



DYNAMIC ADAPTABILITY 2.0: RADICAL RETHINK

July 2012—June 2013

Dynamic Adaptability started as a response to a March 2009 study,¹ commissioned by a consortium of Pacific Northwest funders about the effects of the recession on area cultural institutions and their needs at this time. In that study, cultural leaders asked for more opportunities to gather with colleagues, exchange ideas and learn about ways of managing the rapid changes they were experiencing. “Dynamic adaptability” is a term used to describe the capacity of an organization to be responsive to a changing environment in order to thrive. Dynamic Adaptability 2.0: Radical Rethink was a continuation of a conference series that began in February 2010. The original series was four convenings held between February 2010 and January 2011.²

At the conclusion of the first series, The Boeing Company asked Helicon Collaborative to explore whether there was continued need for convening in the cultural community. Helicon surveyed all 360 participants from the first series and received 94 responses (a healthy 25% response rate) from organizations of all sizes and disciplines. Survey responses indicated that there was still strong appetite among cultural sector leaders for these opportunities. In particular, survey respondents were interested in themes related to 1) new donors, 2) new revenue strategies, and 3) the role of arts and culture in community and civic life. Respondents also requested the opportunity to learn from others who have faced challenges similar to theirs and case studies of organizations that have successfully adapted.

In response to these survey results, US Bank, The Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, and 4Culture joined the Boeing Company in supporting three additional convenings in 2012 and 2013. *Dynamic Adaptability 2.0* was framed as an opportunity for a “radical rethink” for cultural leaders — re-thinking working assumptions, business models, relationships with communities, and more. There is a growing recognition that the methods and perspectives that helped us get where we are today are insufficient to ensure our success in the future. Changes in technology, participation patterns, demographics and the economy have highlighted the need for cultural organizations to alter the way that they think and operate in order to thrive in the future.

¹ <http://heliconcollab.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Puget-Sound-Arts-Environmental-Scan.2009-03-09.pdf>

² A summary of those sessions here: http://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/Project-Summary_Dynamic-Adaptability-Arts-and-Culture-Puget-Sound.pdf

Goals of DA 2.0:

1. To provide opportunities for cultural leaders and funders to enlarge their understanding of their changing operating context and how the most successful practitioners are responding.
2. To provide participants with practical tools and information that will help them be more successful in adapting to their changing world.

Programs:

1. Donor Motivations: Values-Based Fundraising. July 11, 2012
2. Cultural Organizations as Civic Leaders. November 2, 2012
3. How do We Talk About the Public Value of the Arts? June 24, 2013

A total of 395 people attended the three sessions, including representatives of diverse cultural organizations, funding organizations, and other nonprofit and community leaders.

This report contains brief summaries of the three sessions.

Additional materials and videos of the sessions can be found online at <http://www.giarts.org/dynamic-adaptability> and http://heliconcollab.net/our_work/dynamic-adaptability-arts-and-culture-puget-sound/

Donor Motivations: Values Based Fundraising. “It’s Not About You, It’s About Them.”

Holly Sidford, Marcelle Hinand, and Alexis Frasz; Helicon Collaborative

July 11, 2012

Cultural organizations are increasingly facing the pressure to find new revenue sources to effectively capitalize themselves.³ Giving by individual donors makes up three-quarters of total charitable giving (Giving USA 2011), and is one of the only revenue streams that seems to have growth potential at this time. Unlocking that potential, however, depends on a savvy understanding of what motivates individual giving.

This session responded to the top interest of cultural leaders who completed the survey: information on how to reach individual donors. Helicon presented the results of its recent psychographic study (conducted with WolfBrown) of donors to artists and cultural organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Helicon then led workshops to help participants put these concepts into practice in their own organizations.

From a survey of over 3,000 donors, the study found that individuals’ charitable giving in the Bay Area is motivated by five primary values:

- **Humanism** – concern for social justice and equal opportunity, interest in different cultures; commitment to alleviating others’ suffering.
- **Distinction** – interest in “world class” works and artists and sustaining prestigious arts institutions
- **Localism** – interest in local artistic access and local artists, awakening creativity, and programs that serve children.
- **Bonding** – active in civic life, interest in social and family networks and arts programs that reflect one’s heritage.
- **Progressivism** – interest in being on the leading edge of art and ideas, individualistic; value independent thought.

The research found that donors to large institutions are different than donors to small institutions and artists in some important ways. For example, donors to artists and small organizations tend to give more time, value Localism and Progressivism, and be artists themselves (professional or amateur). Donors to large organizations tend to give more money, value Distinction and Bonding, and do not consider themselves artists.

In the workshops participants learned ways to interview donors about their values, assess their programs in terms of the values they convey and connect with potential donors in terms of their values

³ For more on this topic see previous session by Clara Miller and Nonprofit Finance Fund: <http://www.giarts.org/dynamic-adaptability/cultural-capital>

Cultural Organizations as Civic Leaders

John Michael Schert (Trey McIntyre Company), James Kass (Youth Speaks), Lisa Sasaki (The Oakland Museum of California) and Chris Coleman (Portland Center Stage)

November 2, 2012

Cultural leaders in the Puget Sound also expressed an interest in exploring the changing role of arts and culture in community life. “Community,” “relevance,” and “engagement” have become buzzwords in the cultural sector, but what do we really mean when we use these terms? What does it look like when a cultural organization is authentically engaged with its community, moving beyond audience development strategies and outreach departments? Does deep community engagement require compromising other artistic or organizational goals, or can it actually make organizations more adventuresome and sustainable?

This session featured four cultural organizations that are nationally recognized for their artistic excellence and their exceptional civic leadership in their respective communities. These leaders spoke about how their organizations have integrated a deep commitment to community throughout all aspects of their work, and how this has led to numerous benefits, including greater organizational stability and artistic creativity:

- **James Kass** talked about how Youth Speaks is engaging young people around issues of diabetes and food justice in their communities.
- **Chris Coleman** talked about how the move to a new building prompted Portland Center Stage to ask itself, “how can we use this as an opportunity to engage with the community in a more dynamic way on a daily basis?”
- **John Michael Schert** talked about the unlikely choice of the Trey McIntyre Company to locate in Boise, Idaho and how it contributed to the arts becoming more embedded in the community.
- **Lisa Sasaki** talked about what happened when the community around the Oakland Museum of California changed, and how it had to adapt to remain relevant.

In an open discussion afterwards, local cultural leaders gathered to discuss what civic leadership means in the Puget Sound. Leaders identified critical local issues including community identity, safety, transportation, social equity, education and employment. They discussed ways that the arts are currently contributing to addressing these issues in the community, and things that they might do to be more effective in the future.

How do We Talk About the Public Value of the Arts?

Sheila Smith, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts; Tom Schorgl, Community Partnership for Arts and Culture; Michael Ruston, Indiana University

June 24, 2013

This session was convened in the context of an ongoing statewide legislative campaign to approve a new tax mechanism for public funding in Washington State. As local cultural leaders step up advocacy efforts with legislators and the general public, this session sought to address how organizations, and the cultural sector as a whole, can make a better case for the public value of arts and culture. Understanding how to talk about public value is useful for any organization that wants to communicate more effectively with donors, audience members, and the general public. The session featured three guest speakers who are experts on public value and shared their experiences with what works — and what doesn't — in communicating about the value of culture in the context of campaigns for public funding.

- **Sheila Smith** from the [Minnesota Citizens for the Arts](#) — leader of a successful campaign to pass the largest state [constitutional amendment for culture](#) in the U.S., passed in 2008 which provides arts, culture, heritage and environment over \$52 million a year. Sheila spoke about unconventional partnerships with hunting and conservationist advocates that were key to the success of their campaign.
- **Tom Schorgl** from the [Community Partnership for Arts and Culture in Ohio](#) — leader of a successful 2006 campaign to pass a county-wide cigarette tax for arts and culture that yields over \$17 million a year. Tom spoke about how they built a grassroots advocacy campaign by appealing to what really mattered to people.
- **Michael Rushton**, Associate Professor and Director of the Arts Administration Program at Indiana University — an economist and public policy expert who specializes in the [public value of the arts](#). He spoke about the importance about making an argument for what is uniquely valuable about the arts that can't be replicated by any other sector.

The speakers then participated in a panel where they answered questions from the audiences including:

- How did you deal with opposition to your campaign?
- What are the data points or stories that are most compelling to the public?
- How did you make the case for including individual artists?

A second panel welcomed local arts leaders Jim Kelly from [4 Culture](#), Kris Tucker from [ArtsWA](#), David Brown from [Pacific Northwest Ballet](#), and Carol Albert from the [Cultural Access Fund](#). These leaders shared how they are applying concepts of public value to their own work locally.