

NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE – GROUNDBREAKING. RISK-TAKING. PLACEMAKING.

A GROUNDBREAKING MISSION

For over 50 years, The National Black Theatre (NBT) has been at the forefront of creating a home for Black culture as a means to educate, enrich, entertain, empower and inform the national conscience around social justice issues that impact local, national and global communities.

Founded by Dr. Barbara Ann Teer in 1968, NBT's unique approach to art, entrepreneurship and placemaking act as a change agent to combat systematic oppression that impacts diasporic Black people in America and globally. The organization has worked with trailblazing arts leaders, and has served as a rigorous laboratory, training ground and incubator for Black artists, designers, playwrights, producers, actors and stage managers seeking to develop the business skills needed to be autonomous in their own practices.

Beyond its local footprint, NBT's influence reaches and impacts both national and global audiences, with ongoing partnerships in Nigeria, South Africa, and most recently with the establishment of the National Black Theatre of Sweden. The institution has invested over \$10 million in the production and development of 300+ original works by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) actors, producers, directors, choreographers, television and filmmakers, and visual artists.

RISK-TAKING WORK

NBT uses a multidisciplinary theatrical approach as a means to center, humanize and heal Black communities through the power of unapologetic Black storytelling; inducing transcultural empathy, awareness, and humanity to create systemic pathways for meaningful transformation, wellbeing and change.

NBT generates holistic solutions that address the present pulse needs of the field and its community through four programmatic arms:

Production . NBT's *Theater Arts Program* is the institution's primary program, generating an annual performance season and developing/nurturing playwrights, directors and producers;

Incubation . NBT's *Entrepreneurial Arts Program* incubates smaller cultural organizations, providing year-round space rental, subsidy and event management support;

Education . NBT's *Communication Arts Program* is an innovative alternative learning program that uses social justice/impact issues to teach, showcase and train others in its pedagogy around self determination, empowerment and liberation; and

Advocacy . NBT's *Civic Leadership for Communal Growth*, utilizes NBT's platform to advance the civic and social needs of the communities NBT serves.

During this transitional moment for the entire cultural industry, due to the impact of COVID-19, NBT is continuing to work at establishing itself as a 21st century destination, for cultural experimentation, learning, gathering and emboldened artistry – both, in the world and online. Working outside of the confines of a formal space, NBT is building its digital programming NBT@Home and, NBT Beyond Walls, connecting with audiences in new ways, and expanding its connections within the broader arts community – local to global.

A PLACEMAKING NATIONAL CULTURAL DESTINATION

For nearly 50 years, NBT has operated at 125th and Fifth Avenue (now named National Black Theatre Way). Self determination and property ownership are values seeded by NBT's Founder, and in 1984, she secured a permanent home for NBT by purchasing the city block. NBT has recently formulated a plan to ensure that its facility is competitively positioned for Harlem's future – embarking on an historic redevelopment of its landmark property to anchor and recapitalize the institution for a bright future.

Leveraging real estate investments continues to be near the center of NBT's sustainability, and the new development (anchored by a multi-use residential/commercial building) will not only endow NBT with a \$30 million state-of-the-art facility, but will also leverage the various tenants in the new building to expand both NBT's active and passive income streams.

Once completed, the new NBT experience will be spectacular on all fronts – encompassing design, atmosphere, operations, programming, traditional Yoruba sculpture, outdoor/indoor space, areas, exhibits, and merchandising. The project will continue moving NBT forward in its vision of creating the model for a culturally specific, commercially sustained performing arts complex dedicated to an Afrocentric worldview.

THE POSITION

National Black Theatre seeks an entrepreneurial and business-minded executive to serve as **Chief Operating Officer**. Partnering with the Chief Executive Officer and the Artistic Director, she/he/they will play a significant role in furthering the organization's mission and vision, and expand the reach and impact of this vital cultural institution.

NBT is at a catalytic time in its development, with opportunities rapidly surfacing that offer prospects for growth. The institution's programming, facility, staffing structure, and board are shifting and evolving. It is expected that the COO will balance the efforts of the CEO and the Artistic Director with dynamic business, financial and operational modeling, and infrastructure building that ensure NBT's ongoing viability. Together, the team of three will form a close-knit, collaborative executive team, strategically focused on NBT's stability, expansion, capital redevelopment and growth.

Reporting to the CEO, and overseeing a current organizational budget of \$1.3 million, the COO will work to establish and/or standardize organization-wide policies, procedures, operations, earned revenue models and communication protocols. She/He/They will provide budgeting support for the institution's strategic planning, operating and capital activities.

Construction of the new facility is slated to begin next year. During the multi-year redevelopment, NBT will take up residence in the Apollo's new Victoria Theater. The COO will assume responsibility for the continuity of NBT's operations during this transitional period, ensuring that all are efficient and effectively support the organization's programs. She/He/They will also play a significant role in strategizing the build-out of the NBT's new permanent home.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is further expected that the Chief Operating Officer will have specific responsibility to:

Strategic Leadership & Organization Standardization

- Refine and optimize sustainable operating policies and practices that position the organization to be in solid health – allowing for multiple revenue streams, expense management protocols and growth strategies;
- Take day-do-day responsibility for the ongoing long-term strategic planning process. Set an annual organization-wide planning calendar; establish evaluation benchmarks to serve as a point of reference in assessing the organization’s performance of its strategic plan;
- Evaluate business performance by analyzing and interpreting data and metrics;
- Participate in expansion activities, including investments; work with the CEO and Artistic Director to evaluate new partnerships and/or business ventures; ensure that the commercial potential of NBT is maximized;
- Structure and manage the monetization of recently developed digital, and other newly commissioned assets;

Financial Management

- Direct the preparation of short-term and long-range financial plans to support strategic business goals; forecast and manage operating and capital activity against budget;
- Working with the CEO, Artistic Director, and senior staff, oversee the assembly of the annual operating budget for presentation to the NBT Board;
- Provide rigorous financial oversight at both the institutional and project levels; assess, reinforce and guide NBT’s sustainability formula for fiscal viability;
- Regularly assess the overall financial functions, ensuring that the accounting, bookkeeping, audit, budgeting, general ledger, bank reconciliations and taxes are organized and accurate;

Human Resources (Staff & Contractors)

- Working with the CEO and Artistic Director, create and sustain a generative, compassionate culture of accountability; lead employees in a way that encourages maximum performance and dedication;

- Help maintain an effective staffing structure;
- Ensure sound organizational development and HR practices, effective management, accountability measures, clearly articulated expectation and professional development opportunities;
- Manage NBT’s professional services relationships, including legal counsel, auditors, and insurance broker, among others;

Operations, Productions, and Physical Plant

- Work successfully with NBT’s senior management team in support of their departmental needs with respect to both use of the building and operational policies and procedures;
- Support the redevelopment of NBT’s physical site, including plans for operationalizing the new building; provide for the development and management of a plan to maintain the new physical structure;
- Through appropriate staffing, oversee facilities rental revenue, helping to optimize income streams;
- Review all institutional contracts, insurance policies, compliance and other operating-related agreements; coordinate with legal counsel to manage exposure;
- Ensure that appropriate IT solutions are employed to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness;
- Develop and install tools, procedures and controls to promote communication and adequate information flow within the organization;
- Ensure that organization activities and operations are carried out in compliance with local, state and federal regulations and laws governing business operations;
- Implement and manage an effective CRM system;

Board

- Staff meetings of the Board of Directors and Board committees as requested by CEO;
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting to the Board on all financial and operational matters.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate should have:

- Senior-level leadership responsibility with an institution known for quality and excellence; a record of success managing people, operations and fiscal affairs;
- Strong strategic vision and agility, skilled at planning and problem solving, particularly as relates to the development of integrated programmatic, business, financial and information systems required to support a growing, multi-layered organization;
- Solid experience with financial management and budget development/oversight; knowledge of cash management and nonprofit accounting, including fund and grant accounting, compliance and reporting;
- Experience negotiating and navigating constructive partnerships and deals with a broad range of external stakeholders; Skills in business/financial modeling, forecasting and analysis;
- An ability to communicate effectively, in writing and verbally, with diverse audiences, internally and externally;
- Working knowledge of data analysis, performance and operation metrics;
- Capital projects management, and experience with site-based operations is a plus;
- An MBA or comparable advanced degree, or knowledge, skills and experience equivalent to an advanced degree in finance and/or management.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should be:

- Fully aligned with, and committed to, NBT's mission, vision, theory of change, and goals;
- A quickly adaptable self-starter, able to thrive in a fast-paced institutional environment;
- Politically savvy and diplomatic; able to negotiate and navigate change graciously, while remaining clear, decisive, proactive, and fair;
- A committed team builder, with sound judgment and an affinity for process; must impart credibility, trust, enthusiasm, integrity, and motivate others in the same vein;

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- Service-oriented; open and responsive to the ideas of others; willing to take responsible risks;
- A creative, resourceful, and detail-oriented problem solver, who listens deeply, and can design and explore systems and procedures to fit current and long-term needs; able to anticipate and act on events which may create opportunities for NBT;
- A “doer” with a high energy level and a willingness to develop and execute a variety of activities ranging from the day-to-day to the broadly strategic;
- A self-motivated and open personality, with tenacity, pragmatism, curiosity and patience; at home in an organization where mutual respect, collegiality and joy are valued.

Equal employment opportunity and having a diverse staff are fundamental principles at National Black Theatre, where employment and promotional opportunities are based upon individual capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation/preference, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status or any other protected characteristic as established under law.

To apply for this position, please forward a resume, as well as a substantive cover letter outlining your interests and qualifications via e-mail to:

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