



Fueling Adaptive Capacity: A Mosaic of Learning about Adaptive Change from the 2013 National Innovation Summit

Appendix: Examples of Next Practices – adaptive capacity in action

This fuller version of the Mosaic of Learning includes summary examples from Summit participants of how their own organizations have begun to respond to the Principles and the questions posed in each section. The examples of “next practices” and new ways of thinking come from as many as 60 organizations in eleven cities and regions – the Bay Area, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Minnesota/the Dakotas, New York City, Oregon, Saint Louis, and San Jose. They are offered as ways to provoke your own thinking, not as approved approaches to replicate!

FIVE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ADAPTIVE CHANGE

We value the interdependence of the ecosystem over our own organizational or individual self-interest

We hold a collective vision that is aligned with practice – We have let go of being proprietary, of the assumption that one group or individual will lead: we gather repeatedly to get to know each other – We have developed a collaborative rather than competitive mindset among organizations – We have developed new ways of measuring collective impact – There are fewer duplicative efforts on programming – We act with the understanding that our audiences are your audiences, and vice versa – There is vertical integration: sharing internal resources and giving mutual support – There is “dual-hatting” on a community scale: the roles of artists and administrators are cross-disciplinary and cross-organization – There is an arts gym where we develop our change muscles!

We understand broad community issues and the impact of the arts on those issues – We represent the community as a whole and the vibrancy within it – The arts are seen as “backbone” in the community: as essential and relevant as social services – The public understands the arts as an essential public good (not just entertainment) – Collaborations have expanded beyond the borders of “the arts” to include a variety of civic and social partners to address broader community needs...

We have developed each community’s unique arts identity that goes beyond each organization – We catalog and share what is interesting and unique in a region - We are moving away from patrons associating with single organizations toward a sense of inclusion across “competing” companies – We combine our stories to change the idea about what art can do in a community – We understand how innovation leads to collective impact – We have created mechanisms for regional organizations to get together – Convenings like this Summit should happen more often.....



We integrate the voices of citizens into our work as a means of culture-making

We have created an authentic collective vision by doing things together – We have established the goal of making all individuals feel like they can make art: we create opportunities for people to try art-making – Music and art are happening in our streets and unexpected places – There is a community of artists with the resources to be “makers” and entrepreneurs – Citizens are better integrated into a creative ecosystem, with understanding of the importance of arts and culture.

We see reciprocal rather than transactional relationships as a path to enduring capacity for change

We give individuals and organizations credit and a return for innovative ideas – We have developed shared services and resources – There are platforms to share staff resources between arts organizations on an ad-hoc basis – Content is curated across organizations to demonstrate connections in artistic work.

Our organizations authentically value inquiry and use questions as a way to drive adaptive change

Organizations now stay in experimental mode – There is a long-term investment in adaptive leadership – Arts and culture organizations instigate innovation across sectors – We use art as an organizing tool.

Our organizational cultures value the creative potential inherent in ambiguity and complexity

We use innovation to benefit large organizations by driving them to become more nimble, top to bottom: they learn to listen, rather than direct – We use innovation as a way for smaller, more nimble, organizations to systematize their approach – We have systematized specific innovations, so they are just what we do – We recognize that there are no stupid ideas: we let ideas bounce around – Our younger board members want to be part of the innovation process, not a member of an exclusive club – Innovation is an expectation, not an extra project: it’s in our DNA.



ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION TEAMS

1. How can we inspire openness to the “new”?

Place a high value on diversity of thought: Ambitious thinking comes from diversity of thought – Ask Why? to challenge institutional and embedded practice – Invite outside experts/partners to the table to help generate ideas: Leaders are not afraid of the future – Seek and embrace a variety of perspectives

2. How can we boldly embrace risk and experimentation?

Test and try out ideas with courage – Conduct small experiments with radical intent and build on early wins – Identify the fundamental needs for innovation up front to help it stick – “The pathway may not be direct”: let go and don’t need to stay in control of the question.....

3. What can the board do to support innovative efforts?

No “business-as-usual” viewpoint is taken by the board – The board and staff support time to explore new things, and commit resources – A high value is placed on policy and strategic, as well as programmatic, collaboration: it’s expected

4. What can leaders do to expand their flexibility?

Leadership actively participates in national and international dialogue – Mix non-cultural leaders, open to learning new things, into cultural organizations – Leaders think beyond self-interest to look at larger community goals – They are collaborative and share across the cultural community – Leadership doesn’t see the limits: entrepreneurship in all sectors

5. How do we create and lead a cohesive, balanced team?

Build innovation teams of board, staff, and volunteers – Cross-functional teams that can handle the emotionally draining work of innovation – Help people feel part of something bigger by being part of a team – Cross-functional collaboration between technical and creative people – Build ownership across facilities and operations staff – “Creative placemaking”: invest in people to grow leadership wherever they go

6. What practices help us establish continuous learning?

See how change is critical – High level of trust among team members – Openness to new possibilities – Encourage curiosity among team members – Promote continuous learning – Staff persistence: guerilla operation – New process to run meetings: mission component, flexibility with time and agenda – Step moves in order to achieve long-term goals: “do-ability ambition”

7. Where do we seek new valuable allies?

Collaborate around innovation: move beyond the wall of your organization – Borrow the best ideas from outside the sector – Make the arts sector highly accessible to new people – Learn from other organizations

8. How do we evolve our staff structure to meet our changing practices?

Work innovations around the margins to bring staff on slowly – Build the capacity to delegate and change roles and responsibilities regarding decision-making



ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE

- 1. How do we change the fundamental role and purpose of our boards?**

Develop an “innovation circle” committed to continue challenging assumptions – Let go of ideas about how an organization should be structured – Align boards with higher principles and longer-term goals (beyond “butts in seats today”) – Money will be more participatory
- 2. What are the structures that facilitate engagement of board members?**

Consider different governance structures to allow innovation – Involve staff directly with the board – Have board, staff and artists involved in all key decision-making
- 3. How do we challenge and educate our boards to become comfortable with the unknown?**

Create an “innovation sub-committee” of the board, or have the full board be that body – Make sure the board really understands and allows risk – Build the board’s understanding that having permeable borders between our organization and the community does not threaten stability – Be willing to partner with unusual suspects
- 4. Do we need to rethink what it means to be a “qualified” board member?**

Get a more ambitious and curious set of trustees – Add artists (ex-officio) to the board – Use younger board members as connectors and collaborators – Make eagerness to be innovative critical to attracting new leadership – Get rid of board members who serve “as long as it isn’t too much of a bother”
- 5. How do we get our boards to redefine success?**

Create longer-term cycles of measurement for success and failure (and for funders) – Change the dialogue to discuss impact – Evolve funders to emphasize innovation – Use unexpected leadership changes to rethink the organization – Develop funders that are willing to support innovation and measure results over time



THE ROLES ARTISTS PLAY IN ADAPTING OUR ORGANIZATIONS

- 1. Where is the space for artists to insert the creative process into our organization models?**

Leverage the psyche of “OK to fail” not “OK not to try” – Don’t say no to the disruption of artists: think about how to make it work – Support artists to be anarchic within institutions’ status quo – Engage artists to see things differently and develop new ways to express – Place artists at the heart of innovation – Let the do-it-yourselfers make such a mess
- 2. How can we recognize artists as entrepreneurs and engage with the business sector?**

Develop reciprocal understanding between artists and the changing business landscape – Recognize artists as resources beyond simply talent – Practice making a case for the value proposition of art - Capitalize on artists’ desire to be change agents and work in the community
- 3. How can we recognize the work of artists directly with, for, and in the community?**

Strengthen the direct relationship of artists with the community beyond traditional venues – Employ artists as community resources, outside of the organization – Shift from arts organizations existing to preserve and support art to serving the community – Exploit interest in creating work that ignites conversation
- 4. How can we embed artists into our administrative structures?**

Use the familiarity of artists with risk, failure and keeping going – Embrace expanded notion of what an artist is: more people are “creatives” – Have artists take on managerial roles to bring new ideas and perspectives to different aspects of the organization (dual-hatting) – Be willing to work with novice performers and invest in training
- 5. How can we revalue the structures artists themselves have created over time, and explore how they might serve as a guide to invention and reinvention, and a deep connection to the world?**

Changed business practices that value artists: change our view on artist as a job field – Go beyond commissions: create entrepreneurial ventures that are self-sustaining – The radical notion of paying artists fairly to make work – Curators seeing the potential of artist participation to inform programming



APPROACHES TO PROGRAMMING

1. How are we embracing experimentation in service of our essential mission?

Change performance formats to layer in diverse cultures – Let go of the museum's need to curate exhibitions – To change the organization, change the programming: truly led by organizational leaders – Let go of the "precious" – Sell the organization rather than specific shows or events– Consider the "essence" of the art form when making any decision, artistic or otherwise

2. How are we balancing internal authority and external input?

Overcome the idea of letting the narrative speak for itself: allow engagement during story-telling – Build the ability to reflect on criticism

3. How do we identify our public and establish frank dialogue?

Look beyond those who know you to ask what people want to see – Ask fundamental questions of what's relevant – Listen and figure out how to give back to our communities

4. What opportunities do our audiences have to participate in our work?

Engage the audience by opening up the artistic process (and recognize the risk for artists)



APPROACHES TO CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

1. How do we make, present, produce and value art with, not for, audiences?

Redefine participation to include other modes beyond “buying a ticket” –
Cultivate the ability to speak to “new” people we were not used to communicating
with in the past – Develop a shared vision: use a process and give it time - Create
immersive, experiential, participatory experiences

2. How do we recognize and celebrate folks for who they are?

Create relationships that are long-term, not “transactional” – Find a good mix of new
technological tools and face-to-face contact – Offer new entry points to our
organization – Cross-disciplinary, cross-pollinating collaborations: audience of “mixed
tastes” – The ability to change our approach as audience relationships deepen – The
ability to communicate in multiple languages

3. How do we reflect upon and challenge our organizational culture?

Create the space to fail – Don’t assume that audiences won’t be excited to see you
doing new work – In the visual arts, be clear about how much time we want to invest
in other art forms

4. How do we share resources to be mutually beneficial?

Give recognition to small organizations – Leadership that opens doors to wider
collaboration, and keeps egos out! – Invest in online giving – Trade spaces to
discover a new vision – Provide support for others to use our spaces

5. How do we catalyze the personal experience in all interactions inside and outside of a physical space?

Find new ways to bring art to the public (not the other way round) – No longer see
audience as “passive”: engage in unexpected experiences in “a venue for things to
happen” – Recognize that niche audiences can be more passionate



THE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT INNOVATIONS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

1. How do we move from a “do-gooder” mentality to a “do it together” necessity?

Set a goal of “a win for everyone” – Provide platforms for organizations - Talk with not to neighborhoods: listen to the neighbors – Identify broader community goals and look for ways to help and advance them – Think beyond the immediate audience: work on the local planning level to impact the surrounding community – Increase understanding of the local landscape of needs – Drive innovation via communitarian decision-making rather than individual artistic visionaries

2. How can we develop a culture of intentional and active listening within our organization?

Foster internal diversity of thought – Really listen to outside “non-expert” voices: allow them a place to challenge and redirect – Involve everyone (board, staff and artists) in engagement work – Call out the value of relationships – Change the internal working model from programs to hubs and community centers – Don’t think of other arts groups as “competition” – Be willing to be invisible as an organization to elevate the local arts scene

3. How can we redefine current and/or traditional measurements of success to ones that value long-term social capital?

Include an engagement/visitor component in accreditation (in the visual arts) – Develop formal groupings of colleagues to work together to advance a discipline – Manage different imperatives for producing vs. presenting organizations to allow for partnerships – Develop a yardstick to measure collaboration and collective innovation – Make collaboration a requirement of innovation

4. How do we build leadership in our organizations that reflect the diversity of the people* we work with and aspire to work with? (*artists, audiences, partners, community members)

Private, public and nonprofit sectors working together to create an entrepreneurial environment – Allow all partners to be authentic to who you are – A mindset that we are more than our venue – Find the experts who can find the people – Facilitate artists coming together

5. How can we create convergent spaces that enable collective inquiry and engagement that advance art and community?

The ability to balance honoring precious spaces vs. sharing resources – Experiment in someone else’s backyard: greater chance of innovation when organizations cross-collaborate and set programming in other spaces – Create synergy through partnerships between innovative small nonprofits and larger ones – Be willing to align principles and release ownership to work collaboratively – Use space-sharing with other organizations to revitalize neighborhoods – Leverage niche communities of crowdfunders – Generate festival-type frameworks – Use place-making strategies: participate in the community and go to the audiences



ADAPTIVE CHANGE AS PART OF THE CULTURE - THE ORGANIZATIONAL DNA

1. How can we recognize abundance?

Not being protective of existing assets: move beyond anxiety about the unknown – Challenge a culture of scarcity and oppression – Challenge the mindset of “just making do” – Be willing to create art without the goal of generating income or traditional audiences

2. How do we embrace failure and vulnerability?

Hold detailed ‘post-mortems’ for all productions that allow for input from artists and staff – Be willing to take leaps of faith – Affirm innovation language as an institutional value – Limit huge innovations to discrete areas: not re-routing the whole ship

3. How do we name and question our assumptions?

Ask more questions about “Why?” than about “What?” – Develop the capacity to distinguish between real threats and misperceptions/entrenched beliefs – Be willing to question the assumption that “more information is better” – Recognize the negative power of magical thinking

4. How do we deal with our own organizational un-co-operative practices?

Create less traditional hierarchies of employees and leadership – Engage our creativity to change our meeting habits and shake up thoughts – Develop alignment between public programming and conservatorship – Be prepared to share resources without internal fighting – Create an organizational structure that supports and opens up 2-way exchanges

5. How do we build the muscles to be comfortable with and manage conflict?

Use the tension between innovation and stability to drive higher levels of creativity – Allow for disparate points of view within the organization: work through change together – Distinguish where you need to build muscles or relax muscles – Recognize that creative collisions can be more useful than constant tension

6. How can we be open and embrace the power of ideas from outside our organization?

Be comfortable in the organization with the concept of innovation through collaboration – Let go of the notion that everything has to be branded and isolated from other companies’ work and mission – Relate “sacred objects” to public value – Embrace and cross-pollinate new companies in different disciplines – Constantly engage with the outside world and listen to the community – Actually make work across organizations

7. What is the minimum viable product?

Be willing to go from start to completion rapidly on new projects – Balance the push to do things for the first time, with the desire to do them right

8. How do we seek out perspectives different from our own & let them influence us?

Look to business professionals to handle operations, not just programming – Get the Board involved for cross-pollination of ideas – Look outside the field for leaders – Create a through-line from peripheral to core activities



CAPITAL STRUCTURES TO ENABLE INNOVATION

1. What is our strategy to build a capital structure that allows for innovation?

Create budgets that include risk capital to fund experiments and prototypes – Better align capital with organizational goods – Develop “change capital”: innovation comes at a price – Use resources to enable balance of innovation and realism – Put funds into cross-organizational groups and collaboratives

2. How do we attract investment in risky endeavors?

Too centralized a support system discourages other individual funders – Move away from investing only in measurable outcomes – Open up new avenues to capital investment: manage risk aversion by funders – Promote investments over gifts: pay for the whole product, not a portion of it

3. How can we best measure the need for capital and related productivity of capital?

Develop new measures of quantitative success – Evaluate mission drift (e.g., educational arms of organizations)

4. How can we improve our literacy about capital and innovation?

Don't be trapped by established accounting requirements – Realize that having a fundable program doesn't mean you can handle executing it – Adopt a culture of accepting failure – Consider funding a) in a start-up mode, b) creating capital, and c) long-term equity

5. What do we need to give up to make room for innovation capital?

Eliminate low-impact activities to increase impact in other areas – Allow for the destruction of existing structures and programs to open up space for innovation