The Play's The Thing:
Literary Management for the Playwrights' Revolution

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The Company

Capital Stage is a small professional theater company in Northern California. Since 2007 they have produced the Playwrights' Revolution as a summer series that provides exposure to five to seven previously unproduced plays through staged readings, inviting artist and audience feedback for the playwrights. They now receive up to 300 submissions for the series each year.

The Information Problem

"Honestly, sometimes it's just piles of scripts ...it's terrible but it's true"
– Stephanie Tucker, PhD

Capital Stage is committed to fairly reviewing and responding to each submission, including a minimum of two readers for each script. Due to the ongoing growth of the series, a formal process is needed to ensure that the company can meet its goals and reliably select high quality scripts for production.

PLAYWRIGHTS' REVOLUTION

is the playwright art of live theatre; the point of origin in the plays; our culture's story-teller; a revolutionary. the maker of

Growing the Revolution

Capital Stage's recognition continues to grow as a hub for World and West Coast premieres, and new work development. Having a tested information management process for the Playwrights' Revolution series gives the company the tools to systematically and thoughtfully review new submissions.

- Documentation of procedures makes it possible to train new staff or interns to lead this process

- Process is scalable to series growth and transferable to other script submission projects

- Capturing reader comments on the scoring rubric and documenting them in the script catalog provides a detailed historical reference document for the series and can be used in the future to participate in the National New Plays Network's New Play Exchange—a new online database for sharing and reviewing new plays

The Information Solution

I developed a process that is responsive to the company's needs, which included using existing tools that would already be familiar to users.

- Script catalog in a spreadsheet format with standard content descriptions for each field and a linked Google Form for creating entries

- Scoring rubric for readers to normalize submission reviews and provide data to aid in script selection

  – Developed with group consensus on the features that make a script a strong choice for the series

  – Uses a 5-point Likert-type scale for readers to rate each submission on nine criteria

- Weekly volunteer readers meetings to circulate submissions and discuss reader impressions and process feedback

Acknowledgments

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