

Culture needs specific support

Polish cultural institutions are not in the best condition. The main reason is the lack of financial resources that allow them to not only survive, but to offer the audience an interesting experience. How to fix this?

For many years, a number of cultural institutions, such as theaters and art galleries, have faced problems of a financial nature. There is a lack of money for interesting film or artistic projects. This situation has a real impact on what shows are presented to the public, the exhibitions taking place in our country, and what kind of musical concerts come to Poland. It is well known that generally the cultural offerings designed for the public are few. Often, these institutions do not have the financial resources for promotion. Another problem that they face is a lack of ideas for exposing what they have to offer, using hackneyed, obsolete paths for promotion and marketing. There is even a lack of basic knowledge of how to apply for grants awarded by the Polish authorities designated for this.

Help needed

Community centers can take advantage of some of the solutions, but they need to consider not only the strategy of action, but also improvement of their budget. There are many institutions that offer financial assistance, including the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, as well as local governments and NGOs. They are familiar with the requirements and the conditions to be met. Part of their funds come from the European Union.

Applying to corporate companies for sponsoring of a project or the patronage of an entire institution, as happens in the case of the National Museum, is very supportive. Big companies usually spend a large portion of their budget on sponsorship, so they should be interested in whatever offer that institutions make. Fears that sponsorship refers mostly to commercial ventures are inherently wrong. Companies operating in the market direct their services or products to a specific group of people, including those who are interested in classical music and ambitious theater or art exhibitions presenting remarkable artists. There are companies that support cultural projects including mobile phones, such as Plus and Orange, automobile companies, such as Porsche and Citroen, banks, among others, PKO BP and Kulczyk Investments.

Financial resources are not everything. Their skilful distribution, especially if they relate not so much a particular project, but the entire institution is important. Also of importance is promotion, without even the best-financed cultural action may fail. However, so-called specialists "in everything" are not able to provide effective action. Succeeding in this aspect is associated with hiring a worker with experience in public relations and promotion, or working with a professional public relations firm, which will deal with professional advice.

Without promotion there is no success

Even the most interesting art project, exhibition or concert does not arouse interest, if they are not widely promoted. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a strategy for the promotion, which therefore supports the sale. Promotional methods depend not only on the finances allocated for this purpose, but also on the nature of the project. Measures used in organizations such as art exhibitions do not always

pass the exam in preparation of a play or another kind of cultural project. That's why professional public relations specialists advise not only how to apply for funding for the project, but also to prepare a strategy for promoting along with the layout of each action. It is worth it to take advantage of the help of a company that has extensive experience in public relations and marketing, is well versed in the field of culture, and will ensure wide publicity given projects. This type of activity should not deal with the staff of the institutions who have completely different responsibilities and do not have adequate knowledge and experience in promotion. Otherwise there is a risk of not only wasting the budget, but also the lack of interest from potential viewers. At the same time this can cause the loss of a sponsor who will not see further sense to continue the cooperation, since the project has not led to success. Note that sponsorship is not philanthropy and businesses financially support various projects under the condition that I will be able to showcase your brand and image.

Creativity and commerce

In recent years, a number of representatives of culture have protested against its commercialization. The critique is mainly confined to the current system of financing culture in which a major share of which are public funds. They believe that by healing it cannot be the introduction of free-market instruments as an almost exclusive regulators of cultural life in the country. In their opinion, the commercialization of cultural institutions and public media prevents long-term planning activities and makes them dependent on ad hoc demand from the market.

Polish cultural institutions are not able to function without the financial support of companies, which largely transferred the burden of responsibility for the state of culture in Poland. Whether they will give up excessive commercialization depends largely on the institutions themselves and on the functioning of the idea. The sponsor does not force either the media institutions of art or the addressee. Polish society continues to express interest in ambitious art, but you have to listen carefully to its expectations. For example, if there are no spectators in a theater it is often the result of poor promotion, a poor offering or inflated ticket prices. Cultural institutions should solicit the favor of companies as a patron supporting the institution for several years. This will allow them to bring more ambitious exhibitions of art or sophisticated theatrical performances. With the realities of the free market to provide permanent funding for our state, it seems unlikely in the coming years.

*The author of the publication is Arthur Kalinski,
expert in the field of promotion of art and advisor for investment in the arts.*