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Steppenwolf Setting the Stage to Attract Millennials

Steppenwolf and Patricia Martin Release eBook on How to Adapt to the Millennial Mindset in Marketing Communications

CHICAGO—December 7, 2010—In an effort to usher in the next generation of theater goers, Steppenwolf Theatre Company is taking experimental steps to help younger audiences—ages 22 to 30—feel at home in the theater. Besides adding a \$3 bottle of Pabst Blue Ribbon—a retro beer beloved by Millennials—to the drink menu, Steppenwolf recently surprised Facebook fans with an impromptu party, launched an iPhone app and began offering unprecedented sneak peeks into the playwriting production process.

Steppenwolf's cultural costume change began happening over a year ago when it hired Chicago-based Patricia Martin, author, researcher and culture analyst, to interview brands famous for marketing to Millennials in an era of social media, such as Ford Motor, Google and Red Bull and to provide recommendations on best practices and lessons learned from the field.

The resulting eBook that Martin authored, "Tipping the Culture: How Engaging Millennials Will Change Things," is being distributed by the "Leading for the Future Initiative," a program of the Nonprofit Finance Fund so other organizations in the performing arts world and beyond can learn from the findings. The study and the Initiative are made possible by funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

"We've been delighted to discover that Steppenwolf and Millennials share important beliefs: we place a high value on learning and we want to break down the barriers between artists and audience," said Linda Garrison, Director of Marketing and Communications for Steppenwolf. "Our aim is to capture every opportunity to have this target audience feel as comfortable at Steppenwolf as they do in their other cultural relationships."

According to the study, marketers who are connecting powerfully with Millennials do three things well: make a lifestyle connection, transfer knowledge by giving customers a glimpse behind the curtain and provide a platform that lets customers co-create with the company.

"Simply launching a Facebook page isn't going to cut it," said Martin, who spent months getting inside the minds of Millennials and examining their cultural rituals. "When done correctly, marketing to Millennials will change the culture of an organization from the inside out."

"Steppenwolf is at the forefront of investing in the creative engagement of the next generation of theater goers," said Rebecca Thomas, Vice President of Consulting Services at Nonprofit Finance Fund.

Ben Cameron, Program Director of Arts at Doris Duke, said: "Our hope is that this report will help other arts and entertainment organizations find the common ground that they share with Millennials and set the stage for the future of the industry as a whole."

About Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Committed to the principle of ensemble performance through the collaboration of a company of actors, directors and playwrights, Steppenwolf Theatre Company's mission is to advance the vitality and diversity of American theater by nurturing artists, encouraging repeatable creative relationships and contributing new works to the national canon. The company, formed in 1976 by a collective of actors, is dedicated to perpetuating an ethic of mutual respect and the development of artists through on-going group work. Steppenwolf has grown into an internationally renowned company of 43 artists whose talents include acting, directing, playwriting and textual adaptation. For additional information, visit www.steppenwolf.org, www.facebook.com/SteppenwolfTheatre and www.twitter.com/SteppenwolfThtr.

About Patricia Martin

Patricia Martin is a recognized expert in commerce and culture. Independent researcher and author of the book *Renaissance Generation: The Rise of the Cultural Consumer and What it Means to Your Business*, Martin pioneered the point of view that the convergence of art, technology and entertainment is remaking the American consumer. CEO and founder of LitLamp Communications, Martin tunes in to social tremors before they become trends to help clients win hearts and change minds. She conjured a strategy for the Asian tour of the New York Philharmonic, spearheaded a viral Information Privacy initiative funded by George Soros, launched Animal Planet, introduced Dannon products into school lunch rooms nationwide, and re-focused Sun Microsystems' higher education marketing strategy.

About Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (www.ddcf.org) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child abuse, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.

About the Nonprofit Finance Fund

A national leader in social sector finance, Nonprofit Finance Fund connects money to mission success through consulting, innovation, and direct investment. Founded in 1980, NFF (www.nonprofitfinancefund.org) provides services that build the capacity and durability of nonprofits. A leading community development financial institution with over \$80 million in assets, NFF has provided over \$200 million in loans and access to additional financing via grants, tax credits and capital in support of over \$1 billion in projects for nonprofit clients nationwide. NFF has a staff of more than 80 serving nonprofits nationally from offices in New York City, Philadelphia, Newark, Boston, Detroit, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

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