

Philip Dallmann: Hello inclusion believers, and welcome to the Access Champions Podcast. I'm your host Phil Dallmann for this week's journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity, inclusion. Um, I am recording this right now, uh, in Chicago. Um, been here for a few days chatting with some folks, um, and it's been really, really great, except for the fact that I have come down with, um, you know, without having gone to a doctor, we'll call it the, uh, the ominous flu-like symptoms that, uh, that, uh, uh, professional athletes, uh, uh, are described as having, or, you know, when it's like, it's not quite the flu. So I am a bit under the weather, but the podcast must roll on. Um, I was, uh, thinking on the ride back to my hotel, um, it's like, uh, my version of the Michael Jordan flu game, right? Um, gotta ... and, and if, and if you're not really aspiring to do things like Michael Jordan, right, why are you even doing what you're doing? Um (laughs) ... [inaudible 00:01:08] Chicago.

Philip Dallmann: Um, so, um, you know, I'm, I'm, incredibly grateful week. I got to speak to quite a few people this week, powered through, um, and, uh, I went to the Chicago Cultural, uh, Accessibility Consortium's, um, social last night, um, which was really cool. Um, what I enjoyed about it was it was in addition to the workshops and seminars that they provide and the resources they provide, um, both online and in equipment-sharing and all those things. Um, but it was, you know, such a super low stakes way for people to connect, um, and kind of enter into this world of cultural access. Um, you know, it was over at the, the Second City Training Center. Um, and there were some, like, sort of guided topics at a couple of tables, but for the most part everyone just kinda was chatting and meeting each other, and new faces. Um, I know a lot of folks there were new faces to me, um, but, um, you know, everybody, uh, was connecting, sharing ideas, experiences. Um, but like I said, in, um, not so much of a, a formal setting, which I think makes it easier sometimes to, to connect and to share.

Philip Dallmann: So, um, I think that's really cool and, and something that I think, you know, um, if you're looking at sort of connecting folks, if you're building something similar to the CCAC, um, or Mac in New York, um, I, I think this, uh, you know, this may seem silly, or you're like, oh, why do we need a social? Well, I think there's incredible benefits there. Um, and it'll build your, um, yo, what's the word I'm looking for? Uh ... a- and here's, here's the, the flu-like symptoms kicking in ... uh, your, your, your people (laughs). Your attendees for, there it is, attendees, uh, for the, um, for the workshops and seminars. Um, so. Um, really cool.

Philip Dallmann: Um, thank you to, um, Matt Bivins and Rachel Arfa and Brittany Pyle and Christena Gunther, um, for, for inviting me out to that. Um, it was really, really great, um, and great catching up with all of you, and, um, I'm sure be chatting with all of them again soon.

Philip Dallmann: This week on the show we have, uh, we continue our, uh, organizational buy-in series, uh, with TDF, um, and we scoot over to, uh, Tory. We had Tory Bailey on last week, the executive director, and now we're kind of, now we're looking at



her counterpart, um, the managing director Michael Naumann. Um, and, uh, you know, Mike was probably one of the first people I thought of, um, and his role was one of the first things I thought of when we were kind of discussing what this, this series might look like, um, because I think, you know, people look at a, a managing director like, oh. You know, budgets, budgets, budgets, budgets, budgets. Um, and, and, you know, uh, it's so much more than that, and that yet those budgets influence so many aspects of the organization. Um, you know, it's, it's, especially in a, in a service-oriented organization where, um, you know, programming is innately there to help people, um, and, um, you know, to, to also be able to balance that with an organization's long-term, um, fiscal health, uh, as it were. Um, it is tough, um, and I, and I don't envy some of the decisions that, um, Mike and, and other managing directors have to make.

Philip Dallmann: And then I've been on the other side, when it wasn't fair that we weren't getting this money, and, um, but, you know, when you take the macro view and you look at the long-term, and, and, you know, this is an organization now that's survived for, survived and thrived at times, um, for, uh, over 50 years. Um, and has a tremendous amount of impact that, you know, sometimes you do have to go, like, okay, not right now. You know, we don't have the funds for this right now. It's, you know, it would affect this, that, the other, so.

Philip Dallmann: Anyway, um, uh, I think you're really gonna enjoy the conversation with Mike, and as I did last week, um, I wanna give a shout-out to sort of the additional member of, of Mike's team, um, which is his executive assistant Tina Kirsimae, um, who is just a fantastic person, um, and, um, you know, you, you meet her and she's warm and, and, and, and, and wonderful, um, but she also can be sort of, you know, the needed bouncer, uh, to keep people from running into Mike's office and, and asking for things. Um, so I think, uh, that's really great. And then, um, I know last week I mentioned, uh, you know, I said I believe that's somebody even higher, in a new position with Tori, um, and Michael Yaccarino who I, uh, spoke about last week shot me an email to let me know that, uh, they did, and her name's Julie Berger. And, uh, and he vouched that she is also absolutely wonderful. Um, and I have no doubt about that. Mike, Michael's a great judge of character, so.

Philip Dallmann: As always, I want to, um, make sure that, um, I plug our, our social media. Um, if you don't already follow us, give us a follow on Twitter and Instagram. We are @accesschampion, and on Facebook, the Access Champion Podcast. And you can reach us via email at accesschampion@gmail.com. Um, we're always down to chat, um, always looking for new people to talk to. Um, and if there's things that cross your radar that you think we would find interesting or you'd love to hear us discuss or, et cetera, et cetera, um, please go ahead and, and, and share with us. Um, you know, we, we do try to, you know, comb the, the internet for as much information and, and, and, uh, news as possible, um, but, you know, we're a small team, so we do miss things.



Philip Dallmann: Uh, finally, this episode is sponsored by CO/LAB Theater Group. Uh, CO/LAB Theater Group is a nonprofit theater organization that provides individuals with developmental disabilities a creative and social outlet through theater arts. They offer free weekly classes and workshops that encourage actors to collaborate as an ensemble and discover their individual voices. Tickets are now on sale for their annual benefit, CO/LAB Live: A Celebration of Inclusion in the Arts, where you'll enjoy drinks and light bites, mingle with CO/LAB actors, and get an inside look at a CO/LAB class in action. For more information, visit [colabtheatergroup.com](http://colabtheatergroup.com).

Philip Dallmann: Um, and, uh, I'm gonna double down on our sponsor this week with CO/LAB and, and their gala coming up, um, which, um, one, or the, honoree, uh, is Katie Sweeney, who, uh, in a bit of synergy here, um, has been a huge advocate for TDF's, um, autism-friendly performances, is also on the board of CO/LAB. So, um, you know, A+ [inaudible 00:07:54] human over, and, and Katie Sweeney, and, and her stamp of approval both on, on TDF's programming and CO/LAB's programming, um, means a lot, uh, eh, in this world.

Philip Dallmann: So. Now, without further ado, access champion Mike Naumann.

Philip Dallmann: (silence)

Philip Dallmann: All right. And we're here with Mike Naumann, the managing director here at TDF. Um, thanks for joining us, Mike.

Michael Naumann: Thank you for having me.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, so, uh, you, managing director's a really interesting job, and I don't know how many managing directors get interviewed, uh, for, for podcasts or anything.

Michael Naumann: (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: Um, but they should more, be- because I, you know, in my time here, I just thought you had such an interesting role when it come to, um, progressing programs and evaluating programs, and, and it's not necessarily something that people think on paper falls into your category.

Michael Naumann: Right.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but, so if you could give us a little bit of your journey, um, to this role, um, and we'll, we'll start there.

Michael Naumann: Sure. Um, well, uh, my career really started in the not for profit side. Um, one of my first, uh, big jobs was as business manager at Manhattan Theater Club ...

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Michael Naumann: Uh, when they were small. Uh, and up ar- on the Upper East Side.

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Michael Naumann: And, um, I worked there for 20 years until we, uh, got our own Broadway theater and refurbished the, uh, Biltmore Theater on Broadway, and I worked through the first season there, uh, before I left. Um, so my heart was always in the not for profit side. I teach a class from the not for profit side, a budgeting for, uh, Columbia's Theater Arts Graduate Program.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: And, um, but then I went to work for the other side of theater, for the commercial theater for seven years, uh, working for a commercial producer, which gave me a whole different, uh, perspective of things, um, seeing things from, uh, the producer and the investor's side of, uh, of, of this business that we call theater. And, um, and then this opportunity came, and, uh, actually the mixture of the not for profit and the for profit, um, worked really well for this position, because, uh, as a service organization in New York City, we work a lot with for profit as well as not for profit theater, and having the perspective from both sides has come in really useful, especially when dealing with the TKTS booth and dealing with commercial producers and, uh, and the Broadway League. And so that, uh, that balance actually has come in very useful.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, for those who don't know, if you could give us a brief summary of how the TKTS booth works. I know many people, if you don't, uh, if it's not striking a chord, it's the big red steps in Times Square. That's how I always used ...

Michael Naumann: (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: I was like, you know the company with, uh, the big red steps in Times Square? That's TDF.

Michael Naumann: That's TDF.

Philip Dallmann: Um, but-

Michael Naumann: We're, we're now calling it TKTS by TDF.

Philip Dallmann: All right. Gotta be on brand. (laughs)

Michael Naumann: Yep. Um, and, and, uh, we also have two other booths, one down at South Street Seaport and one up at Lincoln Center.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Michael Naumann: And, um, it, it, it's, it, it's, what a lot of people don't know is it's one of our biggest programs, uh, of trying to make, uh, theater affordable for everyone. And, uh, we get tickets day of, and, at the other booths, uh, next day matinee, um, at a discount, anywhere from 20-50% off. Um, and, uh, but we have to work with all of the theaters to ... our, our, our goal is twofold. One, we help the shows by helping to move inventory at the end of that day. Um, and two, by making that inventory affordable, uh, to people to be able to go see.

Philip Dallmann: And, and it's a program, uh, slash institution that has, uh, lasted for the entire existence of TD ... ?

Michael Naumann: A- almost. We celebrated, what, 40 years ago. I, I think we started in, uh, '73 I believe it was?

Philip Dallmann: Okay.

Michael Naumann: Uh, the booth. Um, you know, and, and it's, it helps keeps shows alive. Uh, you know, there are some shows on Broadway now that, um, Phantom of the Opera for instance would not have had the life that it's had without the booth. For the first, I don't know, seven years of Phantom of the Opera, it was a huge hit. We never had any tickets at the booth. Now, we have it all the time, and we're part of what keeps that show running.

Philip Dallmann: So it's kind of a beautiful ecosystem, where, uh, producers are, and, and theaters are able to keep shows alive, and on the other end, um, you guys are able to create essentially socioeconomic access.

Michael Naumann: Absolutely. We always say that, you know, uh, every show will eventually come to the booth.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Michael Naumann: It may be many, many years, uh, before they do ...

Philip Dallmann: I believe I actually have said that on the phone during my time here. It will eventually come to the booth.

Michael Naumann: It will eventually come to the booth.

Philip Dallmann: You will someday see, see Hamilton.

Michael Naumann: There are a few that may be along ways away, Hamilton and Lion King and, and Wicked, those may be a long ways away, but, uh, someday.

Philip Dallmann: Um, yeah (laughs). Absolutely. Uh, so, if you could give us a little bit of an idea, especially for those who, who may not be familiar, um, with the role of a



managing director, and I, and I do know that even within this organization, your role's a little bit unique, um, in the realm of managing directors.

Michael Naumann: Right.

Philip Dallmann: Um, if you give us an idea of, like, what your day to day looks like.

Michael Naumann: Well, it's, the title of Managing Director is used in a lot of institutional theaters, and it's a little bit, uh, a little bit different than here, because we aren't a producing organization, we're a service organization. Um, my primary is, is, uh, head of all of the administrative side of this organization. Um, which means trying to keep everything running and, uh, all of the programs and assisting those programs and trying to get the most out of it. Um, but the other piece of it is, is, is supporting the vision of the executive director, Tori Bailey. Um, and one of the, one of the things that enticed me actually of coming to this organization is, I worked with Tori at Manhattan Theater Club. We overlapped for 14 or 15 years and have a good working relationship, and so, uh, I hit the ground running. And, and she has the vision of where she wants this institution to go and, and what she wants us to be able to do, and a lot of what I do is trying to support that and figuring out how do we make it work. Um, and, uh, and, and trying to get the most out of it, and also, you know, keep this organization, uh, financially stable ...

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: At the same time, which is, is not always easy, uh, with a not for profit. Um, we have been blessed, uh, as a not for profit to have, uh, two programs that are, uh, very financially stable for us, one of them being the TKTS booth and the other being our TDF membership.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Um, and because of those, we, we actually have, uh, a re- a ratio of earned income to contributed income that is not like most not for profits. We, uh, we are substantially, uh, earned income, and contributed income has been just a small portion of our budget, which has been part of our goal since I've come here, is the way that we can expand, what we do is by raising more money.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: And, and that's a, a piece that, uh, we've been working on quite a bit, uh, and still working on and will continue to work on, but we have, uh ...

Philip Dallmann: Such is the not for profit life (laughs).



Michael Naumann: Such is the not for profit life. But I will say, you know, the other difference, uh, with a producing organization and a, uh, managing director usually, is, uh, the fundraising side of things.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Um, where Tori as the visionary here has more of the fundraising side of things for our organization.

Philip Dallmann: Absolutely. So, I, you know, um, and, and, I, uh, can speak a little from experience here, I know, um, at times there, uh, have been difficult decisions here. Um, and, and I find them fascinating, even, eh, especially, um, as I kind of became a little more removed and I could look at it sort of, uh, above, uh, and see the decisions you made and times that I, I was in your office pounding down and saying, we have to do this!

Michael Naumann: (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: We have to spend this money! We have to do this thing. Uh, and, you know, rightfully, you were like, well, it's not in the budget. Uh, and where's this money coming from? It doesn't just drop from the sky.

Michael Naumann: Right. Right.

Philip Dallmann: Um, can you talk, can you talk a little bit to those moments, um, and what goes into sort of that decision-making factor when there is, you know, what you know in your, your gut is a good idea, because there are so many talented people here that are, you know, sub-visionaries of, of Tori, um, from every level of your staff here. Um, and, and they all wanna do good, um, and, you know, it's that inner conflict, of, you know, what does that mean? So if you could talk a little bit about that.

Michael Naumann: Sure. Um, you know, my, my 20 years at, at, at Manhattan Theater Club actually kind of, uh, was great, um, training ground for that, because you do, your, you know, as a producing organization, you're faced a lot of times with decisions where the artistic director may say, this is really necessary for this production. We've gotta do this, and it, you know, sometimes you have to be the one to say, we can't. It's, it's beyond what we can do. And with a service organization, it's, it's things where we're wanting to start a new program or expand a program, and, uh, even though they're great ideas, we can't always do it. And it's, it's a constant balancing act. Um, you know, from the beginning of the autism-friendly performances, you know, we would love to be able to say, hey, we're gonna give away all of these tickets.

Philip Dallmann: Oh, yeah.



Michael Naumann: Um, you know, what people don't realize is that we negotiate with each one of these theaters, and, and we have to lay out, you know, 100, \$150,000 to buy out a house. We can't just afford to do that. Um, and so, but yet at the same time you know that these families are struggling to be able to pay for these tickets, and then you wanna try to make things as affordable as possible. Um, and so we, we, we try to find, uh, the balancing act of that, and, you know, part of our balancing act there was, we made a committed decision that we were going to give away at least two to three hundred tickets for each one of these performances. Um, and then we will find the funding to pay for it.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Uh, and, and that's, you know, that's sometimes the way that you have to do it. You have to take a leap and say, okay. This much I think we can do and will be able to go out and find it. And, and so we ...

Philip Dallmann: And that's when you go and trudge into the office and say, hey, I made this promise. Uh, good luck!

Michael Naumann: (laughs) Good luck, yes.

Philip Dallmann: (laughs)

Michael Naumann: Um, you know, occasionally, uh, things happen where the funding actually kind of comes first.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Um, last year we pitched a pilot program for, uh, [inaudible 00:19:27] ...

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Uh, to the city of New York, to some of the politicians there, and they were like, great! We'll give you \$50,000. Go out and do this. Um, and so it was like, okay. And it was, uh, very popular. Uh, the city loved it and they came back this year and said, we'll double you. You, you can, you can take twice as many vets this year.

Philip Dallmann: That's amazing.

Michael Naumann: Um, and, and so those are the kind of programs, 'cause, uh, Lisa Carling, uh, head of our Access Program, you know, had been talking about wanting to do something with, with the vets, wanting to, wanting to figure out what we could do, um ...

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, we talked about that for years.

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Michael Naumann: For years, yeah! And, and, and we just didn't, we didn't have the funding. We didn't know exactly what the program looked like, but we came up with something that we pitched, and, uh, and the city, you know, uh, bit, and it, it's been great. Now, now it's becoming so successful, because it's city funding, we only can deal with vets in New York City.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: And we're getting calls from New Jersey and from Long Island and from Westchester, uh, for vet, uh, groups that would love to be part of this program. So now our next step for next fiscal year is trying to figure out, okay, where can we go for additional funding so that we can open this up beyond the walls of New York City, uh, and bring in, and bring in more vets. But that's the kind of balancing act that you're constantly wanting to do. You know, when, when you have vet groups calling you up saying, I wanna be part of your program, and you have to say, no, you can't, because ...

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: We don't have the funding right now to do that. That's tough.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. And, and, I mean, that was a little bit, I know, um, uh, this'll be released after the, the interview, uh, I actually just did with Sarah [Zees 00:21:12], um, who was here for a long time.

Michael Naumann: Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: And we were talking about the, the originations of the autism program, um, autism-friendly performances, and, and I know that that was that similar journey where there was this need, and then it was, okay. We have to find producers that are actually willing to, to dive in, which obviously Disney has been a tremendous partner to TDF in every facet.

Michael Naumann: Yeah. They really got it, they really got it rolling. Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Oh, and-

Michael Naumann: And now, and now, you know, we've other, other, uh, producers come to us ...

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Michael Naumann: Saying, now we wanna do this, which ...

Philip Dallmann: Isn't that such a beautiful thing, when those emails come in? (laughs)



Michael Naumann: Oh, yeah. Yeah. And, and you know, truthfully, uh, back to the vets program, that, to me, uh, one of the most amazing things is that, uh, the shows are stepping up with this.

Philip Dallmann: That's amazing.

Michael Naumann: Um, we, we've, we've gone out to, we went out to a bunch of shows and we said, listen, we wanna do this. We can only afford to pay \$50 a ticket, but we would like a block of 100 tickets in the orchestra. Can you do this?

Philip Dallmann: That's no small ask.

Michael Naumann: That's no small ask. I mean, you know, I, again, from the, from working on the commercial side, I understand the need for people, you know, for these shows that have investors to, you know, try to make the most profit that they can. Um-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And those orchestra tickets go anywhere from 150 to sometimes \$400 depending on the show or night.

Michael Naumann: Yeah. Uh, and, and we've, we've had shows, actually more shows than we could actually fill, uh, step up and do this, which has been great.

Philip Dallmann: That's amazing. Um, well, thank you so much, Mike, uh, for, for taking the time to, to chat. I just think it really, uh, I, I really, I think your role is so interesting, and I, and, uh, it's a little bit nerdy of me to say, but I, I, I do. I think, um ... and, and there are many of our listeners out here who are, uh, in managing-esque director roles, uh, at small start-ups and, you know, service organizations, so. I think hearing that, uh, larger service organizations also have to deal with this ...

Michael Naumann: Also have them, yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, you know, is, is very, you know. It's nice and relatable (laughs).

Michael Naumann: Well, you know, I will say that, you know, it's the program side of things that, that make my job fun.

Philip Dallmann: That's awesome.

Michael Naumann: Um, you know, it, you know. I, I have to deal with personnel issues and things like that, and, and those are, are part of my job as well, but it's, it's, it's seeing these programs. I mean, the autism-friendly performances, that, uh, the first one was when I was starting here.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Michael Naumann: And seeing how that has flourished and going to those performances and seeing those families, that's what makes it, that's what makes it all worthwhile.

Philip Dallmann: And I'll say that's one of the things that I always really respected, uh, and, and was able to follow sort of you as a leader when I was here, because you showed up, you were present for the programs. You just weren't a budget guy.

Michael Naumann: Right.

Philip Dallmann: You were, you, you know, you were there, and-

Michael Naumann: If, if I, if I was just a budget guy, I wouldn't be at a not for profit.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. Exactly.

Michael Naumann: (laughs)

Philip Dallmann: Well, thank you again, uh, for taking the time, and thank you for being an Access Champion.

Michael Naumann: Absolutely. Thank you for having me.

Philip Dallmann: Thank you again to Mike, uh, for taking the time to, to chat with us. Um, as, you know, previously mentioned, it is gala season for them. Um, and so everyone is busy. Um, but if you are interested in the TDF gala, uh, you can learn more at [tdfgala.tdf.org](http://tdfgala.tdf.org). Again, that's [tdfgala.tdf.org](http://tdfgala.tdf.org). Um, thank you again to David LeShay, uh, for coordinating all of the interviews in this series with TDF. Uh, really, really appreciate that. I know it's just a, a real, uh, fun time to, to hole up in the conference room and, and have folks come through and, and, and just chat and, and hear about all the great stuff that they're doing and their journeys. It was, you know, really just wonderful.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and as a reminder, um, again, just, um, if you don't already subscribe to us, give us a, a little subscribe on, on iTunes or Google Play or Stitcher or TuneIn. Um, we're still not on Spotify. Really trying to get on Spotify. Someday we'll be on Spotify.

Philip Dallmann: Um, thank you, uh, as always to our producer Matt Kerstetter for making us sound great each and every week, um, our Champion intern, Miss Kelsey Rose Brown, for everything that she does, um, and Eric Walton, for that fantastic theme song. Uh, we'll be back again next week, and remember, inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.

