What makes an Arts and Cultural District successful?
What makes an Arts and Cultural District successful?

A little context...

- Only 12 states have statewide arts and cultural district legislation...

- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Mexico
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- West Virginia
New Mexico Creative Districts

- “Relating to economic development…”
- “A developed district of public and private uses for the purposes of strengthening the cultural economy…”
- Overseen by arts and cultural district councils... Main Street, Arts Division, Historic Preservation Division, Tourism, other organizations supporting the creative economy

Creative Placemaking

“In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around arts and cultural activities.”

Markusen, Ann & Gadwa, Anne, Creative Placemaking, 2010

Creative Placemaking

- Successful creative placemaking efforts...
  - Have visionary and committed leadership
  - Are tailored to distinctive features of a place
  - Mobilize public will
  - Attract private sector buy-in
  - Have the support of local arts and cultural leaders
  - Build partnerships across sectors, missions, and levels of government
  - Demonstrate grassroots support

Opportunities for Impact

- Revitalization/regeneration
- Economic development
- Community building
- Physical environment enhancements
- Activation

Dubuque Historic Millwork District

CamdenTown Collective
Collinwood
Cleveland, OH

Cleveland Artists in Residence - Five main components:
1. An artist housing loan pool in partnership with Noteworthy Federal Credit Union;
2. A community grants program to explore how artists can engage with non-artist residents;
3. Incentive funding for homeownership service providers and other consultants through national contacts;
4. A comprehensive marketing effort;
5. Support supplies and services, such as travel and mailing expenses and a full-time two-year project manager; and

Vizcaino County Park & Drive-in
Marfa, TX

Arts and Culture District Challenges
• Forging partnerships
• Countering community skepticism
• Assembling adequate funding
• Clearing regulatory hurdles
• Ensuring sustainability
• Avoiding artist displacement and gentrification
• Developing metrics of performance
• Access to markets, people and industry information
• Lack of visibility, validation, promotional opportunities
• Lack of start-up assistance and mentoring

Your Challenges
• Financial support and sustainable funding
• Need to build better partnerships and collaborations
• Local political challenges
• State-wide political challenges (e.g. coordination of state agencies)
• Overall management and governance (e.g. board development)
• Better coordinating marketing and promotions
• And this is just the beginning…
**POSITION**

*Identify your niche and what makes you unique*

What are the economic, social, historical, and cultural elements that make you different from the competition?

- Identifying important data to help you understand yourself
- Surveying stakeholders, community
- Mapping assets
- Revealing your historical, cultural heritage
- Interpretation
- Identifying your unique district niche
- Positioning the district competitively

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**BRAND**

*Take ownership of your image*

Build your brand on your niche, create something that is authentic, and use it as the foundation for all you do.

- Let your brand tell your story
- Make it about more than just a logo
- Be consistent in your messaging
- Sell an experience you can deliver
- Bring everything back to the brand
Tell your story

Discover who your audience is, and create messaging that speaks uniquely to them.

- Who is your primary audience? Who are your supporting audiences?
- What do you know about them?
- What is your messaging? What will resonate with them?
- What tools can you utilize to reach them?
PLAN

Set your strategic direction

What’s your destination, and what path must you take to get there?

- Establish a district vision
- Clarify plan goals
- Establish the organization’s role
- Set out strategies - economic, physical and programmatic
- Identify implementation approach

PLAN

CHAMPION

Find passionate people to lead and advocate

Support must extend beyond those that are always ‘at the table’

CHAMPION

- Who are your champions now, and what motivates them?
- Build and deepen your team
- Identify other important partnerships and collaborations
- Create strong governance and leadership
Build capacity to get things done

Create effective organizational structure to achieve your goals.

Some key issues...

- Independent organization vs. part of another organization?
- Informal association vs. legal non-profit structure (501c3, 501c6)
- Bylaws and management (board responsibilities, board size, who should be involved, elections)
- Membership – who do you involve?

Create sustainable revenue streams

Funding is easiest to come by when it’s targeted to your priorities, allowing you to focus more on ‘doing’ than fundraising.

Operational Funding Options

- Association/membership dues
- Sponsorships
- Business Improvement District
- Tax Increment Financing
- Development corporation
- Operating support from local government
Program Funding Options

- Grant funding (local/state foundations, national organizations like NEA, other organizations who may indirectly support your work)
- Targeted project campaigns
- Crowdfunding

MANAGE

Provide structure for moving forward

Effective implementation strategies are critical to achieving your goals

MANAGE

- Establish priorities
- Set benchmarks
- Create timelines
- Establish realistic budgets
- Create good governance and processes

Cultural District
EXIT 70D

MEASURE

Celebrate your success

Tracking progress is key to demonstrating value in what you are trying to do

MEASURE

- How will you benchmark success?
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