Abstract
The performing arts industry is experiencing an awakening in terms of the need to integrate inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) into their practices. This is the result of calls for change in the industry from members of historically marginalized communities. The challenge is that in order for social sustainability strategies like IDEA to be effective, they need to integrate it into the organization’s culture (Serafeim, 2020). IDEA cannot be a checklist. Using stakeholder theory and resource-based view as theoretical foundations, this qualitative case study examines one exemplary organization that has differentiated on social sustainability for decades. In 27 open structured interviews and examination of organizational documents and social media, this study sought to understand why IDEA was adopted, how it was implemented, and what the impact of the strategy is on the most salient stakeholder group, audiences (customers).

Several interesting external and internal factors leading to the adoption of IDEA were revealed. Successful incorporation of this strategy was achieved through leadership, organizational culture, and organizational structure. Three levels of outcomes were revealed: Organizational, Individual, and Societal. Finally, this organization has developed five core competencies that have led to competitive advantage. They are storytelling, artistic risk-taking, building partnerships, stakeholder relationship management, and social sustainability. This study can be used as a guide for organizations in assessing their organization’s readiness for adoption of social sustainability strategy and can be a foundation for future work in developing assessment tools to understand the impact social sustainability has on stakeholders.