



For immediate release: March 20, 2013
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EmcArts launches ArtsFwd Business Unusual National Challenge

Five arts organizations, selected by vote, will have the opportunity to crowdsource bold new ideas in response to their most pressing challenges and win \$35K.

Organizations are invited to enter through May 9, 2013

March 20, 2013 – The arts sector is facing a time of tremendous change, one that requires organizations to innovate and adapt – to try things they’ve never done before. The trouble with doing this kind of adaptive work is that all too often they’re limited to the ideas of the people in the room – the usual suspects.

That’s why we’re launching the **2013 Business Unusual National Challenge**, to crowdsource bright minds in and outside the arts sector to help organizations tackle the most significant challenges they’re facing today. We’re looking for the kind of **challenges that have no obvious solution, no set procedures, and no recognized experts** – we call these adaptive challenges.

Over the next 6 months, we’ll gather adaptive challenges from organizations across the country, conduct a vote to determine five Finalists, source provocative new ideas from an exciting group of big thinkers, specialists, and ArtsFwd readers, and ultimately, **award one Winner a package of grants and resources worth \$35,000** to prototype an innovative new approach.

For more information about the Challenge and to enter, visit: ArtsFwd.org/Challenge.

Richard Evans, President of EmcArts said:

“We believe it will be of value not only for the Winner, but for every organization that participates. This is a great opportunity for organizations to think through and articulate their own most pressing and complex challenges.”

Karina Mangu-Ward, Director of Activating Innovation said:

“We are excited to be introducing this new form of crowdsourcing to our field. We believe it will accelerate and strengthen the move towards innovation and adaptive change in the arts sector.”

About the Challenge

The Challenge has four phases:

Phase 1: A national call for adaptive challenges: March 20 – May 8, 2013: Arts and culture organizations from across the country will be invited through an open call on ArtsFwd to submit a description of their most significant adaptive challenge.

Phase 2: Selecting finalists: May 15 – June 1, 2013: ArtsFwd readers will vote to determine the top five Finalists.



Phase 3: Crowdsourcing bold new approaches: June 15 – July 31, 2013: Big thinkers, specialists in the field, and ArtsFwd readers will be invited to contribute inspirations and ideas in response to the challenges articulated by the five Finalists.

Phase 4: Determining a winner: September 15 – October 15, 2013: A panel of outsiders and EmcArts staff will determine one Winner, who will receive a package of grants and facilitation worth \$35,000 for prototyping a new approach to their adaptive challenge. The winner will be announced in Fall 2013.

Resources

ArtsFwd is offering downloadable [worksheets](#), [video tutorials](#), an interactive [webinar](#), and [phone counseling](#) with EmcArts staff to assist organizations as they prepare their entry.

About ArtsFwd

ArtsFwd is a place for leaders in the sector to share and learn about adaptive strategies and the power of effective innovation. Important new strategies are being developed throughout the professional arts and culture sector, but too often these advances remain isolated within their organizations. EmcArts saw the urgent need for a field-wide learning platform that enables the entire sector to benefit from the remarkable adaptive work underway in some organizations. Our aim is not to encourage mere replication of successful projects, but to share the process of innovation and to foster a new understanding of how adaptive change is achieved. www.ArtsFwd.org

About EmcArts

Recognized as the leading nonprofit provider of innovation services to the arts sector nationwide, EmcArts serves as a nonprofit intermediary for arts funders, and as a re-granting agency and service organization for the arts field around innovation and adaptive change. Our innovation programs support the development and implementation of mission-centered new strategies by arts organizations of all sizes. The programs range from directly incubating specific innovation projects to introductory programs that enable new thinking and build a culture of innovation across local arts communities. EmcArts is a 501(c)(3) organization. www.EmcArts.org

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