

# Utah symphony and utah opera proposed merger analysis essay sample



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In 2002, a proposal was made to merge the Utah Symphony and Utah Opera due to the failing economy, collapsing of the stock market, declining government financial support, and a waning of donations for the arts. The proposed merger would help both organizations by economizing on costs and expanding the artistic potential of both organizations. Each of the organizations need to support the decision in order for the merger to be successful. A1. Bill Bailey and McClelland's Need Theory

Bill Bailey, chairman of the board for the Utah Opera, can apply McClelland's need theory to convince the other Utah Opera board members to support the Utah Opera and Utah Symphony merger. McClelland's need theory is based on three needs: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. Mr. Bailey sees a need for achievement (the ability to accomplish something difficult) both for himself and for the Utah Opera (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013). For the Utah Opera, Bailey sees continued success and growth as its need for achievement. The merger also presents Bailey with an opportunity to personally achieve a difficult task—a merger that is quite rare in the arts world. If Bailey can effectively aide in the successful merger of the two organizations, he can help the Utah Opera achieve success and growth, essentially satisfying the organization's need for achievement and securing support from the board for the merger, and satisfying Bailey's personal need for achievement.

The second aspect of McClelland's need theory, the need for affiliation, can be achieved with the merger. The need for affiliation refers to social relationships and activities, essentially belonging to and collaborating with a group. Bailey will need to highlight to the board that the merger provides

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increased opportunities for the Utah Opera to collaborate with the Utah Symphony, which in turn can increase sales and performances, expand each of the organization's artistic capacity, save costs, enhance support for the art, and achieve economies of scale. As for Bailey, a personal need for affiliation will be satisfied by the merger because it puts him in a position to have more social relationships and activities because of the added interaction between both organizations' boards and constituents, and it safeguards his leadership position if the merger succeeds.

The last aspect of this motivational theory is the need for power—the aspiration to lead, influence, teach, and encourage others to reach certain goals or act in a certain manner. Bailey, as chairman of the board, must use his influence to show the board that the merger will lead the Utah Opera to continued success and progression. By using a positive need for power, Bailey can demonstrate to the board that the organization can still accomplish its goals without losing its identity. The successful merger will also help satisfy a need for power for Bailey by putting him in a position to be recognized for his leadership role in the merger.

#### A2. Scott Parker and Adam's Equity Theory

Scott Parker, the Utah Symphony chairman of the board, proposed the merger idea in order to alleviate the threat of possible financial deficit that the symphony was facing and to keep the company on a prosperous path. However, Mrs. Abravanel, the surviving wife of Maurice Abravanel—the music director at the Utah Symphony for 32 until his retirement in 1979—openly opposed the merger. Scott Parker can utilize Adam's equity theory to persuade Mrs. Abravanel to support the merger. The equity theory in <https://assignbuster.com/utah-symphony-utah-opera-proposed-merger-analysis-essay-sample/>

essence is when individuals seek to maintain equity based on the inputs they produce and the outcomes they receive from their inputs as compared to others perceived inputs and outcomes. A balance between inputs and outputs is strived for because it leads to fairness and improved relations. Mrs. Abravanel's opposition to the merger could be because of a perceived unfairness based on the efforts her husband put into to bringing the Utah Symphony up to world class stature.

Mrs. Abravanel sees the symphony as the dominant party in the merger. This is apparent by Mrs. Abravanel's statement, " Maurice would never take second billing to anyone" (DeLong & Ager, 2005). Parker must show Mrs. Abravanel that the merger will help alleviate some of the financial stress the symphony is facing and increase the success and visibility of both organizations. In order to convince Mrs. Abravanel to support the merger, Parker needs to explain the rationale behind the merger as well as understand why Mrs. Abravanel sees the merger as unfair and inequitable. In order to sway Mrs. Abravanel to support the merger, Parker can offer Mrs. Abravanel a seat to participate in the merger discussions. Mrs. Abravanel's perceived unfairness would be assuaged by giving her a voice in the discussions (input) and a say in the outcomes (output). A3. Anne Ewers  
Positional and Personal Powers

Anne Ewers is the general director of the Utah Opera and reports directly to the opera's board of directors. Ewers has obtained authority based on the position she holds with the opera, which is her positional power. On the other hand, Ewers personal power is the authority she commands derived from who she is as a person. Ewers positional power and personal power are <https://assignbuster.com/utah-symphony-utah-opera-proposed-merger-analysis-essay-sample/>

related because as one is used wisely, the other power is concurrently increased. Ewers has shown she has used her positional power wisely in her time with other operas. She successfully retired a \$450, 000 debt, established an endowment fund, and increased productions during her time with the Boston Lyric Opera.

During her time with the Utah Opera she grew the company's annual budget from \$1. 5 million to \$5 million and was highly successful at fund-raising. Because of her work, she has gained a reputation in the opera community as a capable leader that is energetic and enthusiastically dedicated to the arts in Utah. Because of the positive relation between her positional and personal power, Ewers has gained respect in the arts community, which resulted in the proposal that she become the CEO of the merged organization. A3a.

#### Using Ewers' Positional Power to Lead Merger Efforts

As stated above, Ewers has gained positional power by the position she holds now as well as past positions. Ewers position puts her into a powerful place because it affords her direct contact to the opera's board of directors and its management, and the symphonies board of directors and music director, Keith Lockhart. This places her in a sound and stable position to lead the merger because she is reachable by both parties. In leading the merger efforts, Ewers position gives her authority to pursue relevant strategies to make the merger successful for both parties. Also, because of her position and the access it allows her to both parties, she can help ensure an amicable environment in which to discuss the merger. A3b. Applying Ewers' Personal Power to Empower Lockhart

Ewers personal powers is derived from her character traits. Ewers can use her personal powers to empower Lockhart by actively listening to and addressing his concerns. This will show Lockhart that Ewers wants to empower him through the merger. Additionally, she can empower Lockhart by encouraging him to actively participate in the merger efforts, showing that his ideas are of merit and by showing him how excited she is to work with him during the merger negotiations and after if the merger is successful.

#### A4. Potential Issue with the Symphony Musicians

For the merger to be successful, both parties need to be satisfied. The symphony musicians have brought to light a potential problem they see with the merger—the reopening of the collective bargaining agreement. Some of the musicians have openly accused the board of entering into merger negotiations in order to reopen the collective bargaining agreement to renegotiate the terms. The musicians see this as a threat to them because it could leave them worse off in terms of salaries and benefits. If the musicians feel that their position is at stake, they could refuse to perform which could lead to a strike and a substantial loss of revenue for the organization. This issue could very well hinder the merged organization's ability to successfully function.

#### A4a. Mitigating the Symphony Musicians' Issue

Again, Ewers is in an authoritative position in which she has the power to mitigate the symphony musicians' issue. Ewers is in strong position where she can advocate for the musicians either by first hearing and understanding their problem and then discussing it during negotiations, or by suggesting that the musicians have their own representative present during the negotiations. This will help to ensure that the musicians' issue is heard,

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understood, and taken into account during the negotiations; thus, helping to ensure that the merged organization performs effectively. A5. Utilizing Organizational Influence Tactics

Ewers needs to persuade the opera's permanent staff to back the merger. She can apply organizational influence tactics in order to accomplish this. She can use rational persuasion in order to sway the staff to back the merger. In order to do so, Ewers will need to explain to the staff the reasons behind the merger. She will also need to be factual in demonstrating how the merger will be beneficial to everyone and the feasibility of the endeavor. In addition, she will need to show the staff how the merger will bring the opera more recognition and support from the community. Another important fact for Ewers to make sure that the permanent staff understands is the security of their positions. It is probably a concern for the staff and they need to know that Ewers is looking out for them in this aspect. This should help further secure the staff's backing of the merger.

Another tactic Ewers can utilize to persuade the opera's staff into supporting the merger is that of consultation. In using consultation as an organizational influence tactic, a person gets others to participate in the planning, decision-making, and changes. By employing this tactic, Ewers is giving the opera staff a voice in the merger. This influence tactic allows the opera staff to bring ideas and opinions on the merger to Ewers. This empowers the opera staff and can lead to them endorsing the merger. The merger of the Utah Symphony and the Utah Opera is an unprecedented situation. By using motivation, influence, and power, both parties can help ensure a successful merger of the two organizations. There could be potential issues that each

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party faces, but with appropriate mitigation efforts those issues can be resolved and again ensure the realization of the merger.

## References

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