

To: Planning & Priorities Committee / TO Live
 From: AMS Team
 Date: August 26, 2021
 Project: 1515 / TO Live
 Re: Internal Survey Results



MEMO

This memo is intended as a pre-read in advance of the Purpose & Organizational Change Workshop. Its contents summarize the results of the TO Live staff and Board alignment survey conducted in July 2021. This input is intended to inform the Planning & Priorities Committee as it engages in the workshop effort and drives toward agreement on TO Live's future purpose.

Survey Sample

This alignment survey which was fielded to the staff and Board of TO Live, accumulated 125 total responses. 54 respondents are currently active members of the staff (43%) and another 54 respondents are furloughed staff members. 7 other staff members identify themselves not as active or furloughed, but rather in front of house or hourly positions which were laid off completely or put on Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (IDEL). The remaining 10 responses (8%) come from Board members.

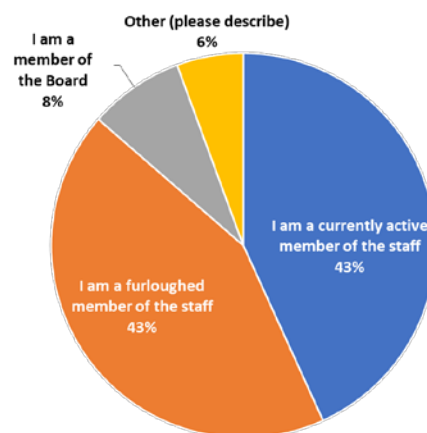


Fig 1: Survey participation

More than half of all respondents indicate that they have a long tenure with TO Live; 58% have been involved with the organization for more than 4 years. The majority of TO Live affiliates who had ties to TO Live venues prior to the organization's amalgamation were associated with Meridian Hall or Meridan Arts Centre.

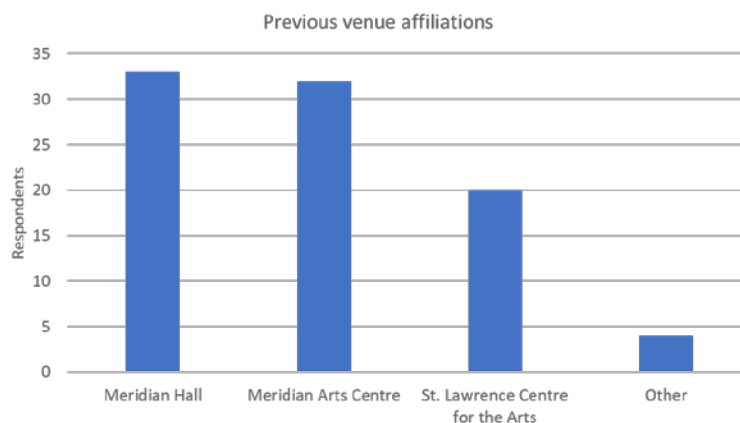


Fig 2: Previous venue affiliations

Summary Results

Alignment survey results reveal that internal stakeholders (Board and staff) mostly agree upon the mission of TO Live as a guiding light for the future of the organization, but that there is room for improvement based upon its historical execution. Community relationship building is offered as a critical element in executing that mission, including creating welcoming spaces for audiences of all kinds, and enabling access to venues by local arts groups. Offering both diverse activity and accessible venues is paramount; inclusivity and access means attracting a diverse constituency to engage with existing TO Live venue assets.

Both TO Live Presents and programming partnerships with partners of all kinds are considered very important to the future. Presumably these distinct roles can be accomplished using the various venue assets at TO Live's disposal, as different venues may have different programming mandates. Diversification of revenue, including continued efforts to procure government funding and development of new sources of earned revenue, will also be important to the future.

Lines of communication between leadership and staff call for critical reexamination. Other important objectives include developing a clear understanding of the distinction between roles of the Board and staff, and fostering a board with more diverse voices and skill sets.

Mission execution & importance

The mission of TO Live:

TO Live believes that the arts are crucial to create healthy, vibrant and engaged diverse communities. TO Live strives for excellence in everything we do. We are stewards of landmark city theatres and activate our spaces through programming and rentals. We are a creative hub for audiences, artists, and all those who work with us.



The survey queried staff and Board respondents about their assessment of both the historical execution of the mission statement (after amalgamation), and the relative importance of the mission statement to the future of the organization. Nearly half (48%) of staff and Board respondents rated historical mission execution as either a “4” or “5” (on a 5-point scale), while nearly three quarters (74%) rated the future importance of the mission as “4” or “5”, representing opportunity for future focus. Though there is room to improve on mission execution, we are encouraged by the fact that the current mission statement is considered important by most internal stakeholders.

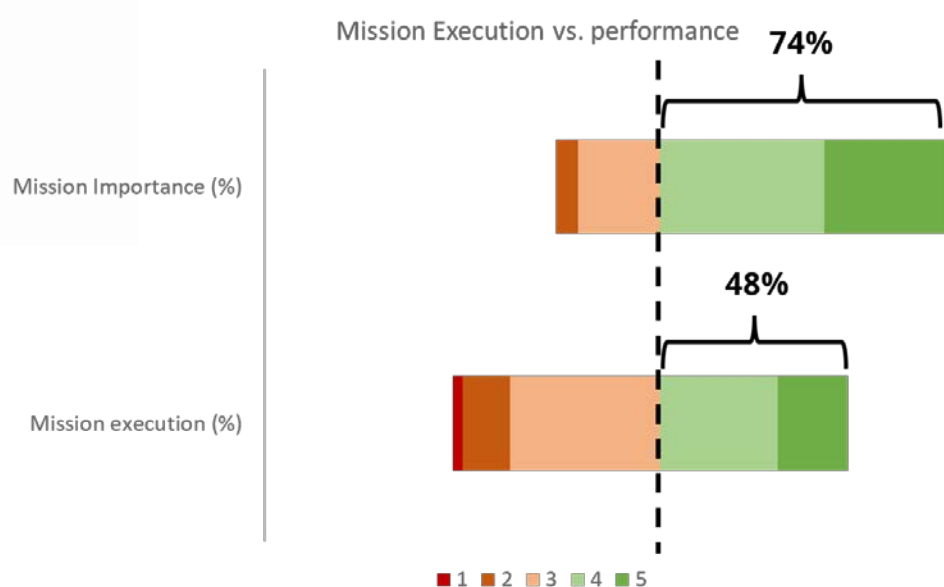


Fig 3: Rated historical mission execution and future importance on a 5-point scale

Though nearly half of respondents believe that TO Live’s early performance relative to mission was sufficient, the other half, who maintain the dissenting view of historical mission performance, consist primarily of long-tenured staff members. 52% of staff who have been with the organization for at least 4 years rated past mission execution as “3” or below. Five out of ten responding Board members also rated mission execution as “3” or below.

Meanwhile, 27% of staff members rated the mission’s relevance to the future of TO Live as a “3” or below, whereas a slightly greater portion of Board members (4 of 10) rated the future relevance similarly.

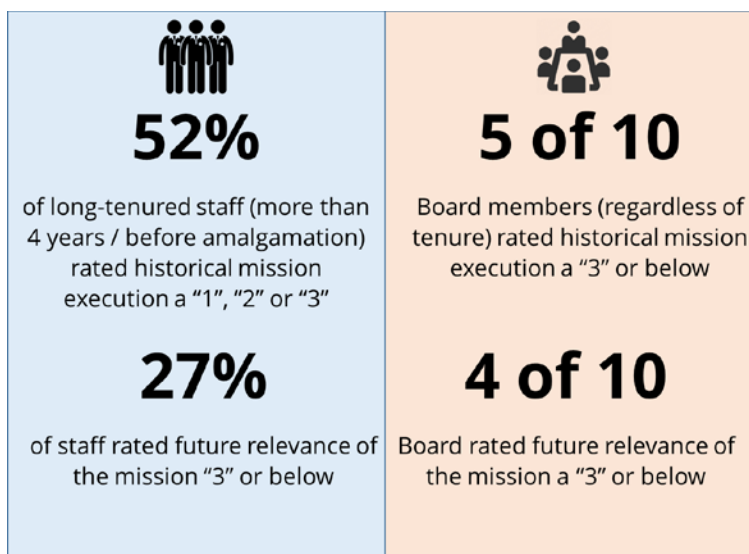


Fig 4: A dissenting viewpoint on mission importance and execution

Future Priorities

An array of future priorities was posed to staff and Board members, who rated their importance to the future success of TO Live. Over 90% of respondents rated statements related to building community relationships and supporting local artists as 'essential' or 'important' to the future of the organization. Overall, respondents believe it is most critical for a future TO Live organization to 'form deeper relationships with the culturally diverse communities in and around Toronto'; 'Be a significant resource for Toronto's artists and arts organizations'; and, 'offer quality technical and production facilities to rental, corporate event, and private clients.'

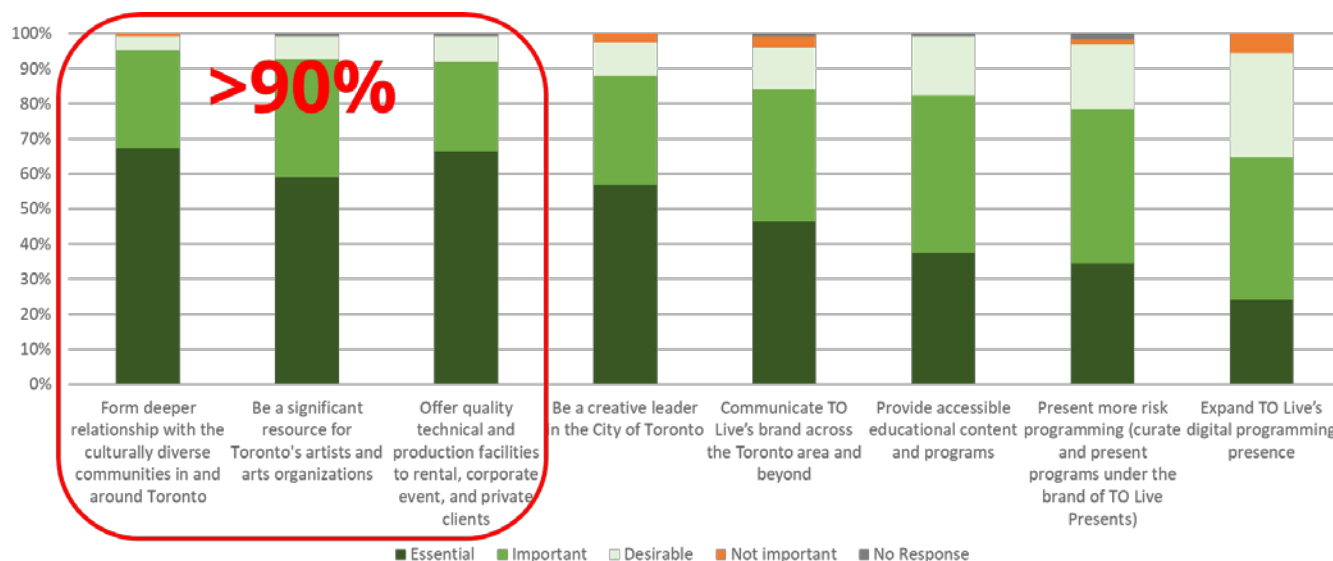


Fig 5: Future priorities



As demonstrated in the figure below, staff and Board members are strongly aligned around the importance of TO Live's future efforts to form deeper relationships with culturally diverse communities. All respondents also believe that it is important for the organization to continue to offer high quality technical and production facilities. While the staff believes in the importance of providing accessible educational content, Board members view this as less important overall. Meanwhile, Board members feel strongly about the importance of TO Live's role as a creative leader in the City of Toronto.

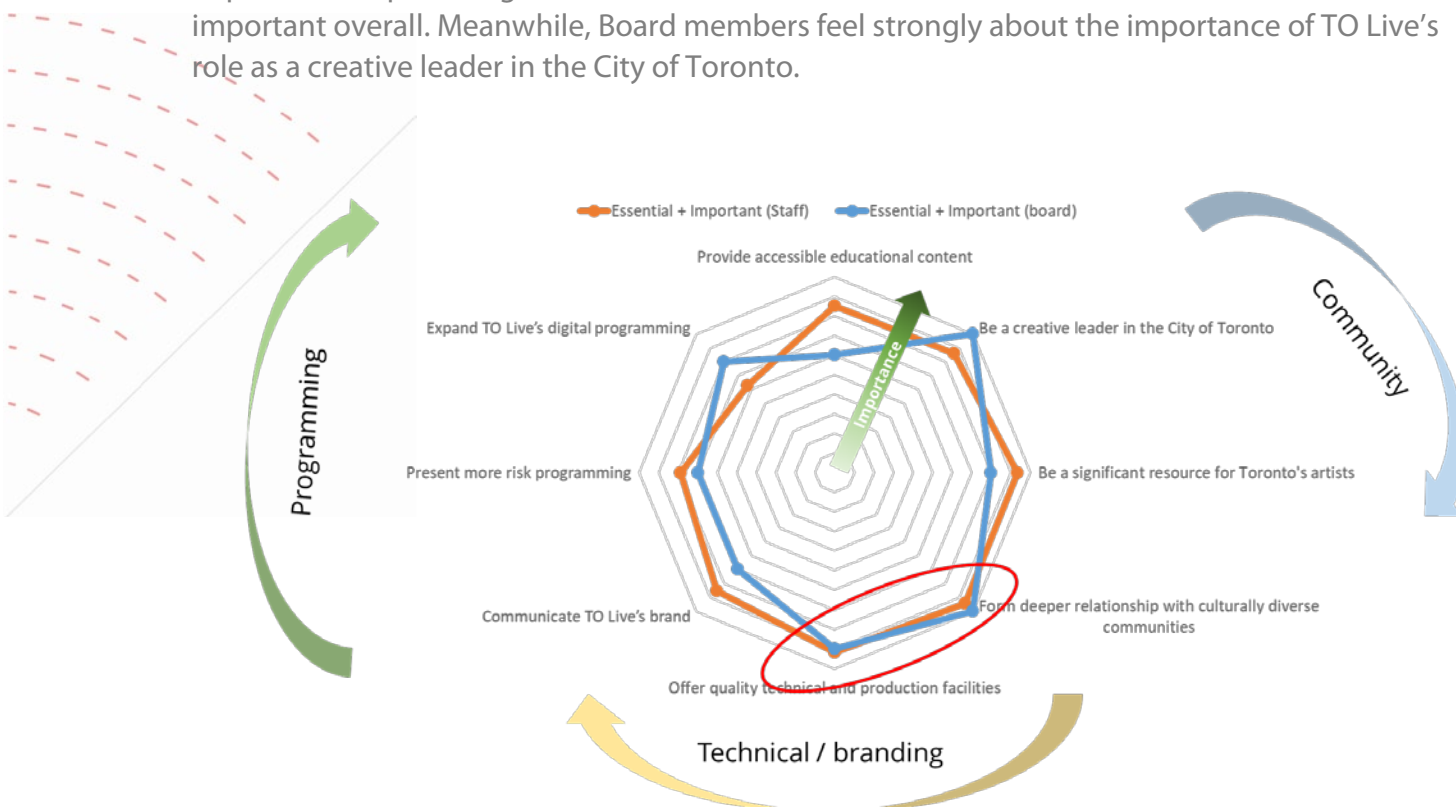


Fig 6: Alignment between staff and Board around future priorities

Activity & Audience

More than nine in ten respondents believe in engaging diversity through initiatives and programs. 96% of respondents believe that it is 'important' or 'essential' for TO Live to 'make special efforts to be inclusive of all races, ethnicities, abilities, genders and ages'; 96% also believe in the importance of 'presenting diverse programming serving the entire community (including culturally diverse groups)'.

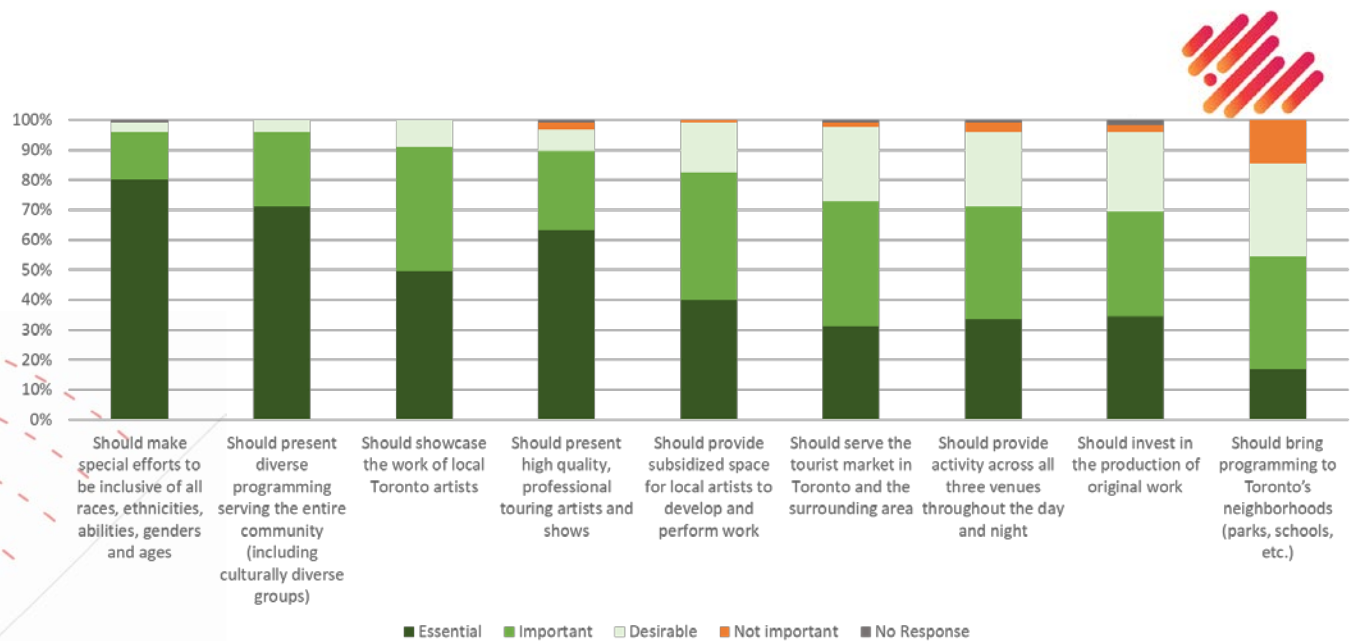


Fig 7: Activity & Audience

In line with diverse and accessible activity, there is also a strong emphasis on both showcasing local Toronto artists and presenting high-quality tours and shows. TO Live's internal stakeholders believe that activity should be centered around their venues and spaces, rather than in Toronto's other neighborhoods.

Staff and Board maintain strong alignment and shared emphasis on inclusiveness, diversity, and serving local artists, while both parties agree that bringing programs into the neighborhood is not as important.

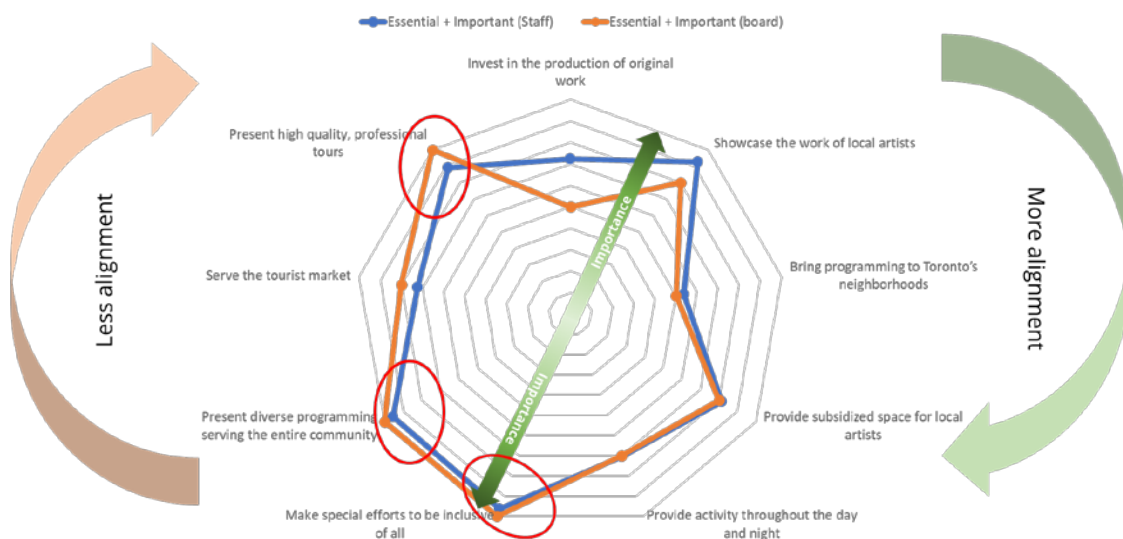


Fig 8: Alignment between staff and Board around activity & audience



Programs

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of specific programs in realizing TO Live's mission in the future. Most respondents believe that it will be important for TO Live to continue presenting their own series, including BMO Dance Collection, national touring acts, and children & family programs. Nearly 90% of respondents also believe that it is important to maintain key partnerships with organizations in the not-for-profit sector, including those with Canadian Stage, Toronto Fringe, and Fall for Dance North.

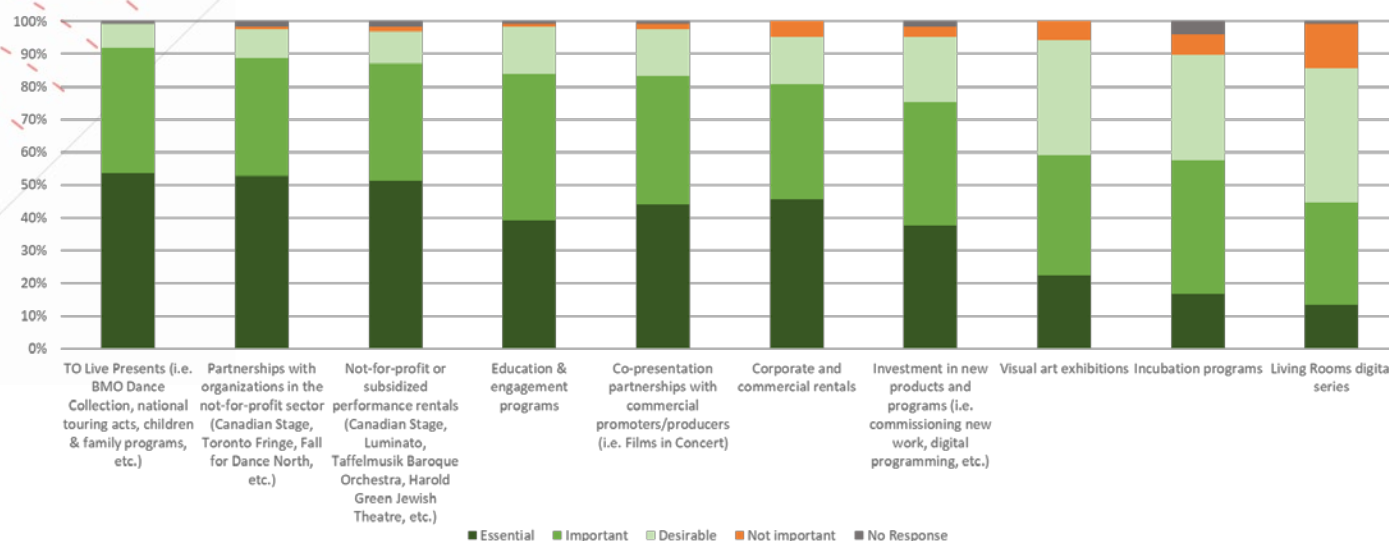


Fig 9: Programs

Alignment between staff and Board is strongest around both promoter/producer and not-for-profit partnerships, education and engagement programs as well as rentals of all kinds, including corporate and commercial rentals and not-for-profit or subsidized rentals.

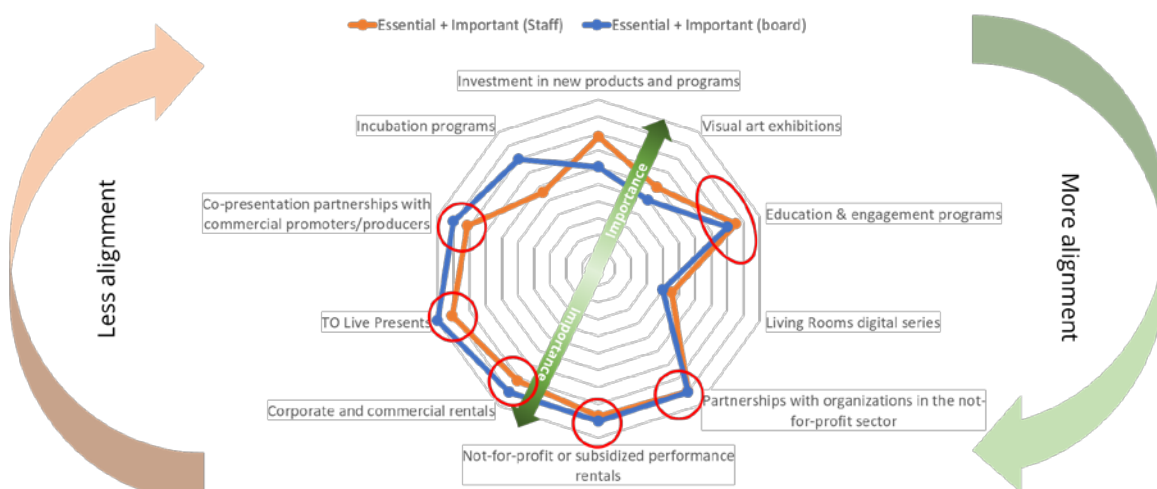


Fig 10: Alignment between staff and Board around program



Financial & Human Resources

When asked about TO Live's operating future, the preponderance of respondents assert that operating monies should come from across all levels of government, as well as from the pursuit of new sources of earned revenue. 98% of respondents believe that it is important or essential to 'advocate for support from all levels of government', and 95% feel the same about finding and engaging new sources of earned revenue.

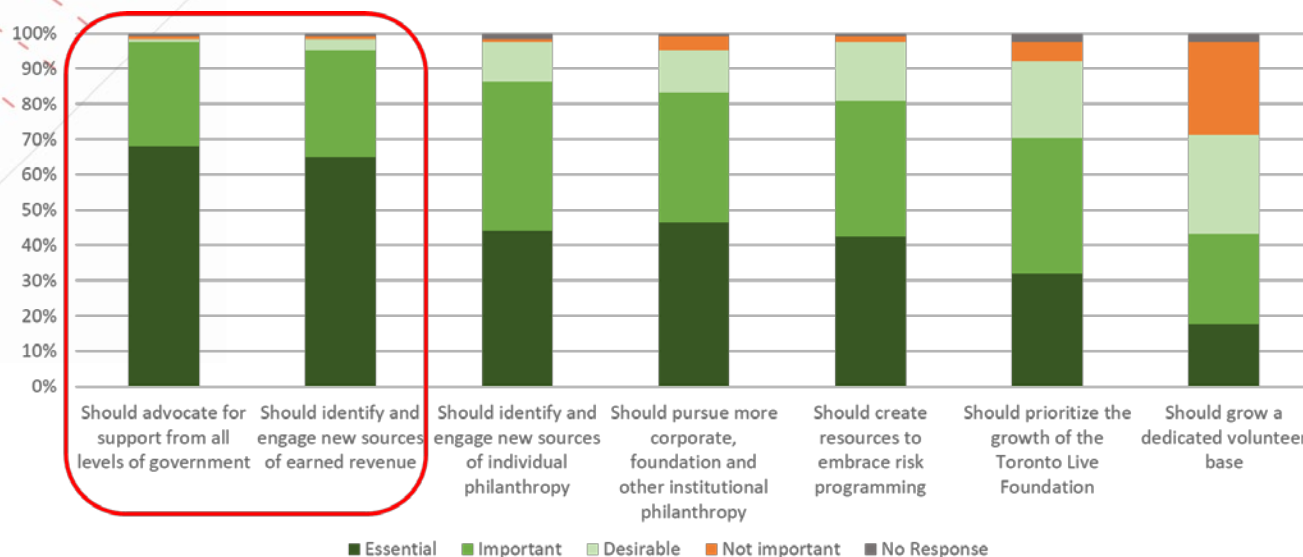


Fig 11: Financial & Human Resources

From an operational perspective, internal stakeholders say that it is much less important for TO Live to look to the Foundation or grow a dedicated volunteer base.

Staff and Board are aligned around the importance of revenue diversification, including engaging new sources of earned revenue, seeking government support, and identifying new sources of individual philanthropy. Overall, Board members feel more strongly about prioritizing other potential revenue opportunities (foundation, corporate) and other assets (TO Live Foundation, volunteer base, risk/opportunity fund).

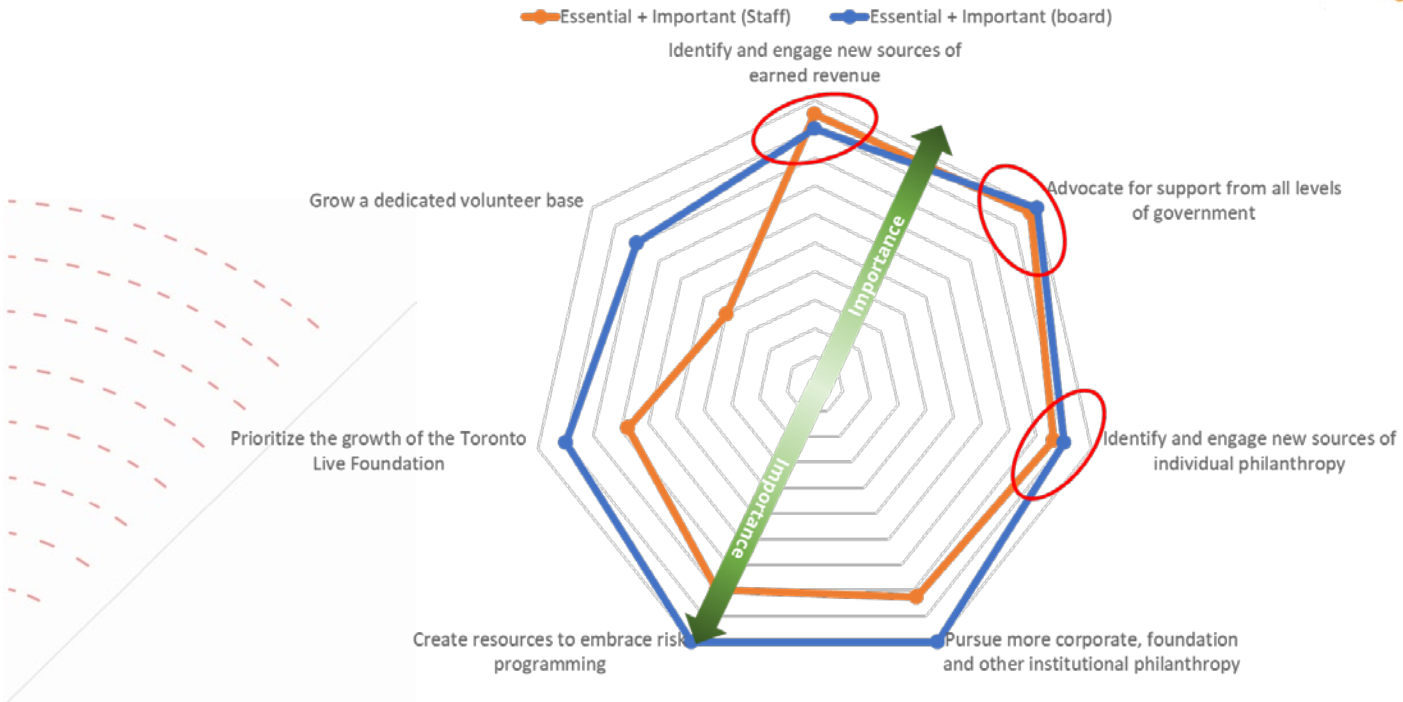


Fig 12: Alignment between staff and Board around financial & human resources

Staff Perspective

Staff believe that internal culture at TO Live should be centered around diversity and inclusion. 93% of staff members say that it is 'important' or 'essential' for TO Live to make an intentional commitment to IDEA training and practices, as well as develop a staff and Board who represent the diversity of the city. 91% of staff also view internal learning, collaboration, and innovation as critical to the future.

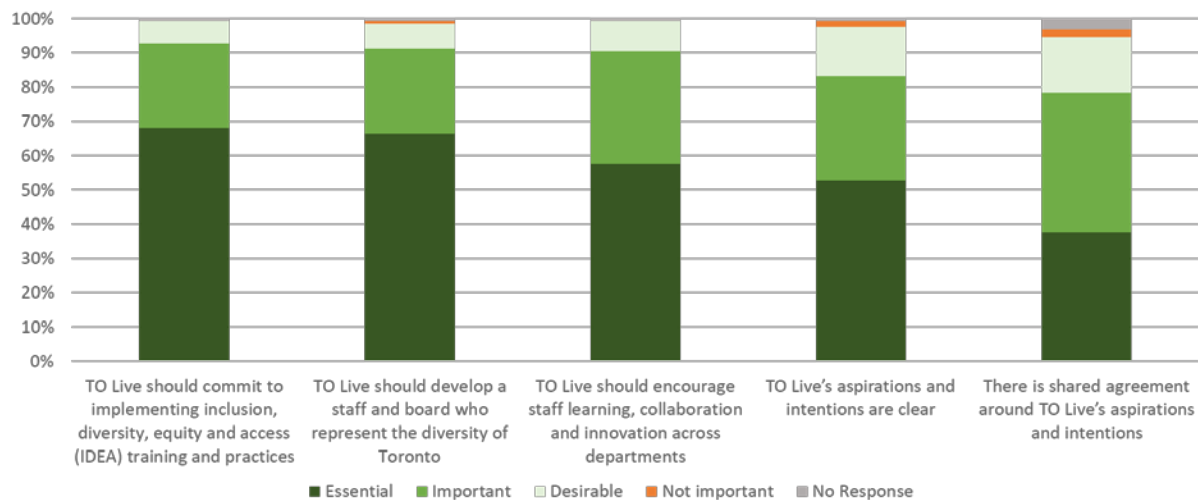


Fig 13: Importance of internal culture elements (staff rated)



Staff (both current and furloughed) were also asked about their perception of the definition of their role, and the provision of resources in support of their work. 60% of staff feel adequately resourced, and 75% believe that their role is clearly defined within the context of the organization.



Fig 14: Role and resource assessment

That said, nearly one in five furloughed staff (19%), and 12% of active staff members, *'disagree'* that their role is clearly defined. Meanwhile, approximately one third of both active and furloughed staff do not believe that they have the resources and information they need to work efficiently in their role.

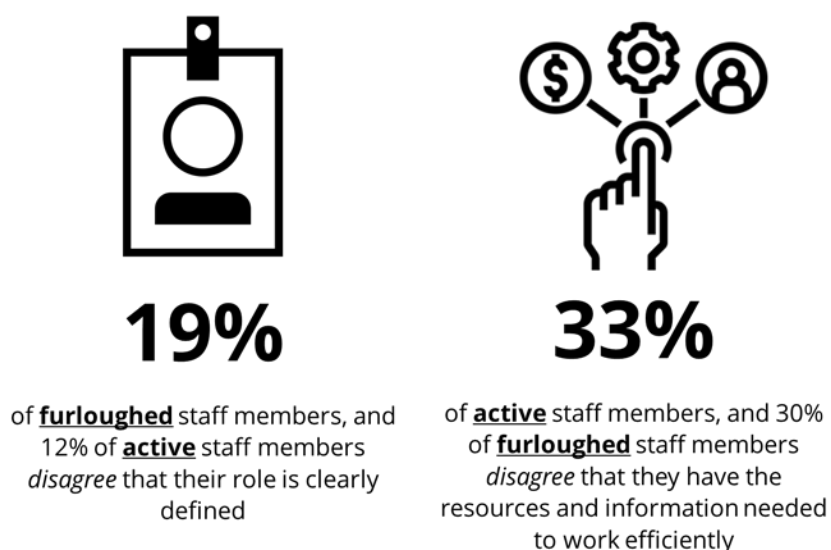


Fig 15: Role and resource assessment (dissenting view)



Further input from staff members garners a series of challenges which are centered around a need for investment in lines of communication. Staff suggest the importance of investing thoughtfully in inclusivity and access, as well as in training and professional development opportunities. They also say that there is room for improvement in communication, particularly for frontline workers at TO Live (FOH, ushers, variable labor, etc.). Staff also express that both bureaucratic challenges and a weak institutional brand identity are cause for frustration.

Board Perspective

Board members were also asked a series of questions regarding their perception of the role of the Board as a whole, in juxtaposition to their roles as individual contributors to the Board. Board members indicate that the primary role of the Board is to serve as a strategic voice, working to set TO Live's priorities and course, and employing resources accordingly. They also mostly agree in their role as generator, bringing wisdom and insight to issues facing TO Live.

Board members say that they clearly understand their responsibilities, but are less inclined to understand the distinction between their role and the role of staff members in serving the organization.

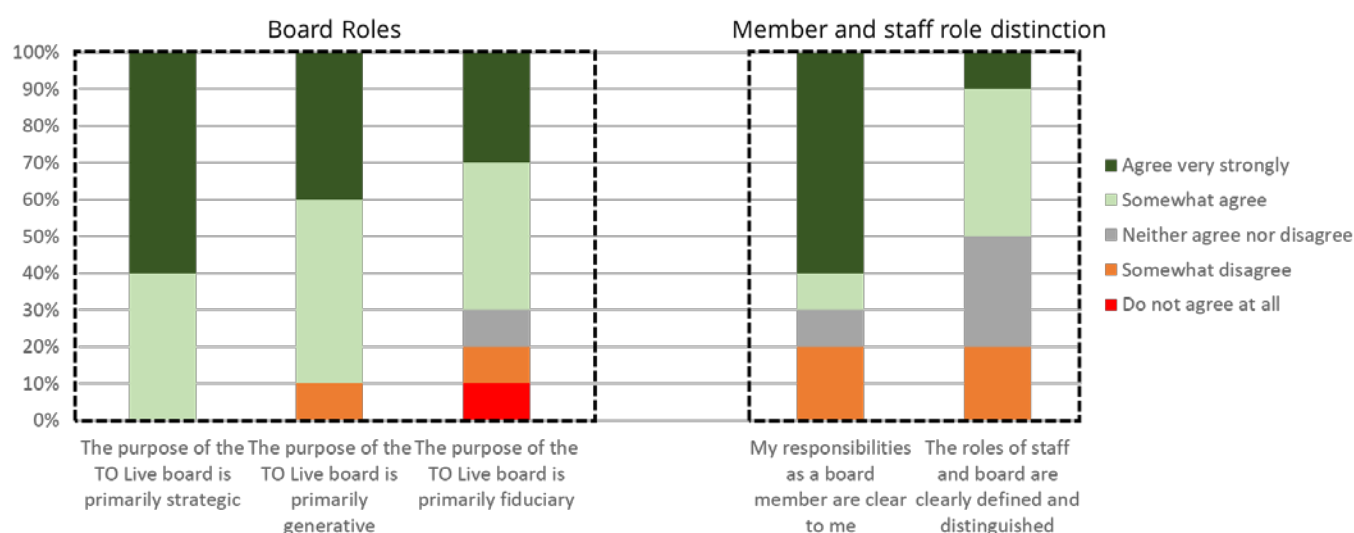


Fig 16: Board roles and responsibilities

Board members overwhelmingly agree that they personally understand the Toronto arts and culture scene, but feel less confident in their understanding of issues specific to TO Live and other performing arts centres. Members also believe more strongly in their own knowledge base than the knowledge of the board as a whole.

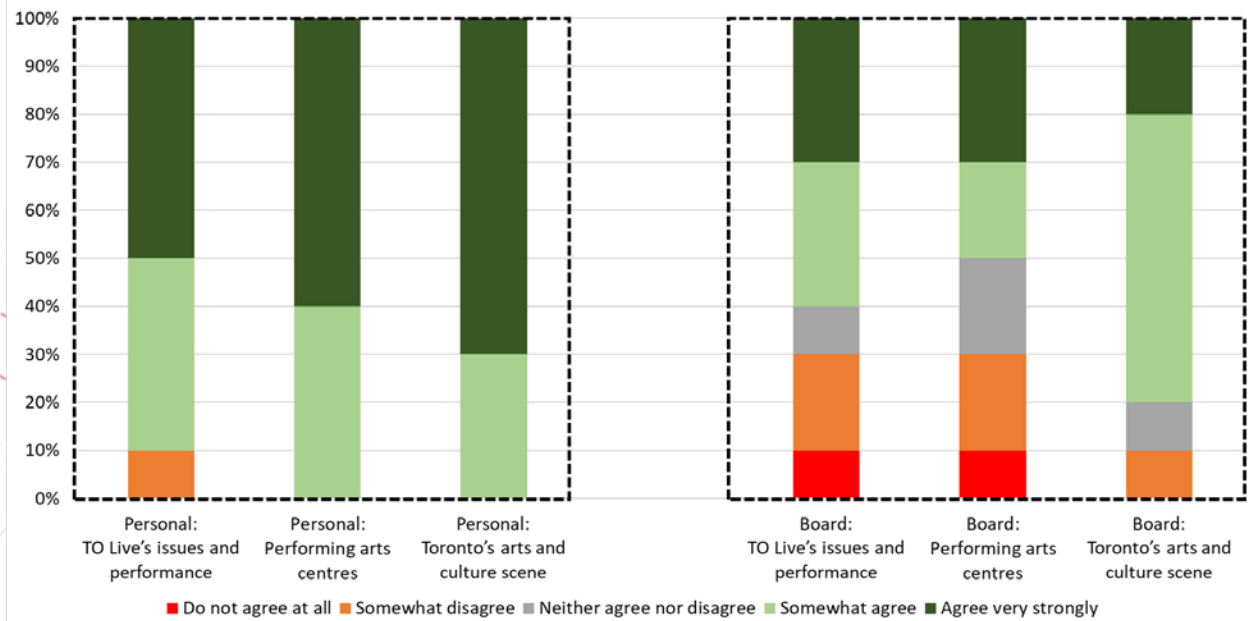


Fig 17: Board knowledge

All Board members cite personal expertise in strategic planning, and nearly all bring administrative and financial oversight experience to the table. Meanwhile, there is less expertise among Board members in more public-facing areas, including those related to building operations, technology, IDEA, and education.

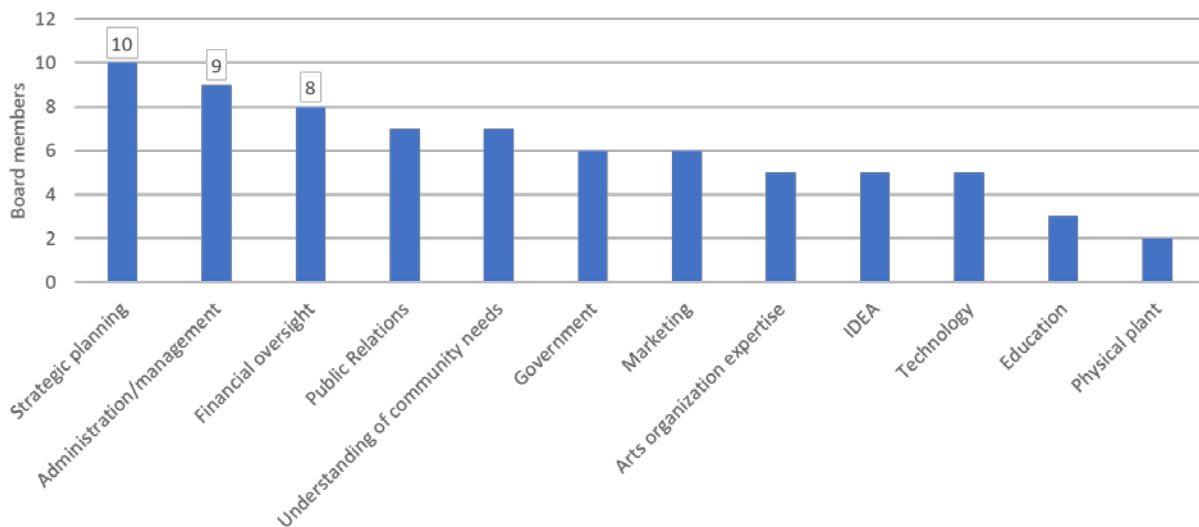


Fig 18: Board areas of expertise