

The Business of Show Business

Theatre is an art, but it also is a business. The Business Department handles the internal needs of the company—from getting paychecks to employees to handling the theatre’s budget to negotiating contracts for all of the artists. The department is comprised of five-sub departments including Accounting, Information Technology, Operations, Front of House and General Management; this department is the one that keeps a theatre company running.

SCR’s Business Department is Responsible for

- Overseeing the daily internal business of the theatre
- Contracts and negotiations for all artists (actors, directors, designers) and negotiation with artists’ unions (Actors’ Equity Association, Society of Directors and Choreographers, United Scenic Artists)
- Overseeing human resources, information technology support and internal networks
- Handling accounting, payroll, annual audits and insurance needs
- Coordinating with all departments on the organization’s overall budgets
- Front-of-House operations including concessions, the bar and the theatre shop
- Overseeing facility and building operations including maintenance, safety and emergency plans, facilities scheduling and overseeing company-owned vehicles

Jobs at SCR in the Business Department

- General Manager
- Assistant to the General Manager
- Controller
- Lead Accountant
- Payables Accountant
- Payroll Accountant
- Information Technology Manager
- Operations Manager (*Operations Associates & Assistants*)
- Front of House Manager (*House Managers, Bartenders, Volunteer Usbers*)
- Front Office Assistants

How to Get Into this Field

SCR’s General Manager started out “behind-the-scenes” as a theatre production assistant and eventually became a stage manager at various theatres across the country. She has a BA in theatre and an MFA in theatre management and has worked in administration at multiple theatres. She suggests getting as much theatre experience as possible to see if you wish to pursue this as a career. Be as knowledgeable as you can about theatre production—through work in community theatre, summer stock theatre, etc.—as a way to prepare for a career in the business area of theatre. There are many options for degrees, but her advice is to work your way up in an organization.

Qualities That May Help

- Analytic mind
- Appreciation for the arts; understanding of theatrical world
- Self-confidence, decisiveness, ability to assert authority
- Collaborative spirit