482 Branson Landing Blvd. Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Main Street Lake Cruise Office	9 S Boardwalk B Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Ozark's Kirkwood Tour & Travel	192 Expressway Ln, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Reserve Direct	523 State Hwy. 248, #B Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Save on Branson	1440 State. Hwy 248, Suite Q Branson, MO 65616-9257	Ticket Sellers
Stacey's Branson Welcome Center	921 W Main St, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Summer Winds Resort Services	3179 Gretna Rd, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Sweet Magnolia Tours	3044 Shepherd of the Hills Expy #310, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Tennessee Tickets	5016 Spedale Ct #163 Spring Hill, TN 37174-6105	Ticket Sellers
Terina Marketing	1105 W 76 Country Blvd, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Terry's Discount Tickets	190 Potential Drive Hollister, MO 65672	Ticket Sellers
Tripster Travel (previously Reserve Direct)	523 MO-248, Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers
Vacations Made Easy	1635 W. Walnut St. Springfield, MO 65806	Ticket Sellers
VIP Tours of Branson	3027 W Missouri 76 Branson, MO 65616	Ticket Sellers

Appendix 4/5/6: FullSurvey Analyses

(provided as separate PDF attachments)