

## **Americans for the Arts Convention: Shift Happens Handout: Ten Actions Typical of Highly Innovative Leaders**

*Based on organizational self-assessments across the country using EmcArts' Rubric of Adaptive Capacity.*

- 1 As the leader, say that innovation matters, and explain why**  
*Make innovation central to your vision. Say it over and over. Praise it when you see it – and push people when you don't.*
- 2 Support your innovators**  
*Support means resources, but also attention – have innovation teams “report to the top,” including access to the Board.*
- 3 Measure differently, measure to learn**  
*You need to measure the success of innovations, but don't use “business-as-usual” measures. Tailor them to the innovation, and use your metrics to learn and improve, not to evaluate effectiveness prematurely.*
- 4 Describe the implementation process very carefully**  
*You are all really competent at your “business-as-usual” work – you do it almost without thinking. But innovation is different, and you need to pay more attention to what you're doing, especially at the beginning; so capture and document the processes, so you can use them again.*
- 5 Get help to boost your capacity**  
*The best innovators realize that their people can't do the new thing without some outside expertise.*
- 6 Look around for emerging trends and ideas**  
*Effective innovators are always scanning the environment for good ideas they can use, and staying current with external influences on their work.*
- 7 Give consideration to everybody's ideas**  
*Good innovators welcome input from many sources, and actively seek out points of view that they know will be different from their own. They are comfortable being uncomfortable.*
- 8 Communicate the benefit**  
*When you talk about your innovation (and you'll need to), tell people why it will help them, not that it's a really great new thing. Relate it to THEIR interests, not yours.*
- 9 Actively resolve conflicts**  
*Innovations upset the apple cart. Move quickly and clearly to deal with conflicts that threaten to stall the effort.*
- 10 Get the Board on board**  
*Develop in the Board the expectation that you'll be innovative, and have the Board communicate those expectations to your staff.*