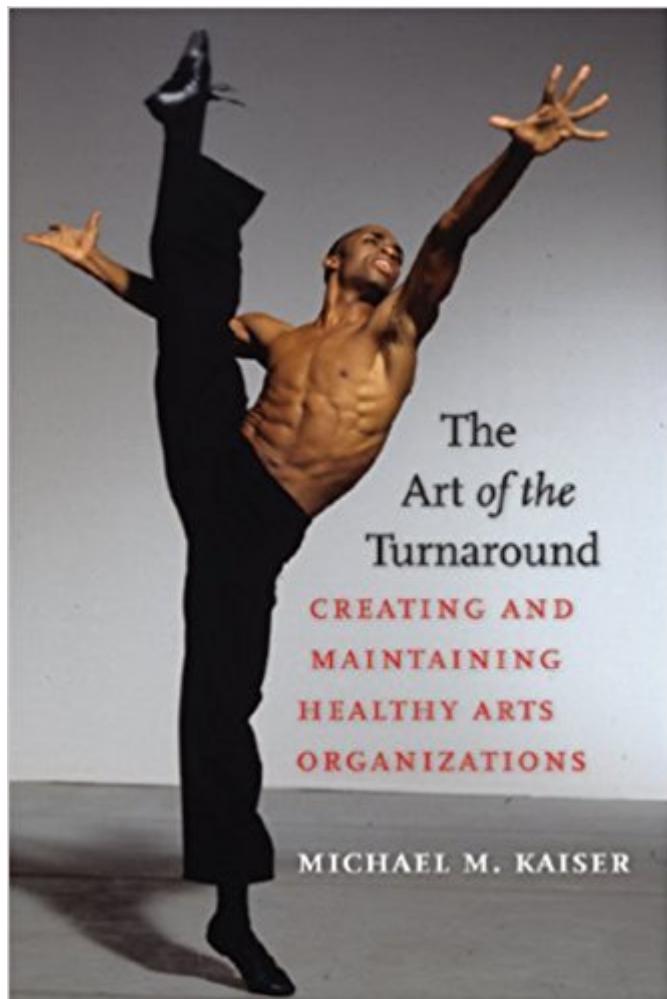


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# The Art Of The Turnaround: Creating And Maintaining Healthy Arts Organizations



## Synopsis

Many arts organizations today find themselves in financial difficulties because of economic constraints inherent in the industry. While other companies can improve productivity through the use of new technologies or better systems, these approaches are not available in the arts. Hamlet requires the same number of performers today as it did in Shakespeare's time. The New York Philharmonic requires the same number of musicians now as it did when Tchaikovsky conducted it over one hundred years ago. Costs go up, but the size of theaters and the price resistance of patrons limit what can be earned from ticket sales. Therefore, the performing arts industry faces a severe gap between earnings and expenses. Typical approaches to closing the gap—raising ticket prices or cutting artistic or marketing expenses—don't work. What, then, does it take to create and maintain a healthy arts organization? Michael M. Kaiser has revived four major arts organizations: the Kansas City Ballet, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theatre, and London's Royal Opera House. In *The Art of the Turnaround* he shares with readers his ten basic rules for bringing financially distressed arts organizations back to life and keeping them strong. These rules cover the requirements for successful leadership, the pitfalls of cost cutting, the necessity of extending the programming calendar, the centrality of effective marketing and fund raising, and the importance of focusing on the present with a positive public message. In chapters organized chronologically, Kaiser brings his ten rules vividly to life in discussions of the four arts organizations he is credited with saving. The book concludes with a chapter on his experiences at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, an arts organization that needed an artistic turnaround when he became the president in 2001 and that today exemplifies in practice many of the ten rules he discusses throughout his book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The remarkable thing about this book - to one who ploughs through a few of them - is that it is readable! Most books on any aspect of fundraising are prescriptive, bulleted to death, and lend themselves readily to Power Point presentations. Can I be more abusive of the genre than that? Mr. Kaiser's book makes none of these mistakes. Instead he gives you a superb distillation of his experience in a neat package - up front. Busy managers and other important folk need read no further. They would be idiots if they did not since the bulk of the book is a series of "cases" - tales - about the experiences that led Mr. Kaiser to his list of essentials of charity management. He calls it "turnaround". And I'm sure the principles apply very well to any turnarounds you might be planning. But the real reason for persisting with this book is that its applications are much broader than that. It's a great guide for any ED struggling with his or her board - and there are many insights that you can relate to those struggles and principles you can adhere to that will serve you well. It's a brilliant training tool for anyone who wants to teach fundraising in most of its varied aspects - how do you present the organization to prospective or past donors as a viable entity they should be thrilled to support? ("invest in" if you want the current parlance.) How do you identify and know these donors? How do you sustain relations with these donors? And how in the long term do you turn these donors into the bedrock of your charity? Working through Mr. Kaiser's cases with students, and even practised fundraisers, would be a stirring way to energize, or re-energize, your fundraising staff.

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