BACK TO BASICS: NURTURING PEOPLE AND BUILDING A CULTURE OF

RESILIENCE IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICAN ART MUSEUMS

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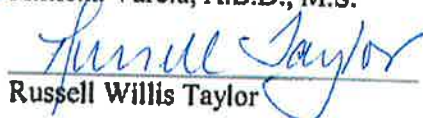
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ABSTRACT

This is a study about how American art museums can become more resilient in the 21st century. As the external environment changes, art museum leadership must explore and consider new approaches in response. One key, and consistently underdeveloped area lies in the implementation of innovative strategies around the internal operations of museums related to staff and structure.

A select group of art museum leaders are beginning to experiment with new practices in this area, especially around the development of strategies that relate to organizational culture, experimentation and innovation, and staff alignment around institutional core values. By focusing on strategies that invest in their staff, these museum leaders are discovering improved institutional relevance, flexibility, responsiveness, and collaboration. In other words, they are increasing institutional resilience. The examples from these leading art museum directors serve as exciting models for other leaders and practitioners in the field, informing strong next practices that prepare art museums for work in the 21st century.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

> "Museums are inventions of men, not inevitable, eternal, ideal, or divine. They exist
> for the things we put in them, and they change as each generation chooses how to
> see and use those things" (Adele Silver, Cleveland Museum, as quoted in Weil
> 1999).

The world is changing. By virtue of this fact, art museums, like other nonprofit

entities, must also change to fit a new and evolving reality. As Adele Silver astutely

conveys in the quote above, museums are engineered for change through the passage of

time and generations. However, the bifurcated role of 21st century museums, particularly

collection-based museums, to build relevance with contemporary audiences, while

simultaneously serving as the cultural keeper of generations past, is not easy to balance. It

represents both immense opportunity and immense challenge, driving museums to make

sense of their collections, exhibitions, and programming, and to do so in new ways.

Adding to this complicated matrix of change are global developments, which are

evolving beyond the realm of art museums, but which stand to have significant

implications for museum sustainability in the future. Recently published titles such as

Reinventing the Museum; *Museums: Challenges for the 21st Century*; and *Museums and

the Paradox of Change*, demonstrate the reality of the pressures facing museums, and

acknowledge the struggle they face in defining their value and purpose in the changing

landscape of the 21st century. Change, decidedly, has become the new constant for art

museums across the country.

This study, however, is not simply about re-engineering the value of art museums in this environment of change. Instead, it is about the internal strategies around staff, structure, and culture, which improve a museum's ability to bend, flex, experiment, and evolve in response to this new reality. In a content-driven, creative field, as is the field of art museums, there is temptation -- intentional or not -- to undervalue or under-prioritize organizational development. Creative scholars have advanced their studies in curatorial practices, art historical scholarship, conservation, and education, to name a few, and accordingly structure careers around building strong legacies related to those content areas. It has been argued that internal organizational strategy related to staff and structure is not top of mind for practitioners in the field (Janes 2013), and commonly, museum job descriptions, organizational charts, and strategies around staff development support this narrow approach.

What experiences from other industries suggest, the technology industry for example, is that by under-emphasizing internal operational strategy, art museums could be losing opportunities to evolve new staff efficiencies and fulfillment, which could in turn, engender new external relevance and worth. In other words, they could hinder opportunities for resilience. Art museums are certainly not in the business of organizational development, per se; however, in this environment of change, allowing old assumptions to inform contemporary internal strategy means that art museums are organizing themselves for an environment that no longer exists. It leaves one to imagine, then, what might happen to an art museum in which internal organizational strategy around staff and structure were considered with the same level of sophistication, creativity, and intentionality applied to content-driven initiatives? What if the many

cultural benefits that museums engender in their own communities were also cultivated internally? In such a model, museum leadership would develop active and focused efforts to build into organizational design strong collaboration, communication, connectivity, creativity, plus personal and professional growth for staff. Art museums developed in this manner could accomplish their work with a newfound sense of authenticity, value, purpose, and resilience.

The challenge, however, is that the majority of American art museums are not adequately structured or focused for such an effort, if they are even interested in such an effort at all. Many museums have embraced some preliminary tactics, introducing the interdisciplinary exhibition team or work with external advisory groups, for example; such efforts certainly challenge the structural status quo, but are potentially fleeting in nature. If these project-based efforts are not sustained beyond the project's completion, they cannot provide lasting solutions for museums seeking to capitalize on operational strategy to improve response to the contemporary environment.

The reality is that with limited resources, time, and a lack of an internal effort to emphasize innovative organizational practices, working in new ways is challenging. In many art museums, such work feels like the aspiration, not the reality. However, driven to change by significant external forces, there are some museums leaders who are beginning to prioritize a deeper dive into organizational development. Emphasizing *the way* in which they conduct their business as a subject equally important to the business they conduct, these art museum leaders are providing ways to make the aspirational begin to feel possible.

Knowing who these museum leaders are, and what they are doing is not always easily accessed information. The internal operations and practices of art museums are more often the topic of closed-door conversations (Janes 2013) rather than the subjects of scholarly articles or books. When museum leaders, professionals, scholars, or bloggers do take up this subject, it is often within the context of a larger dialogue around museum leadership, organizational purpose, or change management in museums, and can lack specific detail and context. Though the role of internal operational strategy is inextricably linked to all three, successful tactics are worthy of consideration in their own right.

Investing time and thought into updating internal strategies related to staff and structure in the face of an externally changing environment provides opportunity for art museums to not only survive, but to thrive. Survival is not a museum purpose (Weil 2000, in Janes 2009), and to remain relevant in the 21st century, it is increasingly clear that art museums need to consider progressive practices that enable new work and new ways of doing things. Museums that support staff in the pursuit of new habits and the development of new frameworks are making an investment in their staff; inspiring staff to become nimble, responsive, adaptive, and flexible in their own work translates to the institutional level as well.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines resilience as "the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change." Although more commonly a term applied in the environmental and design sciences, resilience is finding increasing relevance in museum scholarship as well (for examples, see Janes 2009 and Taylor 2011). As Janes states, for museums, "becoming resilient allows systems and organizations to absorb large disturbances without changing their fundamental natures." He continues,

within the continuum of consequences are the enormous lost opportunity costs if museums remain satisfied in the marketplace rather than using their resources, intelligence, and trusted societal status in the interests of enhanced and creative stewardship. Fostering institutional resilience may soon become the number one strategic priority for museums as events unfold, as it is the foundation for both renewal and prosperity (Janes, 2009, 141-142).

Of course, a museum's resources and intelligence springs forth from the talents of its staff, so there is a case to be made that institutional resilience improves when museum staff is resilient. In other words, art museums can develop into resilient organizations if staff members are trained and supported, and therefore prepared to embrace a new era of museum work with authenticity, creativity, and spirit.

The concept of resilience does not offer a silver bullet to the crisis American art museums now face. But, what it can perhaps lend to the conversation is a new frame through which museum staff can approach their work in a time of change, acknowledging the challenges they face, but committing to work through and rise above them. Connie P. Ozawa's definitions of resilient systems and resilient communities, and the connection of the two, helps to connect this potential relationship between resilient institutions and resilient staff. Quoting scholars Innes and Booher 2010, Ozawa defines a resilient system as "one that can withstand shocks and surprises, absorb extreme stresses, and maintain its core functions, though perhaps in an altered form." She defines a resilient community as one that "is able to respond to unexpected and unwelcome events in ways that enable groups and individuals to work together to minimize the adverse consequences of such crises" (Ozawa 2012). In the case of art museums, one can understand how a resilient community of staff begets an organization structured for resilience; but developing a

resilient community requires the intentional application of resources by leadership.

Statement of the Problem

Not only are there ongoing shifts in thinking around the purpose of museums and the audiences they serve, but there are also new and strong external forces that challenge the status quo of art museum operation. Art museums are not alone in facing what could be considered an existential crisis in this developing cultural landscape, but with rich collections to protect and preserve, and a long tradition of doing things a certain way, art museums are at a particularly vulnerable moment as they figure out how to move forward, securing relevancy and financial solvency for the future.

On some fronts, museums have responded to the call for resilience by challenging long-held assumptions about their roles and missions. Thanks to scholars such as Stephen Weil (1999), art museums, once only focused on core activities such as preservation, conservation, collecting, and scholarship, are now more comfortable navigating externally facing initiatives such as audience education, participation, and engagement. Yet, this shift has internal implications, and in many instances, has cultivated internal conflict, confusion, and frustration. How museums leaders handle change management internally then becomes the next frontier.

Elizabeth Merritt, founding director of the American Alliance of Museum's Center for the Future of Museums, suggested in a 2013 talk to the League of American Orchestras, that traditional museum assumptions around internal structure and authority often hold museums back from embracing change in other areas (2013). In her point there is an echo of the idea that internal practices within art museums have potentially not kept pace with the world, and that external work could be even stronger if bolstered more

properly internally.

Access to information on what exactly museums are doing to address, improve, or ignore issues of organizational development is not easy to obtain. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for art museum professionals (leaders, managers, and staff) working in the field to know what works and what does not. As museum scholar and practitioner Robert Janes notes in his book *Museums in a Troubled World*, the field-wide time and energy that are devoted to discussing internal, organizational practices is negligible. In fact, Janes notes that only one to two percent of the typical industry conferences focus on how things are organized, including the people and resources required to do the work, the strategic planning, organizational structure, delegation, staffing, training, communication systems, methods for resource allocation, coordination and control, plus reward and recognition systems (2012).

There exists a significant body of literature on organizational development in corporations and nonprofits, but very little scholarship has been conducted on how these methods could be successfully transferred to the realm of art museums. This gap in the literature, in combination with the nascent explorations by museum leaders into shifts around internal organizational strategy, offers a rich opportunity for study. As museums continue to inspire and support vibrant programming for communities, it is asynchronous, and surprising, that they do not strive to accomplish similar results for the professionals working within their four walls. After all, resilience is not about a project or a program, resilience is about systems and communities -- the organizations and the people who work within them. Art museums risk missing an opportunity to become extraordinary in what they do if they fail to capitalize on this very important connection between staff and

product.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to present both the theory and the practice behind internal operational strategy related to staff and structure, which can help to improve performance and possibly prepare art museums to be more resilient in the 21st century. In generating a space for museums to share this crucial information, the background, success stories, and lessons learned can become resources to provoke inspiration, consideration, knowledge, and potential action by museum leaders and practitioners working in the field.

<u>Methodology and Research Questions</u>

This study is grounded in both extensive research and interviews with key thought leaders in the field to answer the questions: How is internal operational strategy in art museums developing in this evolving environment? Are there previously untapped opportunities for museum leadership to explore to improve internal operations, building mechanisms for resilience at both the staff and institutional levels? In order to frame and answer these questions, the researcher conducted an extensive literature review in several key content areas including: the external environment affecting museums today; museum practice and leadership; organizational development theory; organizational change and change management in museums; and resilience. Books and scholarly journal articles comprise the bulk of the referenced resources; however, because much of the value in this study relies on successful tactics already implemented by practitioners in the field, several blogs, conference presentations, news reports, and industry speeches were also

considered.

From the background research emerged a handful of key themes potentially central to organizational development in art museums. These practices were then considered in relation to the current themes presented at industry conference by practitioners in the field, namely the Alliance of American Museums conferences 2011-2013. For a third measure of comparative analysis, the researcher identified for interview several museum directors considered to be thought field leaders in this area of internal operational management. The researcher asked the interviewees the following questions to better understand the motivations, challenges, benefits, and priorities associated with successful and perhaps innovative practice in this area. Their responses, in combination with the background information assembled through the literature review and conference presentations provide clues and ideas for strong next practices around internal operational strategies in American art museums.

Interview Questions:

1. As an executive director, what percentage of your time is dedicated to the development of your internal operational strategies?

2. Is there one person (or department) in your museum who is responsible for internal operational strategies? If so, who? Do they sit on your senior management team?

3. Do you feel that, currently, there is external pressure to adjust your internal operational strategies?

4. In general, would you describe your approach to internal operational strategy as institution-wide or project-based?

5. In your opinion and experience, please rank the importance of the following internal practices for museums (scale 1-5; 1=not very important/not a priority; 3=of average importance; 5-of great importance/top priority):

    a. Staff alignment around institutional core purpose

    b. Internal communication

    c. Building leadership at multiple levels within the organization

    d. Professional development for staff

    e. Embracing experimentation and risk-taking

    f. Horizontal working structures [collaboration]

    g. Strategies that are human-centered

    h. Cultivating a learning organization

    i. Clarity of organizational culture

NOTE: Practices for which the respondent ranked as priority or higher (3 or higher), two follow up questions were asked for each:

    1. What is the external impact of this as priority?

    2. How does your staff know that this is a priority?

6. As a museum leader, what is motivating about internal operational strategy work? What is challenging about it? Do you have advice for someone looking to take it on?

7. Do you have specific training or experience in your background that informs your particular approach to internal operational strategy?

8. Who else is working or thinking about intentional organizational practices in this way?

Significance of the Study/Value and Importance to the Field

There is a significant amount of current scholarship on art museums, from institutional value and effective directors, to issues of marketing and audience engagement. Additionally, scholars have been addressing how these critical aspects of museums need to change in the 21st century. One area that seems to be lacking in the current research is attention to how museum work is managed internally, specifically the innovative operational strategies that can strengthen art museums from the inside out. An internally strong, productive, and operationally intentional art museum is prepared to respond to change. Identifying priorities and mechanisms for art museums to build resilience into their organizational practices will contribute to making art museums more prepared for the work in the 21st century.

In general, the existing theory indicates that it is time for the field to stop ignoring this area; however, there is also a need to understand more completely how current theory fits into the practice of arts management (Cray, et al 2007). Art museums invest in their personnel, and together with the collections, "a museum's staff is its most valuable resource" (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 80). As museums face some of the biggest challenges ever, they will need to rely on the success of their personnel more than ever. Many art museums have strong organizational cultures that challenge if not discourage new organizational models and practices. This research seeks to provide successful examples of art museums that have made innovative inroads this area, perhaps creating a road map for other museums wishing to embark on such work. By focusing on the internal practices and structures that facilitate this kind of change management in art museums, this research will make more possible the notion of art museums becoming resilient organizations.

Limitations of the Study

This is a study of what is possible for American art museums in the 21st century, specifically focused on how innovative strategies for internal operations can build resilience in people and organizations. Rather than providing a broad overview of the challenges or the list of what is wrong with current organizational development in museums, instead this study focuses on the value to be gained by intentional, proactive strategies. However, currently, there exists only a small number of art museum leaders developing, testing, and modeling some of these key internal practices within their art museums. Although they represent a small sample size, by virtue of the work they are accomplishing, they also serve as key thought leaders in this area. This study generates a positive frame through which the field can derive meaning through the study of these innovative operational practices. Amplifying the successful thinking and work currently being implemented by these key leaders makes it more possible for other art museums, facing common operational challenges, to consider and implement new initiatives themselves.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to put this particular study into the context of the

literature already produced in the field. This study draws on both existing theory and

practice, and is arranged to present the theory from the organizational development and

museums fields first. Though there is a noted divide between the academics and the

practitioners within the museum field (Janes 2012), this study helps to close that gap by

acknowledging where the two sides are already in sync, and where the potential

alignments might exist. The first section of the literature review is dedicated to exploring

the changing external landscape for art museums, addressing the specific nature of the

challenges they currently face. The second section of the literature review presents an

overview of key trends in organizational development, in general, and also in museums,

when possible. The third section is dedicated to current practice, and presents the most

recent work accomplished by museum staff and leadership in this area, as presented at the

last three years of the American Alliance of Museums annual conferences, 2011-2013.

Part 1: Museum Purpose in a New Era

> Museums represent certainty in uncertain times. As contemporary life grows more
> impersonal, people need to be reminded that there is a continuity to human
> existence and the natural and physical world, and they need a way to connect their
> own experience to what is known about the past and the present. It could be said
> that our times are creating a museum movement (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 17-18).

In 1984, after two years of meetings, open forums, and colloquia involving museum

scholars and practitioners across the country, the Commission on Museums for a New

Century published a report making sense of the issues facing museums. The report was published to clarify the role of museums in America, their obligations to collections and their responsibilities to the community. As such, this document provides an interesting foundation on which to begin to understand museum emphases, strategies, and priorities over the last thirty years. The report forecasted four forces of change that would affect museum work, including: the proliferation of voices; the coming to terms with cultural pluralism; upheaval in the education system; and wiring into the information age (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 24-25). In light of the identified forces of change, the Commission recommended seven areas that required fresh thinking from museum leadership. These areas ranged from collection and education practices to responding to the economic challenges facing museums. It is interesting to note that of the seven conditions highlighted by the Commission, none explicitly addressed the internal infrastructure of museum management. Perhaps the closest was the inclusion of "strong, forward-thinking leadership" as one of the seven points (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 29), and although organizational structure was referenced as an aspect of this, the definition of leadership in this case was grounded primarily in systems of governance, not internal management.

From the seven conditions identified by the Commission, they crafted sixteen recommendations to advance museum work (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 31-33). Excerpts of the sixteen are as follows:

1. In planning for the growth of its collection, we urge each museum to set clear, rational and appropriate goals for the contribution it can make to the stewardship of our cultural and natural heritage.

2. We urge museums with similar interests to develop the elements of

coordinated policies on what objects, artifacts and specimens are to be collected, how and by which institutions.

3. In the belief that America's museum collections are a national resource, which merits a strong federal commitment, we urge the acceleration of the federal initiative in collections care and organization.

4. We urge a planning study to determine the feasibility of a national series of inventories of museum collections, organized and conducted by discipline.

5. Education is a primary purpose of American museums.

6. We urge a high priority for research into the ways people learn in museums.

7. We recommend that the AAM and other professional education and museum organizations convene a national colloquium to begin an effective dialogue about the mutually enriching relationship museums and schools should have.

8. We urge that museums continue to build on their success as centers of learning by providing high-quality educational experiences for people of all ages, but in recognition of the increasing median age of our population, that they pay new attention to their programs for adults.

9. Effective leadership for museums emerges from the ability of trustees to shape and guide the missions of their institutions...we ask that a special, independent task force of trustees, directors and leaders of other nonprofit institutions with similar governance structures be convened.

10. We urge that each museum develop responsible compensation policies and

practices that bring its salaries and benefits into line with professional work

for which similar education and experience are required.

11. We strongly believe the museum community must address the
underrepresentation of minorities in the museum work force generally and
the underrepresentation of women in the higher levels of management.

12. In the firm belief that size is not a criterion for excellence, we encourage
programs that provide information and training for professionals and
volunteers in small and developing museums.

13. The museum community must set up a permanent mechanism for
collecting, analyzing and dissemination of data about museums.

14. We urge that museums actively seek ways of working together and with
other community organizations.

15. A national program should be established to strengthen the public's
awareness of the value of museums and to cultivate public commitment to
museums as institutions that provide essential services to society.

16. Museums should increase their efforts toward achieving a more secure
financial base for the future through a combination of sound management,
self-help and appeals for public and private support.

These sixteen recommendations provide a fascinating snapshot of industry

priorities in the mid-1980s, anticipating the changes to come in the 21st century. It is

interesting to note how some of these recommendations have significantly evolved into

implementation in the ensuing decades, such as the emphasis on education, collection

management within museums, and collaboration with the community. However, it is also

worth noting that what is conspicuously missing from this list is an explicit emphasis on internal organizational practices; although many of these recommendations come with implicit changes to internal operations, *that* museum leaders should emphasize, study, or focus on new ways of operating was not included. Another commissioned report of this magnitude has not been published since 1984.

It could be argued that the story of art museums is one of the more things change the more they stay the same. As many of the recommendations on the 1984 Commission list remain relevant to contemporary museum studies, since its publication, there has been a strong inclination to look to the past to inform our present and future. For example, many contemporary scholars (Weil 1990; Anderson 2004 and 2012; Korn 2007) have found new resonance in the early 20th century writings of John Cotton Dana, the founding director of the Newark Museum and pioneer in museum thinking. Dana wrote prolifically on the importance of museums responding to needs within the community, suggesting in 1917 that "now seems to come the demand that the museum serve its people...to broaden their sympathies and multiply their interests" (Dana in Anderson 2012, 33). Dana's prescient perspective for museums to consider service to the community as valuable beyond the traditional understanding of the duties to collection, preservation, and scholarship are now increasingly common. These cross-generational conversations are an important frame through which one can understand the complex path art museums navigate between the past and the present. It also provides a way to understand the field-wide inclination to look to the past and to perhaps err on the side of habit and tradition.

With that as background, for the purposes of this study, the focus of the literature

review remains on the body of work that has been contributed primarily in the last four decades, with a special emphasis on the last decade. It is within this scope of time that museology has undergone a radical shift, and that external forces have hastened the need for museums to reconsider purpose, value, and sustainability.

Significant shifts in museological thinking and writing were provided by museum practitioner and scholar, Stephen Weil, most frequently referenced for his suggestion that museums are no longer about something, but are instead for people (Weil 1999; Kotler and Kotler 2000). Previously, it had been understood and widely accepted that a museum's primary responsibility was to its collections (Weil 1999). Weil credits this fundamental change to the ongoing shifts in the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in museums reaffirming their commitment to a public role (Bloom and Powell 1984), and to education being adopted as a core purpose of museums by the American Association of Museums (now the American Alliance for Museums, but still the AAM). Following the 1984 commissioned report referenced above, the AAM, in 1991, adopted the educator-prepared position paper *Excellence and Equity*, and proceeded to include some of this thinking into museum accreditation language.

Whereas the educational role of museums is one now widely accepted, museums still struggle with striking the right balance between service to community and service to the collection when making sense of core purpose. There are some scholars and practitioners who are continuing to push the conversation on museum purpose even further. Authors such as Robert Janes have suggested that museums should more carefully consider their social responsibility to the public they serve (Janes 2005 and 2009) as well current museum directors like Nina Simon who have furthered a museum

agenda around participation (Simon 2010). From the variety of ideas and proposals, what does seem clear is that there is no one perfect answer around value for all museums. Although it is critical that museums identify and clearly communicate a purpose, issues of location, size, resource allocation, and mission will help a museum determine the right course of action for its own set of circumstances. Increasingly, purpose and value are inextricably linked to the larger community in which the museum sits, whether local, national, or international; in person, or online.

Museums do not operate in a vacuum and external forces also influence museum mission, purpose, and value. The 1984 Report anticipated massive geopolitical shifts, changes in the distribution of material wealth, technological revolution, demographic change, dramatic assaults on the ecosystem, rising levels of education, transition in the developed world to an economy based on information and the provision of services (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 22). Now that the 21st century has arrived, contemporary scholars are still making efforts to identify which trends are most impacting the work of cultural organizations. Changes in technology, fundraising, leisure time, globalized competition, and shifts in demographics (Phillips, 1993), which are all evolving outside of the world of the museum, are having a significant impact on how museums can position their value and relevance. Gail Anderson also noted major fundamental shifts, identifying the realities of issues of global interdependence, economic volatility, environmental sustainability, the explosion of social media, demographic shifts, and local community dynamics as the issues that institutions must now balance, employing new thinking and learning new skills in response (Anderson, 2012, 191).

In a keynote address delivered by Russell Willis Taylor at the CultureHive Launch in the United Kingdom, Taylor, chief executive officer and president of National Arts Strategies, outlines audiences' new appetite for self-controlled data and experiences; the emphasis on bargain hunting; new technologies; and the rise of the amateur (2013). Similar audience trends are noted by Elizabeth Merritt, founding director of AAM's Center for the Future of Museums in her keynote address to the League of American Orchestras in which she reminds attendees that people now seek out experiences that are personalized, participatory, multi-sensory, distributed, and available when they want them (Merritt 2013). All of these lists indicate significantly altered market environments, and audience encounters that are a far cry from the traditional, quiet, contemplative visit to a museum of the past. These forces require museums to stretch outside of their traditional comfort zones in response.

These new trends in audience needs challenge the role of museum relevance, and invite inquiry into what role museums could or should play in society. Within Merritt's description of the landscape of museums is an implied choice, one, which she makes explicit when she asks, "Do museums have to adapt?" She answers her own question with a very astute, "No. There is always space to be traditional, it just may not be as big a space" (2013).

Merritt cautions museums that in many cases, the thing holding them back from achieving their core purpose is their inability to let go of certain assumptions about the aspects of what they think museums should be doing. These include assumptions about place, time, content, format, scale, and most relevant to this study, structure and authority. Merritt insightfully points out that it is often the assumptions around the

internal structures of the museum that limit the efforts to let go of the many other assumptions.

Merritt concludes her presentation by imagining two futures: one of fragmentation in which museums choose to remain in their traditional narrow roles, relying on other entities to provide the experiences sought after by audiences; and one of ubiquity, in which museums shift their core business to become more open to the needs and interests of the communities and audiences at large. Merritt is clear that not every museum must choose the adaptive, flexible path, but those that do, will find greater opportunity and support.

A consideration of what it takes to make a museum resilient is not complete without understanding the ability of the art museum to fail in this environment. Stephen Weil introduced this point when he maintained that unlike with symphonies, orchestras, and theaters, which close when they no longer have the funding to operate, the definition of failure is perhaps not as explicit for collection-based museums (1999). Weil maintains that museum boards begin to believe that organizational survival is the most important thing for a museum, a line of thinking, which leads to, in his words, "self-indulgent museums" (Weil 1999). This tendency, however, perhaps uncovers a general industry-wide inertia around improving organizational development practices. 21st century art museums that strive for resilience will inevitably look quite different from those who privilege tradition and habit.

The literature also introduces the important layer of complexity, both in contemporary society and in organizational practices of art museums. From the standpoint of organizational management, the instinct is often to try to keep things

simple; but doing so is much harder in today's world (Silverman and O'Neill 2004). Of the impact on museums, Silverman and O'Neill have this to say: "Stresses of sustaining a fantasy of simplicity in the 21st century have led to rigidity in museums. Despite great strides by some institutions, much of the field still operates amid simplistic oppositions that seem more reflective of a fear of change than a faith in tradition" (Silverman and O'Neill in Anderson, 2004, 194). The complexity of the external environment is challenging art museums to move beyond patterns of the past, and to respond to complex problems with solutions that respond to rather than bury the complexity.

The changes in the current cultural climate are well documented and extraordinary. What the scholarly literature has made evident is that the environment in which art museums operate has changed, and that museums must be responsive to this change. It is how museum leaders prepare and structure their staff for this work that will determine overall resilience in the long term.

Part 2: Organizational Development

Understanding internal organizational development is complicated, especially given the sheer number and variety of organizations. However, making sense of how organizations work to be more efficient, effective, and in the case of nonprofits, to deliver on their missions, is of critical importance. Although issues of organizational development have not often made it to the top of the priority list for museum leadership, the changing external environment, in combination with the developing strategies and insights coming forward in the organizational development field, make this area harder to ignore. With more nuanced notions of leadership, organizational culture and structure,

plus increasing sensitivity to staff motivation and alignment in the work place, the organizational development literature can assist museum leaders to better their own organizational practices in preparation for business in the 21st-century.

Informed by a 1995 study on the effectiveness of museums, researchers Des Griffin and Morris Abraham defined effectiveness in museums as concern for quality; shared goals; good communication; attention to training; strategic allocation of resources; and cohesion (Griffin and Abraham 2000). A review of the major literature yields a number of key concepts and trends that supports these themes, plus others. This section of the literature review is organized around them.

Happening Now

Although issues of organizational management and development are areas that have been well tread, a study of them at this particular moment is certainly timely. It should not escape anyone's attention that even at the time of developing this particular research project, shifts in organizational structures and leadership were making the news. In this manner, it seems appropriate to begin this portion of the literature review with current trends in organizational management.

For example, in January 2014, Zappos, the online shoe retailer announced, in an effort to improve performance, its termination of a hierarchical organizational structure. Following in the footsteps of other early adapters such as Twitter and Google, Zappos' plan was to transition from the traditional organizational model into a holarchy by December 2014. A holarchy offers a more horizontal organizational structure, one that allows for a more even distribution of power and that enforces radical transparency.

(Groth 2013). Reporter Aimee Groth quotes Zappos' CEO Tony Hseieh in explaining the change to staff, "Darwin said that it's not the fastest or strongest that survive. It's the ones most adaptive to change." In his remarks, Hsieh connects the internal organizational structure with the company's ability to be adaptable, responsive, and resilient in the external environment. The point is also made that the holarchy allows operations to connect around a central, core purpose of the organization, free from internal politics and the limits of traditional corporate culture (Groth 2013).

It is perhaps not immediately obvious what the new organizational strategies of a successful online shoe retailer may have to do with American art museums, but the connections are closer than what one might imagine. A few notable contemporary thought leaders and bloggers put some of these evolutions into perspective. Of horizontal working structures, Harvard Business Review's Tim Kestelle wrote in his blog piece, "Hierarchy is Overrated," that a flat organizational structure works best when: 1) the environment is changing rapidly; 2) the main point of differentiation is innovation; and 3) the organization has a shared purpose (2013). Kestelle underscores that horizontal working structures are not a new idea, and that their effectiveness in boosting organizational performance is well documented; but he acknowledges that there are some obstacles keeping this structure from becoming more mainstream. These obstacles include: 1) many people do not believe in democracy in the workplace; 2) hierarchical structures, not horizontal ones, feel normal to us; and 3) organizational leadership has a general fear of the unusual. The fourth obstacle is that changing organizational structures is hard and often requires a major crisis, financial or otherwise, to serve as a trigger for response from leadership.

Kestelle ends his post with this prediction and perceptive reminder, "as we enter the social era, flat structures will become increasingly common. There are sound business reasons for treating people with dignity, for providing autonomy, and for organizing among small teams rather than large hierarchies. It's time to start reimagining management. Making everyone a chief is a good place to start" (2013).

Although not written in exactly the same context, popular arts blogger Barry Hessenius added in a recent post that the

> bottom line is that the culture of a workplace sets the tone for everything an organization does. It isn't easy to get it right, and arts organizations lack many of the resources high tech companies enjoy in mounting the effort, but we need to start asking the right questions about how we make our organizations the absolute best we can make them. And people are at the heart of the organization (Hessenius, 2014).

Hessenius acknowledges the value of human-centered practices and speaks to the role of organizational culture in an organization's success. He introduces an important point of differentiation for arts organizations, and for the purposes of this particular study, art museums: it is no longer enough for them to be the best institution with an important cultural mission. To be attractive to employees and successful in what they seek to do, cultural institutions must also be organizationally exceptional.

These contemporary examples and bloggers beautifully introduce the complexity of organizational development, and in doing so, introduce some of the key elements that can help leadership make sense of and within an organization. Themes such as supporting leadership at various levels, human-centered internal practices, horizontal working structures, and alignment of core purpose emerge in the literature, in addition to other key practices. Each of these is more fully explored in the following sections.

Horizontal Working Structures

A brief review of the history of organizational structures is helpful in understanding how structure relates to organizational efficiency and competency. Although art museums are very rarely included as a subject of this scholarship, it is essential to understand these general theories and developments to better understand how organizational practices might yield resilience in art museums. The concept of a horizontal organizational structure emerged in the 1980s, and emphasizes the re-engineering of structure around workflow processes instead of departments (Anand and Daft in Hickman 2007). These structures advocate for the dispensing of internal boundaries, which are seen as an impediment to effective work. Anand and Daft suggest that such structures are best applied when the organization can create better value by improving internal coordination to enable greater flexibility and tailored responses to fit customer/audience needs.

With the increase in digital technology influencing the way in which workers work and relate to the organization, the 1990s saw the development of new organizational structures and strategies, including the hollow, modular, and virtual organization (Anand and Daft 2007), each pushing the lines of operations and collaboration in organizations. A detailed understanding of these structures is not necessary for the purposes of this particular study except to note the many ways in which organizations are writing and rewriting new structures to improve performance; and are doing so by eradicating older, more traditional forms of management which prioritized the defense of units and boundaries, emphasized control over clarity, and authority over influence (Anand and Daft 2007).

Scholars working primarily in the field of museums consider strategies around internal structure somewhat separately, and argue that a simple application of business-model practices does not equal success in museums. As the authors in *Museums for a New Century* point out, "the trends toward separating administrative functions and programmatic functions and toward looking outside the profession for leadership can be a misapplication of the business perspective" (Powell and Bloom, 1984, 77). This suggests a need for sensitivity to a structure built for the complex work of an art museum; direct appropriation of business practices may not always be successful. This perspective is picked up by later authors as well, some noting that even though many management practices are borrowed from other fields, one can make the case that arts organizations are distinct from other nonprofits because of their dual functions of artistic credibility and management (Cray, et al 2007).

In contrast, Robert Janes suggests that the popular hierarchical organization has proven to "categorically restrict initiative and reward passivity in museums" (Janes 2010). In place of hierarchy, Janes suggests multifunctional work groups that sustain beyond temporary project teams. Related to these teams are rapid response groups, which Janes argues should be included on the organizational charts of the future to improve the museum's characteristic inability to address unanticipated issues (Janes 2010). Janes concludes, "without a change in how the work gets done, there can be little hope of changing what gets done. The way a museum does its work will either permit or preclude inclusive thinking, the questioning of status quo and heightened awareness of the external world" (Janes, 2010 in Anderson, 513).

<u>Human-Centered Practices</u>

"As long as our thinking is governed by industrial 'machine age' metaphors such as control, predictability, and 'faster is better,' we will continue to re-create institutions as we have, despite their increasing disharmony with the larger world." (Senge, et al 2004)

This quote introduces the increasing dissonance between old organizational models and the contemporary environment, which has laid the groundwork for the emerging emphasis on organizational practices that are human-centered in nature. In the Victorian era, large bureaucratic, administrative machines adopted hierarchical practices to develop the end result of uniformity, control, and predictability (Mitra, 2013). In today's society which values creativity, innovation, and experimentation, such models no longer resonate, and it becomes more challenging to defend approaching today's environment with yesterday's tactics. Therefore, emphasizing the needs, talents, and potential of staff is one area in which leaders are finding strategic resonance. This is particularly critical for arts institutions, which are in the business of, among other things, fostering innovation, nurturing creativity, and developing shared humanity through the arts.

The leadership strategies of Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project in Cornwall, provide one current example of this kind of work. Author of the "monkey business" management manual, which Smit describes as the antithesis of most management rule books, Smit has developed seven rules which represent a new approach to management, one grounded fundamentally in the well-being and personal connectivity of the staff. In publishing management rules that establish frames around how the staff should relate to each other, the institution, and the cultural world at large instead of a typical list of

policies and procedures, Smit extends a message that it is the people, their growth, and their development that matter most to the organization's success. As an example, one rule is that staff may not start the workday until they have said hello to at least 20 colleagues; another requires staff to experience cultural activities outside of their normal comfort zone. Through these measures, he upends traditional operational protocol. Even though executives often maintain that staff represents the best part of an organization, rarely do those executives demonstrate this perspective in preparing staff to do great work. Smit's monkey business invites the questioning of traditional management structures and practices, most of which seem to have lost sight of the important practice of staff connecting as humans. The monkey business provides a subtle commentary on these potentially outdated practices, suggesting that somehow in the management of the management, arts organizations have lost their very basic sense of the reason for which they are all involved in arts and culture in the first place: the pursuit of humanity. In the 21st century, dedication to that mission requires consistent attention to and support of the people accomplishing the work.

This human-centered management practice is present in literature on concepts of leadership as well. The co-authors of *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, perhaps say it best when they suggest "becoming a real human being really is the primary leadership issue for our time, but on a scale never required before" (Senge, et al, 2004, 192). Understanding what that means for contemporary organizations is no small feat, but the simple call for that kind of shift in leadership practice is noteworthy.

Additionally, in his own research, scholar James O'Toole found that successful companies focused on building human capacity collectively, rather than relying on a small group of individuals or leaders. Of this finding he says that there is "something palpably different about a company that emphasizes building enabling systems verses one that depends on a single person at the top" (O'Toole, 2001 as quoted in Hickman, 2009). In his research, O'Toole measured each organization's effectiveness according to twelve categories, some of which relate to the individual:

- Vision and strategy: Extent to which corporate strategy is reflected in goals and behaviors at all levels

- Goal setting and planning: Extent to which challenging goals are used to drive performance

- Capital allocation: Extent to which capital allocation decisions are objective and systematic

- Risk management: Extent to which the company measures and mitigates risk

- Recruiting: Extent to which the company taps the best talent available

- Professional development: Extent to which employees are challenged and developed

- Performance appraisal: Extent to which individual appraisals are used to improve performance.

- Compensation: Extent to which financial incentives are used to drive desired behaviors.

- Organizational structure: Extent to which decision-making authority is delegated to lower levels.

- Communications: Extent to which management communicates the big picture.

- Knowledge transfer: Extent to which necessary information is gathered, organized, and disseminated.

Theresa Amabile and Steven Kramer introduce another element of what can be defined as human-centered practice in "The Inner Work Life: Understanding the Subtext of Business Performance," which presents research on the stream of emotions, perceptions, and motivations -- the inner work life -- that help staff make sense of their day. There are a number of managerial behaviors which can positively influence inner work life, which include: enabling people to forward their work; treating staff as human beings; offering direct help, adequate resources, and time to work; reacting to successes and failures with a learning perspective, rather than evaluative; and setting clear goals (Amabile and Kramer 2007).

As organizations consider how they can reframe internal operations, sometimes they face a human resources struggle in which adaptability might mean downsizing at the expense of honoring the loyalty of long-serving employees (Bolman and Deal 2008). What these two authors synthesize in *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, is that the case has been made time and time again that a skilled and motivated workforce is a powerful and strategic advantage for organizations, sometimes at the expense of staff longevity if the two cannot coexist.

This perspective is further underscored by the work and research of scholar Serene Suchy, who suggests that human resources should be considered at a new level of priority in museums, unlike the current status quo within museums which continues to emphasize collection management over human resource training and development (Suchy, 2004,

180). According to Suchy, in the future, human resources in art museums could increase

professionalism across the board, launch new initiatives like performance assessment,

career development, updated job descriptions to reflect new-found complexities of work,

develop workplace diversity strategies, provisions for professional raining, and increased

reliance on volunteers (2004).

This body of literature contributes to the understanding of the important role an

individual plays within an organization. People clearly matter, and this is especially true

in cultural organizations such as art museums, which define their value in connecting

people to art and art to people. Leadership that privileges and invests in the talents of

staff can effectively harness those talents on behalf of the organization. In contrast,

leadership that fails to attract or capitalize on the talents of great people, misses an

opportunity to develop the organization at higher levels.

Clarity of Organizational Culture

Any conversation about organizational development and change requires attention

paid to the role of organizational culture (Yukl 2009). Understood to be the life force of

any organization, organizational culture is responsible for the dynamics within an

organization. It is generally understood that the culture of mature organizations is far

more difficult to change than in a new organization. Making sense of the way

organizations must balance the external and the internal, organizational culture has been

the focus of work by scholars like Gary Yukl, who suggests that organizations must

tackle these two simultaneously (Yukl 2009). Yukl explores a number of organizational

aspects as influencers on the culture, including the behavior of the leadership, including

how they communicate organizational values through loyalty, self-sacrifice, and service beyond the call of duty. Yukl also acknowledges the role of programs and system design of an organization, referring to the formal budgets, performance review, orientation processes, training programs, and role of formal mentors as all influencers on culture. Also important are the measurements and rewards for success, and Yukl cautions that organizations must provide realistic information about this criteria. Finally, the design of the organizational structure also impacts culture, whether centralized through one particular leader, or de-centralized, with the responsibility shared across individuals.

This attunement to organizational culture is also referenced in some of the museum-related literature. Attention is called in the *Museums for a New Century* report to the fact that museums are different than other nonprofits, and that there is a specialized working climate in museums which is an outgrowth of staff motivated by a particular set of incentives (Powell and Bloom 1984). In general, the museum orientation is scholarly, inward looking, and resistant to change (Hancocks, 1988). Noted researcher Randi Korn questions the relationship between employee motivation and organizational culture in her 2007 essay, "The Case for Holistic Intentionality," "Should not their institutional culture support their natural tendencies as lifelong learners? Should not museum directors and all staff create an environment where all staff can learn about themselves, their values, their colleagues, their works, and their organizations....?" (Korn 2007). These articles give a good overview of the evolution and status of organizational culture in art museums, with special attention paid to the complexity and possible transformation of staff motivation.

In sum, organizational culture is a very complex and nuanced thing. As an organization's size grows, so too, do the variety in perspectives on what the culture is.

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The staff at National Arts Strategies, a nonprofit providing organizational leadership education and training for arts and culture organizations, discusses the value of explicit conversations around culture within an organization. One such mechanism to approach the conversation is the competing values framework, which allows staff and leadership to objectively discuss where they sit as an organization in terms of collaboration, control, competition, and creativity. Once established, then organizations can decide where they want to go in terms of culture. The competing values framework makes it easier to visualize that with limited resources, organizations cannot be everything at once, and instead, need to make choices based on these internal and external motivations and limitations (Taylor and Shelby 2012).

It is common in art museums to accept the organizational culture as a given, but what the literature reveals is that with certain, intentional practices, organizational culture can be addressed, improved, or directed for critical results.

Cultivating Learning Organizations

A significant amount of the organizational development literature focuses at the intersection of organizational culture and the cultivation of learning environments. There seems to be a genuine opportunity for optimization within art museums. Organizational learning can be described as a process that adapts the organization and its members to change in the external environment by encouraging experimentation and innovation, continually renewing structures and practices (Hickman 2009). Because organizational culture serves an organizational stabilizer, helping to keep things the same, depending on an organization's culture, the cultivation of a learning environment within an

organization can assist organizations to move beyond the status quo (Schein 2004). In his

book, *The Learning Culture and the Learning Leader*, leading organizational culture

expert, Edgar Schein, discusses how organizations might stabilize perpetual learning and

changing within the organization through the following practices:

- Proactivity assumption

- Commitment to Learning to Learn: learning organizations value reflection and
  experimentation and must give staff time and resources to do both

- Demonstrate positive assumptions about human nature

- Assumption that the environment can be dominated

- Orientation toward the future

- Commitment to full and open task-relevant communication

- Commitment to diversity (subcultures must be connected and learn to value each
  other; laissez-faire leadership does not work here)

- Commitment to systemic thinking

- Commitment to cultural analysis for understanding and improving the world

     Shein's list explicitly lays out tactics that can be employed by leaders to encourage

an environment of learning. Of course, Schein did not write this specifically with art

museums in mind; however, many of these tactics are echoed in other sections of the

literature review (Powell and Bloom 1984; Anderson 2012; Weil 2000) and demonstrate

the potential power of application within an art museum. Schein was an early scholar in

the field, investigating organizational learning in the early 1970s, but it was Peter Senge

who really popularized the work as an operative process in the 1990s.

     Through his research, Senge contributed to a better understanding of the role of a

leader to help cultivate a culture of organizational learning. According to him, leaders need to develop three essential characteristics to facilitate a learning culture: participation, defined as involvement of organizational members in decision-making, learning, inquiry, challenge, and the creation of greater autonomy; openness as defined by receptiveness to diverse ideas and tolerance, and commitment to the free flow of information; and finally, psychological safety, which provides the freedom internally to take risks, trust, and support (Senge, 1990, in Hickman).

In *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge suggests that real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human: "Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life" (Senge 1990). Senge defines the learning organization as "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive" (1990). Korn echoes this in her own article: "organizational learning is dependent on individuals, as well as teams, sharing their insights, questions, and values in an ongoing systemic way" (Korn 2007).

Many of these theories are based in some key pillars of transformational learning, which increase cognitive, emotional, plus inter- and intra-personal capacities (Drago-Severson 2008). Scholar Ellie Drago-Severson identifies the three most common ways of knowing in adulthood and how those ways of knowing might best be supported in an organizational setting: instrumental knowing benefits from teamwork and mentoring; socializing, which benefits from the sharing of perspectives to help clarify one's own

beliefs over time; and finally, <u>self-authorizing</u>, which challenges individuals to let go of their own perspectives.

<u>Leadership at Multiple Levels</u>

Leadership in art museums is a complex phenomenon, and there is a growing sense that the notion of leadership is evolving. Griffin and Abraham stress that leadership is actually the ability to translate external needs into internal vision, expressed through employee action, the integration of tasks, structures, systems and management practices to build internal and external unity (2000).

The definition of successful leadership in an art museum, and cultural leadership in general, has evolved as museums and the cultural landscape have evolved. In art museums, specifically, the role of the executive director has developed from primarily one of content-authority to a more contemporary understanding of a leader, one who has passion, "heart," and emotional intelligence (Suchy, 1999). In fact, research has demonstrated that museum directors are now relying most on their energy, resilience, and ethical entrepreneurship in their daily roles (Suchy 2004). Suchy's research also indicates that leaders in art museums are becoming change managers and creating more collaborative contexts in which staff can generate their best work (2004). As organizational leaders are confronted with the need to manage significant change across their organizations, some research suggests that organizations will develop more leadership teams at the top (Katzenback and Smith 1993).

Related to this new paradigm shift in museum leadership is the notion that leadership is not just reserved for those in top positions within the organization.

Nurturing leaders at multiple levels within the organization is equally important. A 2010 National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture report includes a powerful quote from two individuals, James Kouzes and Barry Posner that states, "Leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It is a process ordinary people use when bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Liberate the leader in everyone, and extraordinary things happen" (NAMAC, 2010, 7). Leaders can make people more productive and smarter, creating an environment in which clever people can thrive (Goffee and Jones 2007). In this changing environment, passion and commitment are not always enough, and emerging leaders in this complex landscape need to be nurtured, encouraged, and supported (Brooks 2011).

Critical to this understanding is a newly developed emphasis on the role of mentors and mentorship. Mentors are defined as people who provide guidance and support, and mentorship is defined as a relationship which makes available to staff, warmth, trust, empathy, and interpersonal connections (Suchy 2004). It is the sad reality that sometimes leaders in the cultural industries are less prepared for the challenges of leadership since staff development processes, including coaching and mentoring, are often considered by the field as an indulgence rather than an priority (Brooks 2011). The value of mentoring relationships, however, is being increasingly recognized. It is also important to note the omni-directional aspects of mentorship within an organization which advocates for a constant passing of knowledge between individuals, within and across age cohorts, to raise the capacity of all participants in the field at all levels (Clapp, NAMAC 2010).

In 2007, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a report on leadership in nonprofits, which referenced this evolution as the generational shift in the current

understanding of leadership. The report acknowledges some key trends around leadership, especially around the role of young leaders. Recognizing the impending transition in leadership as older leaders prepare for retirement, the report emphasizes the necessity of investing in young leaders through staff development and organizational structures that model empowerment and participatory democracy. These conclusions came from the recognition of the need to value staff ideas and skills, which is often possible through alternative models of leadership; teams and co-directorships being examples of this (Kunreuther and Corvington 2007, Serifsoy 2001). This presents an opportune moment to recall the argument developed by Cray, Inglis, and Freeman that although many of the leadership roles that are required in other industries are similarly needed in the arts sector, the way in which these leadership roles are enacted needs to be different by virtue of the dual nature (aesthetics and management) of arts organizations (2007). Recognizing this, these authors suggest four basic leadership styles for arts organizations: charismatic, transactional, transformational, and participatory (Cray, Inglis, Freeman, 2007, 299). Charismatic leadership is described as effecting through force of personality; transactional leadership is predicated on mutually beneficial exchanges; transformational leadership offers a sense of higher purpose as motivation; and participatory leadership involves staff in aspects of decision-making (2007). Each of these emphasizes the value of the employees in some measure, and inspires future possibilities beyond the heroic model of leadership, which currently maintains its prevalence in the cultural industries (Brooks 2011).

Staff Alignment around Core Purpose

As the Center for the Future of Museums' Elizabeth Merritt suggested in 2013, the changing environment offers museums a choice. In the 21st century, museums will need to decide not only how they define their core business, but also if this core business is sustainable in the context of changing values of the times (Burton and Scott 2003). Closely related to the conversation around core purpose is the notion of institutional values, which naturally influence institutional priorities and work, and translate into behavior at the organizational level with board, staff, and volunteers (Anderson 2012). As the beginning of this study explored, museums are making sense of changing values and purpose and marrying them with audience needs; the challenge then becomes how museums can make sense internally of these competing claims for resources through realistic goals, tools, and strategies (Kotler and Kotler 2000). Veteran art museum leaders of the past have nurtured staff dedication to the collection while simultaneously motivating staff to assist visitors to fully enjoy the museum experience (Kotler and Kotler 2000). As the definition of the museum experience increases in complexity, so does the strategy for motivating staff around an evolving purpose. Ensuring that staff comprehend, engage, and reflect this purpose requires robust institutional self-reflection, a process that includes "the examination of values and assumptions, the refinement of the mission and the vision to assure relevancy, and an assessment of institutional capacity in order to refine institutional effectiveness and public impact" (Anderson 2012).

Such work has also been described as "cultural competence," defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system (Mayeno and Lew, 2010). Mayeno and Lew note the need to align champions and leaders around the

notion of integrating cultural competence into daily practice, and that the way to accomplish this is through acknowledging and clarifying assumptions about culture and difference within the organization. The chart, "Building blocks for a sustainable process" was included as a part of the essay (2010):
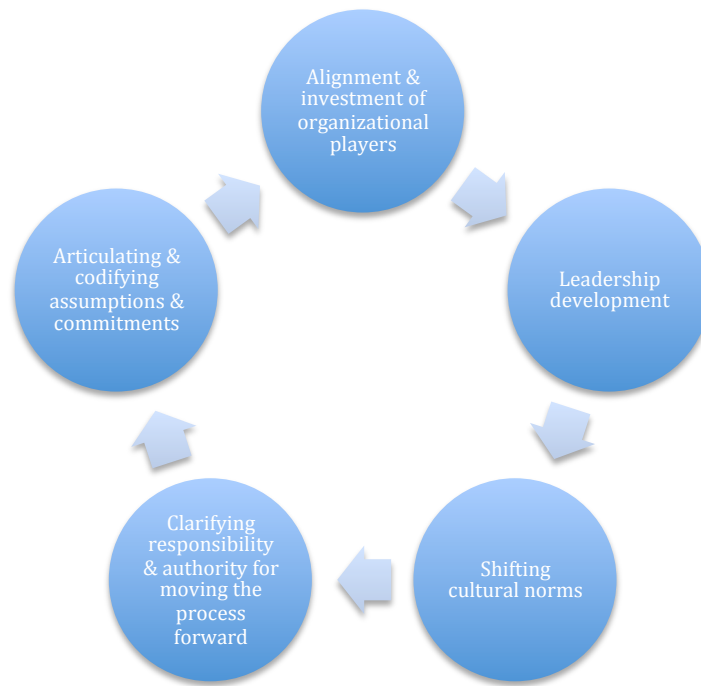
Figure 1 Sustainable Process for Cultural Competence

It is interesting to consider staff alignment around these general competencies and practices, rather than through the framework of departments, as is often the case within art museums. Such a system generates space for organizations to absorb the complexity of the 21st century environment in addition to the roles of individuals working within it. Visualizing it as a process of continual feedback and renewal rather than something that is linear and concrete activates the notion of staff alignment.

Creativity, Experimentation, and Risk-taking

"Tried and true methods of organizational development and management are in question. 'Best practices' are out and experimentation is in.'" (Paula Manley, NAMAC, 2010)

Designing ways to develop creative experimentation within cultural organizations is not of exclusive interest to art museums; the challenges of pursuing this kind of model within art museums are great, however. Although museums often celebrate the vibrancy and importance of creative expression and experimentation, in traditional art museum structures, those outputs are not often integrated within the process. However, it has been noted that high impact nonprofits can actually master this art of adaptation through learning and re-evaluating (Manley 2010). According to Manley, "command and control" is being replaced with "co-create and adapt" (2010).

Of course, the preeminent Ronald Heifetz has published significantly on the definition and value of adaptive leadership to facilitate adaptive work. As museums seek to be more flexible, responsive, and adaptive, a review of his work in this area is essential. In his book *Adaptive Work*, Heifetz describes the process as involving proactive seeking to clarify aspirations or to develop new ones, followed by the hard work of innovation, experimentation and cultural change to realize a closer approximation of those aspirations that define a thriving organization. Heifetz offers a number of clarifying points about the nature of adaptive work:

- It is necessary to respond to problems for which solutions lie outside of the current way of operating
- Demands learning

- Requires shift in responsibility from the organizational leaders to the stakeholders themselves

- Requires that people within the organization distinguish what is essential from what is expendable with the organizational culture. He additionally cautions leaders around this specific point "to be profound in change, but must honor ancestry and history at the same time that it challenges them."

- Demands experimentation

- Requires time

- Adaptive work is a normative concept and requires an organization to actively consider the values by which it wants to thrive

There is an inherent tension between adaptive work and efficacy, which often leads museum directors to err on the side of the latter. However, research exists to demonstrate the value of experimentation through productive failure; ultimately, innovative thinking which arises through experimentation and risk-taking leads to more efficacy within an organization in the long run (Kapur 2006).

Internal Communication

It is rare to find an article or book about museum operations that does not reference the challenges with internal communication. Commonly referred to as "silos," these departments remain as strong barricades across the institution, ensuring that information does not go in or out. There are a number of reasons they exist, some based on long-term habits and idiosyncrasies of museum staff, but the reality is that this lack of communication drives down efficiency, motivation, and alignment. A more updated

definition of communication describes it as less about straight information-sharing, and becomes more about helping others to meet their needs, address their concerns, and add value into their world (Myatt 2012). Leadership is key to improving this process within an organization.

One of the more compelling arguments for taking seriously communication as a priority is the connection between trust and communication (Cummings 2013). According to Cummings, communication is the thread that connects trust and leadership within organizations, so it follows that getting this piece of organizational practice running well is critical for organizational operations. Doing this well, according to Cummings, requires managers' abilities to lead, listen, and communicate effectively, honestly, and directly. Myatt underscores these principles in his own work in which he shares that leaders are great communicators when they have a heightened sense of situational and contextual awareness. Strong communicators replace monologue with dialogue, are adept at transferring ideas, aligning expectations, inspiring action, and spreading vision; have an open mind; listen more than they talk; and understand the role of the individual within the group setting (Myatt 2012).

Part 3: From Theory to Practice: Museum Practitioners Speak

The annual American Alliance of Museum (AAM) conference represents the one time each year when leaders and staff members from museums around the world come together to share stories, advice, lessons learned, and innovations in the field. As such, the AAM conference schedule comprised of practitioner-submitted presentations represents one way to understand what is on the minds of those working in and leading the field. Robert Janes suggests that only a small percentage of industry time is dedicated

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to a discussion on operational practice and structure, and a review of the AAM conference schedules from the last three years supports this. Of the 152 presentations at the 2011 conference only seven either loosely or directly related to themes around organizational practice and structure; in 2012 and 2013, four of 155 presentations and seven of 165 presentations dealt with these topics, respectively.

Of these eighteen total presentations, the most pervasive theme by far, was the external environment of change driving internal change. Many of the titles directly referenced the topic, examples including "Leading Change," (2011), "Organizational Change: Reimagining Museums for the 21st Century" (2012), and "Organizational Change: Creating a Culture of Authentic Storytelling" (2013) indicating that change is a very real process for museums right now. It should be noted that the majority of panelists in these particular sessions were executive directors of their organizations. This indicates that executives have the primary responsibility for leading the change process in museums, or are the most willing to talk about it; it also means that the information shared during these presentations was centered on the roles and perspectives of executives. The panelists acknowledged many of the trends referenced in the earlier sections of the literature review, linking the role of the external environment to their own decisions to make internal changes.

In the 2012 presentation on organizational change, Lori Fogarty, director of the Oakland Museum of California, shared that financial pressures served as the motivating force for the Oakland Museum's organizational change process. Fogarty defined change not as an event, but rather as a process. On being a leader through the process of change, she had this to say, "leaders in transition rely on the skills that have worked for them in

the past, but not doing the same thing is critical." In contrast, Janet Carding, executive director, the Royal Ontario Museum began the change process at the urging of the board, whereas Tim Holman (not an executive director) from the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco presented on an internal change process that was inspired by the institution's branding effort. Although change came about in each of the organizations in varying ways, the speakers agreed on a few concluding points about change: change is necessary, so museums must start embracing its possibilities; it is helpful to determine end goals before embarking on a change process; building a culture of change supports the process; strong leadership is required, but change also needs to be an inclusive process. During the question and answer period, presenters and members of the audience alike used words such as "adaptive," "nimble," "flexible," and "responsive" to describe their aspirations and inspirations, again indicating the timeliness of this content.

It was not surprising, then, that of the many themes that emerged across these panel presentations, one of the most universally held was the need for action in the industry. This was referenced most specifically in conversations around experimentation and risk-taking, but appeared in other areas as well. A few of the panelists pointed to the tendency in art museums to talk about taking risks rather than taking action that involves risk. In one 2011 panel, Nina Simon, director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History advised, "just try something." This was echoed in a 2013 panel presentation by Jay Xu of the Asian Art Museum in which Xu stated that "action is critical" even though there may not be one universally applicable structure for action, art museums cannot let that impede the process of trying new things. The 2012 and 2013 panels on "Experimental Projects: Creating a Community of Practice," also underscored the importance of making projects

happen; the mere process of doing so pushes organizations and staff in new directions, the panelists agreed. This panel, originally organized for the 2012 conference was repeated in 2013 due to the overwhelming popularity of the subject.

In fact, new ways for staff to work with each other, cross-institutionally and inter-departmentally was another major theme in the presentations. Although, not specifically focused on organizational structures per se, the presentations illuminated that fact that current organizational structures do not always support the kind of work staff either want to, or have to, complete. One panelist presented this as the value of prioritizing creativity over departmental structure in the 2013 panel on "Two Departments: One Goal" (Cole 2013).

The AAM presentations also clarify how important experimentation is becoming to museum practice. Some museums have grown more interested in presenting projects in process, in addition to or instead of the completed projects, work that requires everyone to become increasingly open to embracing mistakes and re-framing failures (Lerner 2011 and Xu 2013). The mechanics of this kind of work are not easy, and to improve the process in art museums, experimentation really needs to be built into the management structure (Lerner 2011). In turn, management needs to serve as "space-makers" for staff to ensure commitment to this kind of work (Tench 2011).

There was also a compelling emphasis on organizational culture and interpersonal connectivity that emerged throughout the last three years of sessions, much of which was seemingly led by mid-career and senior staff in museums. Adam Lerner, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, introduced the topic beautifully in the 2011 panel on "Empowering Staff to take Creative Risks" in which he stated that "it all begins with

HR…," referencing the importance of *how* you hire and *who* you hire into the museum environment. In Lerner's words, MCA Denver lets "staff be who they are" for the betterment of the institution; even though "creative shenanigans" at times have an unproductive element, they also help to develop a specific and authentic organizational culture which carries with it a real gravitational pull for potential future staff and audiences on the outside. In some ways, Lerner admits, organizational culture is more important than marketing because people want to be a part of a museum with a strong and compelling culture; according to him, culture can evolve into substance within the museum setting. Other presenters discussed the benefits of more practical organizational dynamics such as being friends with colleagues and sharing spaces (Cole 2013) as ways to make accomplishing their jobs easier.

The way that staff can connect and accelerate the learning process for themselves was also the subject of a 2013 presentation, "Horizontal Thinking in a Vertical World." Presented by the Getty Leadership Next Gen 2011 class, this panel tackled the ways in which staff can contribute to and benefit from horizontal mentoring, allowing for personal and professional growth, even outside a singular institution. Their own research indicated that horizontal mentoring provides an opportunity for safe and less-intimidating relationships; honest discussion; the ability to keep pace with a changing field; objective advice and access to a broad knowledge base; connectivity; collaboration; and sources for new ideas. The notion of creating community within organizations was not limited to mentoring relationships. In one particular panel, "This is So Fun! Creating Staff Community by Fostering Creativity" (2013), Sarah Evans from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History Museum shared her role in the "Create

Smithsonian" program, which was designed to encourage staff collaboration and creativity across the many Smithsonian institutions. This endeavor, though designed and implemented by staff, was actually linked to a recommendation from the Smithsonian's leadership development team, and was connected to the Smithsonian's strategic plan. In addition to this institutional focus, as Evans reports, "staff really wanted to do it." So they did. In the presentation, Evans reported on the acceleration of staff camaraderie through this initiative, in addition to its creative and energizing effects for staff. She notes, however, that the one and only challenge to such an undertaking is that, at least in the Smithsonian example, it was no one's official job to implement this program. The team had to deliver on all of the planning and execution of this "additional project" in addition to fulfilling their duties as assigned. Within the same presentation, Doug Coler from Discovery Place discussed the behaviors associated with innovation, many of which are the outgrowth of these staff-led initiatives: engagement, idea generation, communication; collaboration; problem-solving; risk-taking; boundary-pushing; reflection; celebration. Although these specific behaviors are not often written into museum job descriptions, they are characteristics that are valuable in museum work, and help to make jobs feel more fulfilling for museum staff.

To that end, there are some organizations that are taking more systemized approaches to cultivating innovation internally. The Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA), for example, introduced a new staff funding opportunity through the Roberta Mann Innovation Award. Michele Callahan presented on this program in "Inspiring Wonder Through the Power of Staff Innovation" (2013) and detailed their process to invest in staff learning and innovation, which institutional leadership feels will, in turn, create

vitality within the internal and external community. In Callahan's words, the program "engages alternative thinking, fosters collaboration, cultivates next practices, advances innovation and the strategic plan, benefits the museum, and expands the employee's concept of his/her position" (2013). Such a program clarifies a particular organizational culture within the museum, and simultaneously serves as a space-maker, of sorts, providing the structure and means for staff to safely experiment, innovate, learn beyond the scope of their jobs, and grow. Two MIA staff members presented on their own research as a part of this panel, and both had used their funding to connect with industries outside of the museum realm – and sometimes even outside of the arts and culture field in its entirety – to bring back into their museum new perspectives and ways of working.

Yet another example of ways in which museum leaders are looking to structure to solve issues can be seen in the recent structural shift that has taken place within the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA). Executive Director Lori Fogarty has been extremely forthcoming in AAM sessions about the process. Driven primarily by financial issues, the OMCA's has undergone a transition over the last eighteen months from a department within the city administration to a nonprofit organization. Fogarty has led the OMCA through a complete organizational transformation, dispensing with the traditional museum department structure in favor of six cross-functional teams. This final structure, commonly referred to as the "flower structure," is still a work in progress, but was an outgrowth of the way the OMCA had begun to work on exhibitions as teams, and exists, as Fogarty explains, "at the intersection of passions, assets, and community needs" (2013).
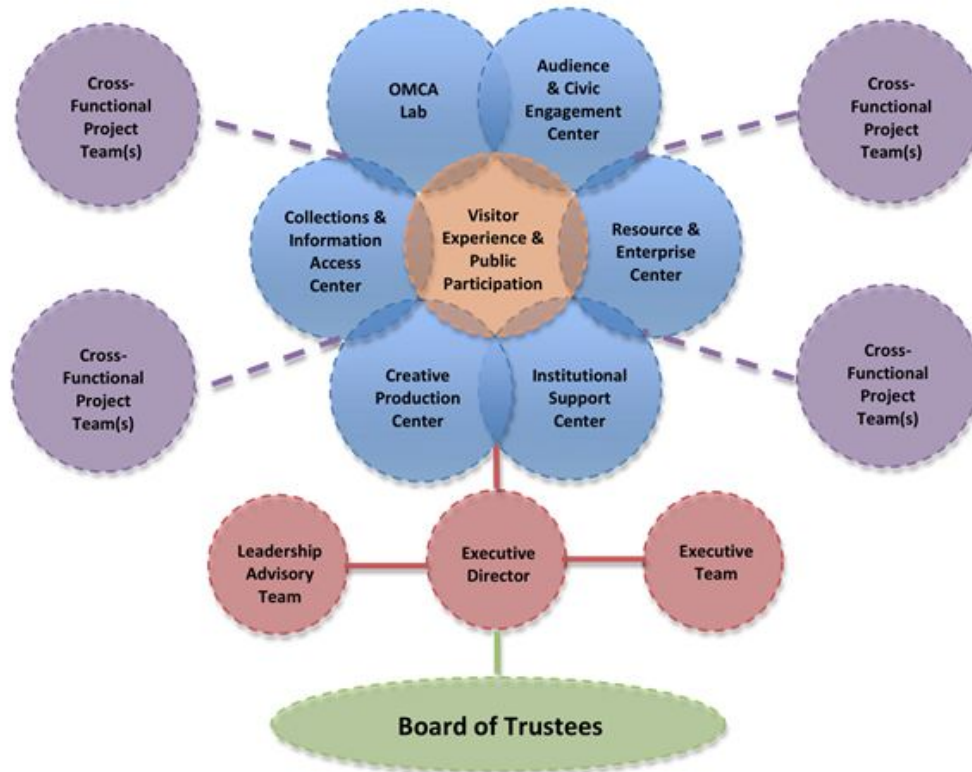
Figure 2 Organizational Chart, Oakland Museum of California

Janet Carding, executive director of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), and fellow

panelist on the 2013 "Organizational Change: Creating a Culture of Authentic

Storytelling," shared her own strategy for the ROM. Carding details that the ROM,

having just completed a decade-long building project, is now shifting attention back to

the collections, research, and programs, and is changing everything about the way they

work. Carding described the new "centers of discovery," the new organizational model,

as thematic areas that drive internal work but are created with the visitor in mind. As part

of the discussion, Carding shared her frustration that the dynamism of museums often happens behind the scenes through research and discovery. Her structural change is intended to uproot that tendency, making the dynamic work more accessible and available for all.

Although it was not explicitly referenced as such, there were allusions to the notion of human-centered practices present in some of the panel dialogues. One leader discussed the need to deal with values and passions of staff, rather than cutting across them through disciplined structure (Carding 2012). She found this to be particularly helpful when change indicated potential job loss or job changes, and she used that as an opportunity to work with staff to answers questions like "what do you care about? And what can you learn to care about?" For Carding, the tactic provided a balanced framework through which she could address organizational realities while simultaneously recognizing the reality of a human being to accomplish a job.

The notion of collaboration also came up as a part of the organizational change process. Some presenters referenced the process of co-creation (Fogarty 2012) and touted its importance in building a community of trust during times of change. Certain institutions have rebuilt organizational structures or strategic teams around this concept. Some leaders referenced the value in putting people in situations in which they might naturally form teams (Carding 2012). In contrast, the value of collaboration was also questioned in terms of its ability to diminish resources in the effort, but not necessarily delivering results. From this particular panel, "Museums without Silos: New Perspectives on Organizational Structures" emerged the idea of disciplined collaboration (2012) as a possible solution. Collaboration was very much on the minds of the panelists,

but unpacking its meaning in the context of a museum proved challenging. Not many of the participants saw interdepartmental collaboration as something that is currently thriving in museums (Panelist, Jesse 2012), and building on the work of Morten Hansen, panelists drove toward a more nuanced understanding of disciplined collaboration for better results. Hansen was quoted throughout the panel, especially for his better-known contribution, "bad collaboration is worse than none at all." Panelists found solutions to these collaboration pitfalls in scheduling regular meetings, staff hat switching, and the development of understanding and respect for different roles over time. In one example, these behavioral adjustments led to an actual organizational structure change, promoting the education department to senior level at LACMA. Additionally, LACMA instituted a new program around strategic teams focused on the general areas of technology, education, and design. Led by people with expertise in the area, but staffed by people from different levels and backgrounds across the institution, these teams had no particular program to develop or problem to solve; they simply were drawn together to foster collaboration in those specific fields.

It is critical to conclude this section of the study with a reminder that although the ideas presented in this section are big, audacious, and strong, the presenters still represent a very small community of practice within the field. These ideas and concepts are still quite new, and although well received, have yet to become standard operating procedure within the majority of art museums across America.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to assess replicable strategies and approaches for innovative operational

management within art museums, seven major thought leaders were invited to participate

in this study; four confirmed. Of the four confirmed interviewees, each of them is a

current executive director at an art museum. All of the executives who were invited to

participate were selected based on his or her own career performance and reputation in

the field for innovative museum management and leadership strategies. The selected

directors represent a range of sizes of art museums, two representing institutions with an

operating budget under five million dollars; two representing institutions with an

operating budget over twenty million dollars. Each interviewee was asked the same eight

questions as a way to compare and contrast their responses, and to recognize possible

trends and consonances.

The first question in the survey was directed at the level of involvement and

oversight current executives have in internal operational strategies within their respective

museums. In an effort to make no assumptions about levels of time commitment,

directors were asked what percentage of their time is dedicated to the development of

internal operational strategies. There was a significant range in responses to this question,

from "minimal" to forty percent. Most of the candidates struggled to quantify a

percentage of their time, and two of the three respondents recognized that such work

shifts and spikes related to "crucial" or "key" moments within the organization.

Respondent 3 defined those crucial moments as when transitions are happening, or when

staff needs realigning around new visions or values; in those moments Respondent 3

estimated dedicating approximately fifty percent of the schedule. The same director differentiated the role as less about managing staff to their goals and more around ensuring that people are clear about the vision and where they are going. Respondent 4 reported spending the highest percentage of time (40%), and continued that senior leadership is all about staying current and responsive with constant, ongoing strategy in its broadest sense; as part of the answer, Respondent 4 recognized this as a "huge change in the profession." In contrast, Respondent 1 acknowledged that once the system is sorted in an organizational chart with duties and responsibilities assigned, then the respondent's role becomes more a question of "firefighting" around staff interpretations of those assignments.

The responses to this question indicate that each of the directors takes seriously their need to inform operational strategy, but that each understands the management of those practices differently. Perhaps most interesting from this data set is that the management styles do not align necessarily around institutional size. For instance, the respondent who reported spending the most time managing the internal operations oversees the museum with the largest budget within the group. For this particular group of directors, it is their leadership style, rather than organizational size, that determines their particular level of direct involvement with the development and especially the monitoring of operational strategies. The literature reviewed for this study indicated that a leader's level of engagement increased in the face of an external issue or crisis, and the data supports that notion as well.

In an attempt to understand the relationship between the development and the management of internal operational strategies, the second question asked respondents

about responsibility and oversight. Respondents 1 and 3 have deputy directors to whom they delegate this responsibility. Respondent 4 shares the responsibility with an 8-person management team, with board engagement as well. Respondent 2 ensures that the work is pervasive across the institution, attributing that structure to the small size of the organization.

The third question reflected if the directors felt there is external pressure to adjust their operating strategies; three of the four directors responded affirmatively, to somewhat varying degrees. Respondent 1 feels external pressures are not an issue; the respondent had adjusted the organizational structure to be less flat within the last two years, and had no reason to make further changes. Of the three directors who responded yes, two of them provided additional context to their answer. Respondent 2 mentioned that the external pressure is more "self-imposed" in that the museum staff is beginning to respond to demographic shifts within the community, which are informing new ways of operating and staffing. Respondent 3 noted that a transition or crisis provides the pressure to adjust internally. This director most recently realigned staff as the institution entered a new lifecycle, one no longer geared toward opening a new building, but instead toward programmatic growth.

There is perhaps a fascinating lesson in the responses to this particular question. It is certainly noteworthy that three quarters of the respondents reported being very aware and connected to what is happening in the external environment in which each museum sits, and using the information in some way to influence their internal strategy. These findings are absolutely in keeping with the need reported in the literature review for museum leadership to maintain a sensitivity to the external environment. Also in keeping

with the themes introduced in the literature review is the idea that it is an external crisis or major shift that often inspires museum leadership to make changes internally. The one exception to this in the current findings is the "self-imposed" changes implemented by Respondent 2 in response to the external environment. In this particular case, the respondent referenced the growing number of Spanish speakers in the museum's vicinity and made the decision that, moving forward, all staff placed in externally facing positions must be proficient in Spanish. The decision to make this change, though perhaps not critical to the museum's operations at the moment, reflects a level of nuanced proactivity that could yield very powerful results for this particular museum. The advantages of making internal adjustments in anticipation of major trends or events, rather than in response to them, could be a fruitful area for museum leadership to explore more specifically. This approach is buoyed by the definition of change as a process rather than a moment in time, referenced within the literature review. Museum leadership that invokes a continual review process of the external and internal landscapes can build in flexibility to their structures, building specificity and intentionality into decision-making around staff and structure.

The fourth question attempted to better understand if the leaders' approach to strategies around staff and structure is systemic or project-based in nature. All four directors indicated that they approached strategy mainly from an institution-wide perspective, and two of them indicated that they also employ project-based work in the service of particular strategies, when necessary. Respondent 3 pointed out that as a function of the level of the executive position, there is no choice but to implement institutionally. Additionally, Respondent 1 considers the systemic nature of planning as a

function of internal communication, and at the respondent's institution, there exists a bi-weekly budget and management meeting with thirty mid-level and senior staff. At this meeting, the staff works through projects and the project calendar, and this meeting becomes a touchstone for operational issues. The respondents' answers indicated the level of importance they place on ensuring departments relate well to each other and that everyone within the institution is operating with the same information and making the right connections across organizational functions; but, is noteworthy that more specific practices related to this function actually emerged within the conference presentations referenced within the literature review. This is an appropriate moment to revisit the idea of the a museum director as "space-maker" within the institution, creating the framework, the incentives, and most importantly the space, for staff to develop processes that drive and manage the institution to its goals. This illustrates a very poignant point of connection that is not often made explicit in museum leadership and operations: if a museum leader understands his or her role at the institutional level, and prepares and trusts staff to figure out ways to accomplish the work within the general framework set forward by the leadership, there exists an engaged body of staff ready to take on the operational lift to make it happen. This proactivity inclination by staff was evidenced in a number of the referenced AAM presentations, and there is a strong indication that staff themselves are ready to lead processes to make their work increasingly communicative, collaborative, and supportive. Significant operational opportunity lies in this area for art museums, and the surprising answer is that the specific solution(s) may lie with museum staff rather than museum leaders.

Question five provided an opportunity for the respondents to rank by priority the operational strategies that emerged in the literature review to ascertain which ones were currently resonant to art museum leaders. Each of the directors was asked to rank nine operational strategies on a scale from 1-5, with 1 equaling "this is not a priority;" 3 equaling "this is a priority;" and 5 equaling "this is a top priority." When respondents answered with a three or higher, they were asked two follow up questions: 1) What is the external impact of making this a priority and 2) How does your staff know this is a priority?
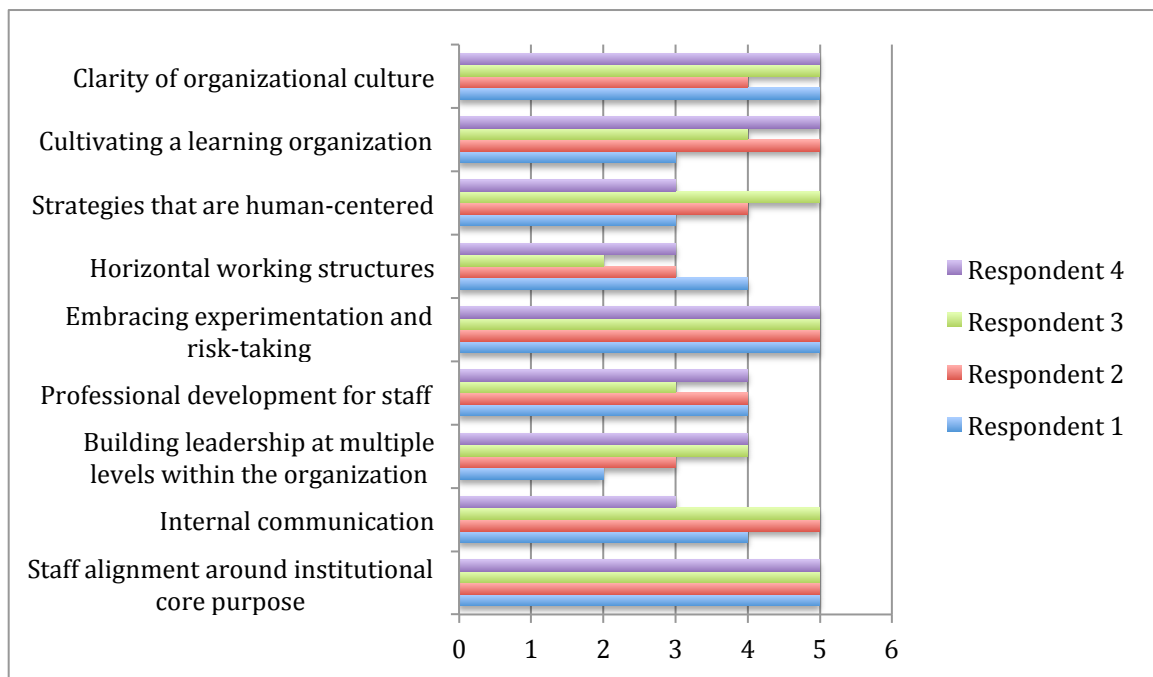

Figure 3 Priorities for Organizational Practices in Art Museums

Staff alignment around institutional core purpose: This category is noteworthy as one of the two categories that all four directors recognized as a top institutional priority. Respondent 1 commented that staff alignment around mission and values is a

"cornerstone" of their newly developed strategic plan. Respondent 4 shared what this strategy looks like in practice, including consistent communication around the institutional strategy to staff and board members, and initiatives to measure progress on strategy through milestones and deliverables (not meetings). Respondent 3 discussed alignment of staff in terms of organizational culture. The respondent states, "the entire staff culture is productive. [Culture] is the content and not just a mechanism to get things done. It is where the value lies." In an effort to reinforce this through management practices, staff undergoes quarterly reviews in which they present on their progress toward annual goals; these meetings now include a question about staff contribution to the values, culture, and vision of the organization, even though such efforts are not explicitly written into staff job descriptions.

The literature review indicated the strong need for work in this area as well, and suggested the complexity and challenge of aligning staff around common goals. The respondents in this survey demonstrate a thorough understanding of the continual reflection and adjustment required to make this happen and remain sustainable at an institutional level. Although not specifically referenced during the interviews, the respondents reflect an the ethos of Mayeno and Lew's "building blocks" chart through their use of performance evaluations, branding exercises, and communication to keep staff in touch with core purpose. The fact that some of the leaders are increasing the number of performance evaluations executed during the year is a strong indication of the seriousness with which they approach this work; each evaluation provides an opportunity for feedback from leader to staff and staff to leader, making alignment and reflection that much more integral to daily work, and achievable through daily practice.

Internal communication: Although each of the respondents ranked this as a priority or higher, there was a more significant range of responses within this category. Of the four directors, two of them (Respondents 2 and 3) relied less heavily on formal procedures due to their small size. Instead, open office plans and personal interaction helped to keep staff informed. Respondent 1 discussed the importance of regular staff meetings and focused all staff emails, which emphasize what is happening in management. Respondent 4 also pointed to this as an ongoing challenge within museums, which has helped to inform the respondent's own approach to require staff to be proactive in seeking out critical information they need. Respondent 1 introduced the role of branding in the internal communication process as a way of ensuring consistency between what the museum says it is doing and what it is actually doing.

Although each of the respondents agreed about the value of internal communication, it is clear from their responses that they regard communication as a process of straight information-sharing, rather than an opportunity for staff to meet their needs, address their concerns, or add value into their world, as Myatt suggests. At this stage, it is difficult to determine what a more evolved definition of communication might contribute to museum operations. There are some early indicators around the notions of community building and mentorship, which might relate specifically to a new understanding of communication to grow staff needs rather than share operational information, but additional research is needed in that area.

Building leadership at multiple levels within the organization: Again, there was a range of responses to this category, although in general, it tracked on the lower end of the priority list in comparison to some of the others. Respondent 2 shared personal evolution

in thinking on this topic which has led the respondent to understand this as a less critical area than previously considered; the respondent now recognizes that not everyone on staff is interested in seeking out leadership opportunities. Therefore, in this manner, the respondent distinguishes growth opportunities from leadership ones. Respondent 3 sees the lack of opportunities to advance within the organization as a way to focus on the leadership growth for key people in key senior positions, recognizing that others may stay on staff at the museum for a few years and then move on. In contrast, in response to the recognition that the museum was not doing a good job of cultivating leadership at multiple levels within the organization, Respondent 1 shared that the museum was about to undergo a 360 degree evaluation process and are beginning to explore ways to introduce unconventional performance assessment. One such example is the idea that performance evaluations might occur on a more regular basis rather than annually, and could be more team-based. Similarly, Respondent 4 oversees a museum that invests heavily in training and skill development, exemplified by the decision to bring in advisors to work with the curatorial department over a six month time period to build leadership skills.

The results to this particular question hint at a potential operational lag in the museum field. The respondents indicated areas of close attunement to the needs of the staff, and willingness to meet those needs in various ways. In fact, in response to the question, they referenced team building as part of leadership, as well as professional development opportunities for staff in need of new skills to become stronger institutional leaders. It is noteworthy, however, that a number of the respondents felt more comfortable framing this work as building opportunities for staff "growth" at multiple

levels rather than "leadership" per se. This hints at a more traditional understanding of leadership than what was noted in the literature review, which emphasized leadership opportunities as related to duties and work accomplished, not necessarily job titles. It is also noteworthy that the respondents did not discuss the role of mentorship as part of their practice in this area, although that emerged quite prominently in the literature. It could be that this discrepancy is the result of differing definitions, rather than a philosophical divide, per se. In that manner, the field-wide work would really become about aligning art museum vernacular around the terms and definitions used in a broader context.

Professional development for staff: This category ranked consistently important for all four respondents. Funding for this is included in each of the interviewee's museum budgets; Respondent 2 shared that after the museum recovered from a financial crisis, this was one of the first line items that was reinstated into the annual budget. Respondent 1 noted how critical professional development is for the "institutional profile" while Respondent 3 emphasized it as a tool for employee "growth." Two of the directors identified a subtlety around this subject, noting that different people within the organization require different things, and to that end, professional development is not the right thing for every employee. Respondent 3 noted that some employees might develop and grow more rapidly through a mentorship relationship with his/her supervisor (Respondent 3). Respondent 2 remarked that even though they value professional development, the fast-paced nature of their work makes it hard to always take time to reflect and take time out for professional development activities.

In many ways, the professional development category relates well to the organizational learning category, yet there are indications that the respondents consider it somewhat differently. In this context, the majority of the respondents referenced professional development as something very personal to staff growth, not necessarily integral to improving museum operations.

Embracing experimentation and risk-taking: Similar to the category of staff alignment around core purpose, this category stands out as one in which all four directors ranked as a five in priority. In fact, some version of experimentation has been incorporated into the core values of each museum interviewed as a part of this study. After including "informed risk-taking" into the museum's strategic plan, Respondent 1 is actively working on acting and espousing that as an attribute of the museum. The respondent noted that the challenge is in "getting staff to believe it." One way to overcome that barrier, the director said, is to ensure that there is no punishment for well-informed risk, even if it does not yield the intended results. Respondent 4 discussed the development of a strategy to collaborate with three other museums across the country to hire a professional consultant to help the four museums incorporate this element into their practice. As a result, they abide by the doctrine, "fail often, quickly, and off-Broadway," and the regular staff meetings now include time in which staff present both successes and failures. Additionally, a question geared toward risk-taking and lessons-learned is now incorporated into the performance evaluation process. It was in this category that many of the directors felt they could accomplish external impact. When talking about the value of that, Respondent 4 shared her experience that "unveiling perfection is the museum way" and that experimental work is helping the respondent's organization upend that notion.

As a result, some of their installation projects are accomplished in a more iterative way, even in public spaces; in the director's opinion, this shows the world "that we value input and are a learning organization."

The unified emphasis on experimentation and risk-taking is both a surprising and exciting finding of this study. Unlike with staff alignment around core purpose, this is not something that has been previously expressed in the literature as a priority for art museums, and both staff and leaders in the conference presentations and interviews recognized the newness of this concept as practice in art museums. This, therefore, represents one of the most important trends for which others working in the field should take note. As Respondent 4 noted in the interview, art museums have long been most comfortable presenting polished, finished projects for public consumption. Instead, now there is a culture of practice developing around the notion of "just do it" with clear room for practitioners to learn from the process as it evolves. This represents a fundamental shift in practice, and a significant break from tradition. Respondent 1's insights underscore this most especially when noting that the hardest part of prioritizing experimentation is getting the staff to believe it.

It is interesting to reflect on the reasons for which this has become such a high priority for some museums. Of the nine internal strategies on the list, this strategy has high potential for external impact. In a contemporary environment in which museums are defending value and striving for relevance, experimenting with tradition by changing internal processes and opening them up to community input are markers of change for external audiences. An emphasis on experimentation and risk-taking can represent concrete changes in museum practice to which funders, supporters, and new audiences

can point to and understand the evolution at play. For these reasons alone, there is much to be gained by art museums choosing to embrace experimentation as part of their organizational strategy, not to mention the innovation, creativity, and surprises that emerge.

It also allows for art museums to push their own boundaries of tradition and ways of doing things. As the examples from the literature review clearly indicate, organizational cultures that are structured to encourage experimentation, learning, and innovation are of top concern for the leadership in other sectors because of the benefits they bring to the company and product. In general, professionals drawn to work in art museums are curious, life-long learners by nature, and offering opportunity for those staff members to fulfill such inclinations through experimental projects and programs provides a rich organizational atmosphere in which staff will want to stay and succeed.

Horizontal working structures: This particular category yielded a range in responses from the directors, and demonstrated a variety of interpretations of what this practice might mean in art museums. A couple of the directors defined this immediately as structure expressed in an organizational chart. In that manner, at least two of the directors (Respondents 1 and 2) mentioned that they were trying to move away from that kind of practice, minimizing the number of direct reports for the chief executive. A majority of the interviewees also discussed this topic in terms of how departments relate to each other within the organization. Respondent 1 noted that within the museum, they attempt to be team-based in decision-making, but simultaneously are "constantly at war with departmental norms." In response, they have appropriated a system of task forces that can move projects along briskly, rather than "sedately" as they might if left under the

management of specific departments. Consequently, the respondent's strategy is to divide up responsibilities in ways that do not reinforce departmental hierarchies because those hierarchies become "inviolate." Respondent 4 noted a similar tension around departmental hierarchies, and admitted to the challenge of making projects team-based rather than focused on these hierarchies. Within this respondent's museum they are working on it, but do not consider it a top priority. Respondent 2 discussed their current internal strategy as actually moving away from a horizontal working structure. Although the organizational culture of that particular art museum embraces openness and collaboration, the respondent noted that too much openness can sometimes have the opposite effect and can instead, become stressful for some staff members; in that respect, this particular director is attempting to strike a more considered balance between the two. Respondent 3 reported that due to the culture of the organization, they have significant collaboration between departments, and can rely on it to happen organically, rather than having to implement new or specific systems.

The literature review demonstrates the value of horizontal working structures to enable more collaborative and innovative work. Whereas the four respondents also value this outcome, many of them were candid in their reporting that organizing an art museum horizontally may not always be the right structure to enable that outcome. For art museums who still suffer from hierarchical models that prevent collaborative work, consideration of a more horizontally oriented working structure could be of help. However, based on the results of the interviews, it is clear that there might be such as thing as too horizontal a structure for art museums. The value of this philosophy lies in questioning old habits designed from tradition rather than core purpose; flattening

organizational structures is one way to address it, but as the literature review and the responding directors suggest, there are other ways, including working groups and task forces, which might be just as effective.

Strategies that are human-centered: Similar to some of the other categories, there was a range in response to this particular strategy, especially in the interpretation of its definition. Respondent 1 reported on the work of the staff appreciation committee, which focuses on events and activities to assist staff socializing and connecting. This particular committee is also tasked with the job of reporting up to senior management suggestions on changes they feel need to be made to better support staff. Respondent 2 noted the challenge in balancing systems and the needs of people, particularly in the areas of "productive play" and flexibility around work/life balance. Respondent 3, who reported on this as a five in terms of priority answered, "everything we do is based on that." The respondent considers this a question of employees' ability to thrive within the environment.

Of course, creating the internal environment in which experimentation can truly shine is integrally related to organizational culture because it is an issue of both relationships and learning. The results of this study indicate that there is perhaps a more robust understanding of the nature of personal relationships informing professional work at the staff level than executive level. However, it is clear that these leaders do not underestimate the value of it. Although not all of the directors identified their efforts as being particularly human-centered, when considered in relationship to the literature, it could be argued that they are implementing these practices even without an explicit expression of it.

Cultivating a learning organization: This category ranked as fairly important to top priority in the responses of the interviewees, most of them noting that, in some way, it represents a part of their value system as an organization. Respondent 2 mentioned that this is actually one of their top three priorities for the next three years, tied to designated funding. Consequently, they are putting lots of resources into it as an organization. Respondent 1 understood this as embedded in their practices around personal enrichment and growth for staff. In another example shared by Respondent 4, dedicated funding, beyond professional development, has been established for staff (on an application basis) to travel and research around innovative concepts that relate to their role within the organization, but are not specific to their job function.

The cultivation of a learning organization relates to a number of these practices, from professional development to human-centered practices, and especially to organizational culture. The results of the interviews make it particularly apparent that these directors are thinking of ways to invest in their staff, and that they are considering this investment in terms of what it might contribute back to the organization. In this way, similar to the human-centered practices, the model of a learning organization is critically tied to organizational culture (explored in the next section); at times, it is difficult to separate the two. As Senge noted, a learning organization is an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. In a moment when art museums are choosing between resilience and tradition, cultivating a culture of learning is of critical importance when driving for the path of resilience.

Clarity of organizational culture: This category, by far, engendered the most conversation from the interviewees, and in some respects, is the culmination of all of the

categories. Each director emphasized its importance and shared stories about their work in this area. Respondent 1 noted the challenge of remaining attuned to the organizational culture because in some ways the director "sits in a bubble." Although the director would like to imagine that everyone on staff understands and embraces the direction of the museum, the director understood that may not be the case for all employees. This director is therefore looking to a branding exercise to help clarify that relationship, noting that without staff buy-in, the organization runs the risk of becoming "hollow." Respondent 3, who considered clarity of organizational culture as a top priority, echoed similar sentiments noting that the staff "feels a sense of identity and pride around the culture. [It] is part of the reward for staff working at the institution because they understand that they are doing something that is special in the world." However, in placing organizational culture at the core of the institution, this director noted the shift in management practices that comes along with that philosophy. As an example, the director noted that there might be more transition in the organization than in other organizations that do not emphasize culture to such a degree. Respondent 3 emphasized that in order to maintain the vibrant culture, the institution needs employees that "get it," and neither staff nor management can abide complacency in this area; if someone cannot participate in the culture, then it is perhaps grounds for termination or departure. In another example, Respondent 4 shared that if the respondent had to rate the current culture within the organization, the respondent would not rate it highly. However, following a retreat of the leadership staff, they came to a new realization about the need to emphasize it as a top priority. As such, they are about to invest significant time and resources into changing and improving the culture. The work will start with an accessible company document on the subject

intended to guide the work of current and new employees.

The results of this study in this particular category represent, perhaps, the beginning of a shift in thinking and practice within art museums, which have previously prioritized missions and collections above all else. The data from the literature review and the interviews, however, reveals that contemporary thinkers and practitioners alike are finding new-found success in the recognition that perhaps mission is no longer enough to attract and keep talented staff; an art museum needs to be culturally exceptional as well. As Hessenius suggests, the culture of the workplace sets the tone for everything that an organization does. The data collected via the interviews with current museum directors indicates how critically aware of this they are as well. In addition to each respondent ranking it of top priority, most of them are putting new organizational resources behind their efforts to improve organizational culture. Many discussed implementing new elements into the performance review process including asking staff how they contributed to the culture throughout the year. Other respondents are taking these methods even further by writing some of these characteristics into job descriptions, and changing the format of the performance reviews to happen more regularly and to be more team-based. All of these shifts mark significant investments in culture within art museums indicating to staff that the way they approach their work, their colleagues, and their institution is of vital importance to leadership. The clarity of organizational culture is one area in which the theory and the innovative practice currently align, and other museums should look to these innovative leaders for cues on making this a priority.

Question six asked directors to share both the motivations and challenges of their work around organizational culture and structure, as a way of helping to clarify the

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groundwork for others interested in these issues. Respondent 3 described the motivation in making successful internal adjustments as similar to adding "oxygen to hot coals." This director considers work that helps staff to thrive, to be happier, and to connect socially, to be rewarding work, and critical to maintaining the culture. The related challenges to this kind of work include the need to be continually responding to and adjusting as the staff and/or the culture evolves. The same director also noted that prioritizing culture to such a degree often intensifies interpersonal issues within staff meaning that management has more of a responsibility to manage to the social issues in addition to the professional ones. Respondent 4 is motivated by the "new frontiers" and "open possibilities" of this kind of work. Understanding that museums can no longer operate under business as usual because the world has changed, this director mentioned the institutional confidence that they could be the ones to figure out a new model given their security of funding and "off-Broadway profile." These qualities afford them the opportunity to experiment in ways that a museum like the Metropolitan Museum of Art cannot. This director listed the challenges as the "fear of getting it wrong." Respondent 2 was candid about the evolution the respondent has undergone from being a "risk-taker" to a "space-maker" for others within the institution to take on risks. Knowing that staff is empowered and has the resources to act, thereby developing a vibrant, experimental culture than can exist beyond the leader, was incredibly motivating for this director. Respondent 1 saw this not really as a question of motivation verses challenges, but rather as understanding the pre-dispositions that people can have and working with those to one's best ability. For instance, this respondent mentioned that there are two kinds of people in the world, those that see opportunity and those that are more systems-based and

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aware of what can go wrong; in this director's opinion, strategy cannot necessarily change those pre-dispositions. This respondent's preference, therefore, is to be surrounded by those that see opportunity, but to ensure that just enough systems-based people were involved in the decision-making process.

The exciting part about the results to this particular question rests within the possibilities of innovative operational design. The interviewees were selected for their attunement to the potential of these processes, but what their answers yield is genuine enthusiasm for this kind of work. Clearly, the definitions and categories are still in a process of refinement, and the right strategies to improve the work of art museums are not yet fully evolved, but the respondents had experimented and experienced enough to feel genuinely enthusiastic that the results are worth the effort. Coming to the conclusion that staff relations and growth can almost be considered the lifeblood of an organization's culture, and by definition then, of the organization, is a weighty conclusion for art museums. Of course, there is more to a museum's mission than the staff, but it is certainly innovative to consider them at the same order of magnitude of the collection and mission. Doing so makes for a more complicated matrix of management, but clearly, the alignment of all of these is a powerful tool for museums to pursue their work in the 21st century.

The seventh question asked respondents about their training or experience to see if there were particular commonalities that informed their perspectives. Respondents 1 and 2 both reinforced the value of leadership training programs for insights in how to motivate people and find motivation in new kinds of work. The Getty Leadership program (formerly the Museum Management Institute), Center for Curatorial Leadership,

and National Arts Strategies' Chief Executive Program, were mentioned by respondents, in particular. Respondent 3 referenced psychotherapy as being instrumental in this kind of work because it has helped to clarify the respondent's own internal thoughts and idiosyncrasies, making it easier for the respondent to help staff.

Although each of the leaders referenced some form of training in their responses, there is the clear sense that each of them is operating on instinct at some level. Their measure of confidence to trust this instinct clearly grows with the professional training, and with their experiences. This is important because even without a clear road map for execution, these directors are trusting their instincts and are "just doing it" where it comes to questioning tradition and implementing new practices when they identify needs and holes within the system. This appears to be an instinct shared by museums professionals as well, which indicates the potential to develop a genuine culture of practice, inclusive of both leaders and staff. These referenced training programs could be a part of the process, as could associations such as the American Alliance of Museums.

The final question asked respondents to identify other leaders developing and testing similar internal strategies to begin to develop a cohort of thought-leaders in this particular area of the field.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In 2014, fourteen years into the 21st century, and thirty years after the 1984

commissioned report on the future of museums was written, it is useful to return to

Bloom and Powell's words as a point of reflection:

> Museums represent certainty in uncertain times. As contemporary life grows more
> impersonal, people need to be reminded that there is a continuity to human
> existence and the natural and physical world, and they need a way to connect their
> own experience to what is known about the past and the present. It could be said
> that our times are creating a museum movement" (Bloom and Powell, 1984, 17-18).

The research from this study supports the idea there is a museum movement afoot, but it

is not the same movement forecasted by Bloom and Powell in 1984. What is clear now is

that "certainty" is by no means a given for museums in the 21st century; rather, as

Elizabeth Merritt suggests, certainty is a choice for museums, one based on their capacity

to adjust, respond, and change in this new environment. In the last two decades, some

museums have sought out externally focused solutions based in audience engagement,

education, and blockbuster exhibitions to reach new and large numbers of people. Those

strategies have worked by some measure, but carry with them additional sustainability

challenges. What this particular study helps to clarify is that a newfound opportunity for

organizational resilience can be cultivated by looking internally. For leaders and staff of

art museums who are weighing the cost and value of museum operations, a

(re)consideration of staff alignment and investment strategies may actually represent a

profound chance to re-engineer the way art museums work and the results they obtain.

The perspectives, attitudes, and culture of staff working within art museums, in addition

to the way in which they are organized for work, has been an often over-looked aspect of

museum management, set aside in a supporting role for content-driven resource allocation and decision-making. For the longest time, museums have been organized around producing a finished, scholarly product; as that changes, a shift in philosophy around how staff is organized, trained, and supported to work is almost inevitable. Change is scary for organizations, but change is also the new constant, and art museums, in particular, can improve their success rates in responding to and anticipating change – their organizational resilience -- by rethinking their internal operational strategies.

Thus, this becomes a study around how art museums seeking such change can successfully implement new priorities and strategies. The answer lies in the management of the people and the structures that support them. As the data suggests, by virtue of intentionally unlocking creativity and resilience within staff, organizational leaders do the same, in return, for the organization.

The data collected from the director interviews serves as a helpful map through which art museum leaders can navigate new systems for the 21st century. Selected for their innovation in this area, these directors have already started making connections between internal and external strategies, and these strategies have genuine potential for improving the way the field works. It is certainly noteworthy and encouraging that of the nine categories culled from the existing literature of theory and practice, all four directors rated each of them as a priority or higher (score of three or higher), with only two exceptions. This indicates that for those directors, these themes are in general alignment with their current thinking, and have resonance in some capacity within museum management. What all of these nine characteristics have in common, is that they represent relational strategies in some form or another. From this alone, one can begin to

draw conclusions about the value of nurturing staff as individuals within museum structures of the future. To consider that a museum will now install work-in-progress spaces for visitor response and input, and prioritize innovation training for staff from all departments, including Visitor Services, Education, Human Resources, and Janitorial Services, is to understand a significant evolution in the way some museums are conducting business and reframing the cost of doing business well. Although, the museums working in this way are still the exception rather than the rule, what they are accomplishing is nothing short of a significant paradigm shift for the field.

Equally interesting is that the data also reveals what is possibly a latent challenge around the taxonomy of these approaches. Although the literature is fairly clear in describing the differences between these various practices, the interview data indicates that it is much harder to delineate between these themes when put into practice within art museums. The directors interviewed for this study had examples and projects that underscored almost all of the themes discussed, but they were not always operating with common understandings of definition and context. This suggests that a field-wide understanding of these practices is still emerging and requires proactive efforts to further clarify and define them within the context of museum management. This is especially rich territory where it comes to the categories in which there were varying responses from the directors, such as human-centered strategies, horizontal working structures, and building leadership at multiple levels within the organization. As urgency and interest in this work grows, having a more developed common language around these practices will

help museums identify collaborators and finesse practices based on their unique

positions.

Unpacking the institutional motivation to implement these strategies provides another important context for the data. For so long, staff development and organizational learning have been considered niceties, and to date, the thing that has thrown them into more prominent play has been some sort of external crisis. The data from the presentations and director interviews suggests that certainly for art museums facing major transitions or crises, the motivation for change is enormous, and the level of internal change can be enormous in response. The structural changes within the Oakland Museum of California and the Royal Ontario Museum serve as examples of that. There are also contemporary examples of less successful versions of this: the recent announcement by the Corcoran Gallery of Art to split the College of Art + Design and the museum's collection between The George Washington University and the National Gallery of Art respectively is one case in point. If art museums do not attune their internal practices to the external environment, survival is not a guaranteed option. The lesson for art museums is to begin the process no matter what, because once the crisis hits, the stakes are higher, the options are smaller, and the staff is under prepared. Finding proactive measures to integrate and align structures to maximize flexibility is a valuable exercise for all museums, even if the changes are small or incremental.

Although the general field of art museums has yet to catch up with many of the ideas expressed in this study, innovative museum directors and staff members are making serious changes to their internal operational strategies related to staff and structure, and seem to be connecting more broadly with some practices beyond the museum field. One perceived opportunity rests in the evolution of art museum purpose, which demands new

working styles and formats from staff. No longer are quiet, contemplative scholars the ideal candidate for employment; instead, directors are recognizing the dynamic work that museums can conduct and are looking to staff to embody curiosity, creativity, and experimentation, and to become agents for change, initiative, and productive play. In this manner, the staff itself becomes the previously untapped opportunity for museum leaders. The staff breathes the life and relevance into objects, connecting directly with community needs, interests, and desires. These directors are demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of this by implementing new performance review processes, providing opportunities for professional and personal growth, allocating resources including time, space, and money to forward work, and by cultivating environments that prize learning at individual and collective levels.

Blogger Gwen Moran has this to say about resilient people in her 2014 post, "6 Habits of Resilient People": they build relationships; they reframe past hurts; they accept failure; they have multiple identities; they practice forgiveness; they have a sense of purpose. The work being accomplished by these innovative directors is cultivating just these qualities in their staff. In strengthening resilience in staff, they fundamentally improve the way in which their institution can not only respond to the changing environment, but also anticipate the landscape, intentionally and proactively adjusting their efforts based on more nuanced information.

Some of the scholarship indicates that social trust is a key factor in building a resilient community (Ozawa 2012). Borrowing from the fields of negotiation, consensus building and dispute resolution, communicative planning theory frames a path for operationalizing social trust. In her essay, "Planning Resilient Communities," Ozawa,

based on the work of Kasperson, Golding, and Tuler (1992) describes four factors that contribute to the existence and/or growth of social trust as competence, commitment (to a common mission or goal), caring (for the trusting individuals), and predictability (Ozawa in Goldstein, 2012, 23). Understanding this framework makes it easier to understand how trust can be built (or eroded) within a community, especially one that might be facing an uncertain future. Ozawa confirms, "communities are made up of people. People are highly resilient. But a resilient community requires trusting relationships among its members" (2012, 36). The art museums that prioritize proactive community building within their staff and organizational culture, develop a stronger core of practice, making them more prepared to handle change with productivity, creativity, and trust.

In conclusion, this is ultimately a study about people, and how people can strengthen art museums for the future. Forming and acknowledging a basic understanding of the value that staff can contribute to the organization through their competence, commitment, caring, and creativity – their resilience -- represents a potential paradigm shift in the art of museum management. This is especially critical for American art museums, which, of all museums, are perhaps most beholden to long-held traditions centered on the notion of excellence, and based in the study, preservation, and display of collections. External challenges and/or crises have forced some art museums to shift priorities, and some of these museums have used those challenges as catalysts for re-thinking internal operational strategies. Their willingness to experiment and change offers a lesson to the field. It means, however, that the real power of this lesson, then, lives in the urgency with which other art museums, those perhaps not yet facing similar external pressures, begin experimenting with and adopting these practices. By

intentionally prioritizing decisions and investments around staff and structure now, art museums will develop a staff of professionals ready to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to be found in the 21st century.

Ultimately, people make a difference in an organization. Art museum leadership that invests in its people, their talent, their learning, their creativity, and their relationships and interactions will the see the fruits of that investment bear out in staff that is more driven, committed, positive, and capable to drive the institutional agenda forward. It is essential that art museums begin to develop their philosophies around internal operational strategies that build from this very basic point of connection and connectivity. By leading from this point of strength, and acknowledging the ability of productively aligned and structured staff to build a stronger, more purposeful art museum, leaders can identify and strengthen key next practices for organizational development in art museums. The implementation of these practices will help art museums evolve from reactive, traditional organizations into strong, informed organizations, operating from a position of intention, possibility, and proactivity. In the 21st century, art museum leaders must understand the opportunity that exists in prioritizing innovative operational strategies around staff structure and alignment to strengthen art museums, and to raise them to new and resilient heights.

Suggestions for Future Research

As a part of this interview process, the interviewees were asked to identify other museum leaders working and thinking in similar ways related to international operational strategies. Further research could continue to expand the network of directors, leaders, and staff working in this way, contributing their own perspectives to the process. New lenses could also be added to this study, including the role of gender in museum leadership, for example, as an influencer in these practices. Additionally, further research on art museum leaders who choose more traditional strategies around internal operations could be helpful in identifying specific barriers and habits related to this kind of practice.

Additionally, further research around the budget commitment of these organizations to professional and staff development could be helpful in framing the level of organizational commitment to this kind of practice.

Although this study relates specifically to art museums, and the internal operations related to them, future research could expand this work to other types of museums, as well as zoos and aquaria. A study into how some of these theories could be successfully applied in other cultural nonprofits could elevate the general thinking in this area of research, as well as contribute to making the case for urgency.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF REFERENCED AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS CONFERENCE
SESSIONS

YEAR 2011
- Redefining Museums
- Charting the Future of Art Museums: A Conversation
- Building Staff for the Museum of Tomorrow
- Future of Museums is the Future
- Leading Change
- Culture Shock: Empowering Staff to Take Creative Risks
- Engaged and Connected: Creating Communities of Museum Learning
  Professionals

Year 2012
- Organizational Change: Re-Imagining Museums for the 21st Century
- Experimental Projects: Creating a Community of Practice
- Museums without Silos: New Perspectives on Organizational Structures
- Redefining the Role of Curators in the Visitor-Centered Museum

YEAR 2013
- Organizational Change: Creating a Culture of Authentic Storytelling
- Two Departments, One Goal: Making Development and Program Staff
  Relationships Work
- Who's on First? Critical Collaborations During Simple or Complex Projects
- Inspiring Wonder
- This is so Fun! Creating Staff Community by Fostering Creativity
- Continuing the Conversation: Experimental Projects in Museums
- Horizontal Thinking in a Vertical World

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