
BROADWAY

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A Quick Guide to Closing Greener

Off-Broadway Edition

July 2017

Introduction

Closing Greener

Closings are a part of nearly every show's life cycle. Theatre professionals want to dispose of show materials at closing in an environmentally responsible manner, but face numerous challenges unique to the closing process.

This Guide identifies the principal obstacles to greener closings and highlights solutions and resources.

Background

One of the first committees established by the BGA after its founding in 2008 was the Pre- and Post-Production Committee, which worked on greener closings of Broadway shows. A study conducted in 2010 showed that more than 85% of materials disposed of at closing on Broadway were reused or recycled. As will be discussed below, BGA members would like to increase the proportion that is reused.

In 2016, the Off-Broadway Chapter of the BGA decided to focus on Closing Green, as the resources relevant to Off-, Off-Off-Broadway, and independent theatre productions often differ from those applicable to Broadway. In the spring of 2016, the Chapter distributed a survey (the 2016 Survey) to these communities in an attempt to learn as much as possible about what the current practices were. The 2016 Survey confirmed the five major obstacles to closing in a greener manner: (1) time (at strike, and a mismatch in when materials become available and when they are needed); (2) knowledge (lack of information about others that would want production materials, and solutions to the other obstacles); (3) storage (space to hold materials until they are reused); (4) transportation; and (5) cost (of transport, storage, labor, etc.). This Guide was developed to support the New York theatre community in closing greener. A draft edition of this Guide was distributed at a September 2016 Town Hall at the Public Theater, and was revised based on the discussions that took place. The Guide in its current form is a product of the 2016 Survey, meetings with the organizations profiled below, and input from the community and the conversations that took place at the September 2016 Town Hall.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. ~~Landfill.~~

The 2010 Broadway Closing Study and 2016 Survey demonstrate that a high proportion of materials avoid landfill after closing, helped by extensive recycling. While recycling is much better than landfill disposal, reusing or reducing the material used is preferable. This Guide focuses on the obstacles to moving up this value chain and highlighting the resources that can enable our community to close greener.



5 Challenges to Being Greener

Time

75% of 2016 Survey respondents reported that Time is a major or moderate obstacle. Time can be an obstacle in two distinct ways: first, once a production closes, time is at a premium -- the strike usually needs to happen as quickly as possible before the production team disperses and without extending the show's occupancy of the venue. Second, time can also sabotage the possibility of reuse, as your materials are available at a different time than a potential user's needs or ability to take possession. The key to overcoming both of these obstacles lies in planning early. A greener load out begins with a greener strike plan, and the earlier you start analyzing your materials and making plans for their disposal, the more likely you are to find someone who needs them.



- Design your production taking into account what happens to materials after closing;
- Make a strike plan, ideally before opening night, but always before closing;
- As early as possible, list attractive items on reuse sites such as **ArtCube** or **Materials for the Arts'** Direct Donations platform;
- As early as possible, contact **Big Reuse** and **Materials for the Arts** to see whether your remaining materials will be accepted and whether transportation is possible. Plan production staff time to organize deliveries to appropriate sites.

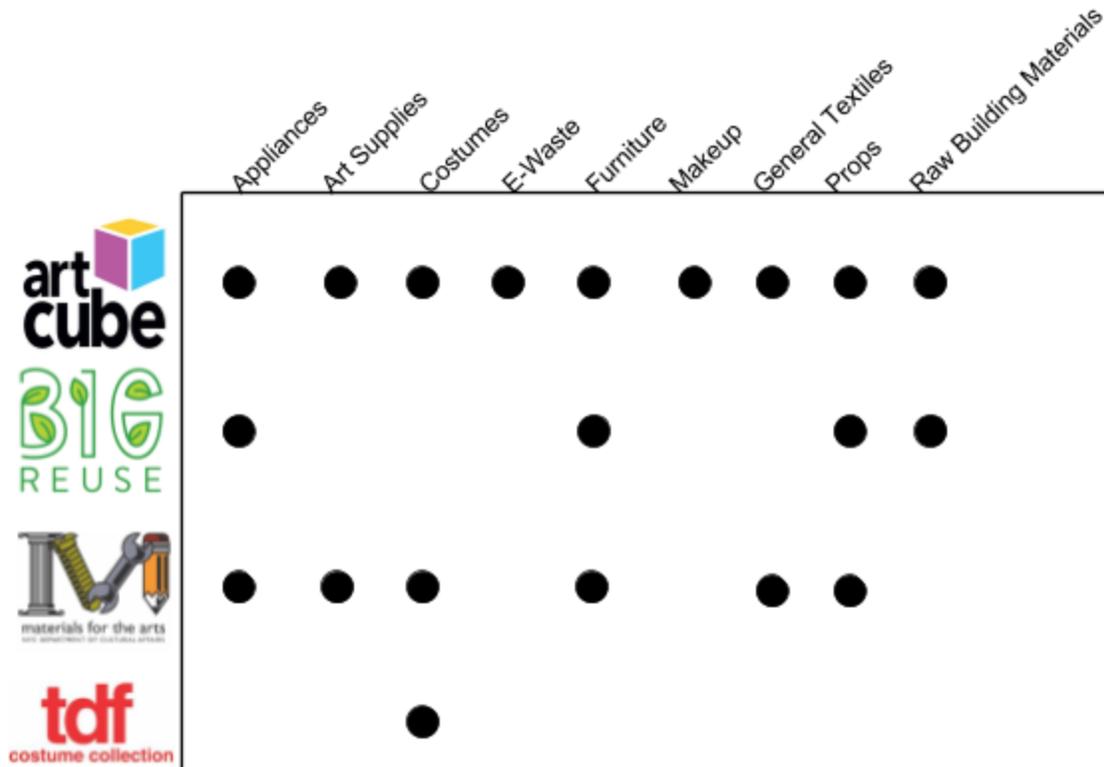
Knowledge

54% of 2016 Survey respondents reported that Knowledge is a major or moderate obstacle. For reuse, connecting potential suppliers and reusers of materials remains an obstacle. There are great resources for making this connection, including ArtCube and the Direct Donation program of Materials for the Arts. Many in the community are not familiar with the other organizations and programs listed in this Guide. The resources highlighted in this Guide are intended to help you make decisions about what can and should be done with the various pieces of your production.



- **ArtCube:** ArtCube exists entirely as an online resource to find jobs, crew, consult with peers, buy, sell and give away set materials, props, and set dressing;
- **Materials for the Arts:** Through the Direct Donations program, Materials for the Arts relies on its large network to find new homes for many different objects and pieces. This platform is ideal for larger items that cannot be donated in person. To make a donation, email donations@mfta.nyc.gov;
- Though not designed for theatre, other matching services include **Craigslist** (craigslist.org), **donateNYC Exchange** (www1.nyc.gov/assets/donate/giveandfind/exchange.shtml), **Freecycle Network** (freecycle.org), etc.;
- Consider "Take it Back" organizations like **Showman Fabricators** (showfab.com);
- Start a conversation with others in your production. Be vocal about these resources and the benefits of closing in a greener manner. Ask questions about what will happen to all of the production's materials when you close.

Who Takes What - At A Glance



Storage

93% of 2016 Survey respondents reported that Storage is a major or moderate obstacle. Space is at a premium -- especially in New York. If you are unable to store your items for your own or others' future use, you can connect with groups that want what you have, or bring them to one of the reuse warehouse programs in the area.



- The **TDF Costume Collection** operates a warehouse with more than 80,000 costume pieces. Donations are tax-deductible, or you may be able to receive a credit for future rentals;
- **Materials for the Arts** accepts drop off donations of many items at its warehouse in Long Island City;
- With two locations in Brooklyn and Queens, **Big Reuse's** warehouses have the capacity to store larger items and building materials;
- The **re-fashionNYC bin** located in the Actors' Equity Association Building (165 West 46th Street) is accessible for clothing and shoe drop off, and can be used for materials that would not be well suited for TDF.

Transportation

64% of 2016 Survey respondents reported that access to Transportation is a major or moderate obstacle. As with most solutions in this Guide, early planning may be crucial. Many of the organizations listed in this Guide have some capacity to assist with transporting materials. Often, transportation is provided by the organization or individual that reuses your items. For smaller items, transportation may be as simple as a cab ride to a donation center.



- Reuse providers such as **Big Reuse** and **Materials for the Arts** may be able to provide transportation, depending on your materials, and with sufficient lead time;
- Reusers found through matching services such as **ArtCube** or the Direct Donation program of **Materials for the Arts** will often pick up your materials;
- Utilize taxis, Zipcar, U-Haul, and other local transport companies as appropriate.

Cost

All productions have limited funds for closing. 64% of 2016 Survey respondents reported spending less than \$1,000 on their disposal/storage of materials post-closing, and 71% reported that Cost is a major or moderate obstacle. Transportation, storage, and labor all cost money, and, if left to the last minute, may cost more than renting and filling a dumpster. In fact, half of the 2016 Survey respondents reported that they closed without a strike plan established in advance.

Greener options often will save money, if planned early. For example, groups that would like to reuse materials from your show may pick up materials at closing, at minimal or no expense to you. The key to minimizing costs is using the channels described in this Guide as early as possible.



- Plan early -- make a strike plan;
- Include a line item in your budget for closing costs;
- Use matching services to find reusers (see Knowledge);
- Dispose of e-waste through collection sources;
- Donate materials to reuse organizations (some may help with transport for free or a small fee);
- Donate costumes to the **TDF Costume Collection** and receive tax deductions or rental credits.

Resources

ArtCube

artcube.nyc
artcube.nyc/contact

Existing entirely online, ArtCube connects you with the industry's individuals, services, and goods you need. ArtCube is a professional forum, and an efficient way to find jobs, crew; consult with peers; buy, sell, and give away set materials, props, and set dressing.

Big Reuse

bigreuse.org
(718) 777-0132 (x2)
donate@bigreuse.org

Big Reuse is New York City's only non-profit retail outlet for salvaged and surplus building materials. Big Reuse's mission is to keep these materials out of the landfill, while offering deep discounts on their resale. They accept drop-off donations seven days a week, offer free pick up services for large donations, and provide some deconstruction services.

Broadway Green Alliance

broadwaygreen.com
(212) 840-0770 (x264)
green@broadway.org

The BGA collects and recycles / upcycles various items at its office. To receive a current list of the available collections, please email green@broadway.org.

Electronic Recyclers International

electronicrecyclers.com
(800) 374-3473
info@eridirect.com

Electronic Recyclers International (ERI) is the largest electronics recycler in North America, recycling more than 250 million pounds of e-waste annually. ERI specializes in the environmentally safe and socially responsible dismantling of electronic waste, and as such, was the first electronics recycling company in the world to receive R2 and e-Stewards certification.

Matching Services

While not designed for theatre, online matching services like these can be helpful resources.

Craigslist - craigslist.org/about/sites

donateNYC Exchange - donateNYC

Freecycle Network - freecycle.org

Materials for the Arts

materialsforthearts.org
(718) 729-2065
donations@mfta.nyc.gov

Materials for the Arts (MFTA) works with the New York community to make goods freely accessible to nonprofits, government organizations with arts programs, and New York public schools. Their emphasis on creative reuse, a reconceptualizing of waste towards something that can be repurposed and revitalized, allows them to accept an array of items in their Long Island City warehouse. Productions may qualify for a free pickup of items from their location. Otherwise, productions can drop off items at the warehouse, or post them on MFTA's Direct Donations server. The Direct Donations platform is an online-only service that advertises larger items in an attempt to match them with people and organizations that are able to use them.

re-fashionNYC

re-fashionNYC is a partnership between the City of New York and Housing Works to make clothing donation as easy as possible. There is a re-fashionNYC bin on the fourth floor of the Actors' Equity Building (165 West 46th Street). For more information on what can be donated, visit: www.housingworks.org/i/page-media/refashionyc_broch.pdf. Drop items off Monday - Friday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Showman Fabricators

showfab.com
(718) 935-9899
info@showfab.com

Showman Fabricators has made a commitment to supporting all projects looking to be more sustainable. They believe that all items they build should be built in a way that allows for the largest re-use and recycling possible. To support that, they will use relationships with re-use organizations and will take back entire sets to keep what they build out of landfills. For more information on their greener practices, visit www.showfab.com/about-us/greener-greener-practices.

Theatre Development Fund Costume Collection

tdf.org
(212) 989-5855
costume@tdf.org

Theatre Development Fund (TDF) Costume Collection is the place for costumes. Their warehouse is generally open weekdays between 9:00 am and 5:30 pm, during which you may donate costumes and/or rent costumes for future productions. When donating to The Collection, pieces are either eligible for a tax deduction or may be eligible for rental credit which can be used toward future rentals. Additionally, once or twice a year TDF Costume Collection will host a Bag Sale, to which it invites theatres, organizations, designers, and/or teachers in to shop selected racks of retired stock by invitation only. The amount you pay depends on the size of the bag you choose, and you can walk out with as much as you can fit into the bag.

* Special thanks to contributing author Bria Woodyard