



# THE ROAD TO REINVENTION

Southwest Arts Conference  
2009





# MY BACKGROUND

- Five - time re-inventor
- Change agent
- Sometimes it works, sometimes not
- Always difficult



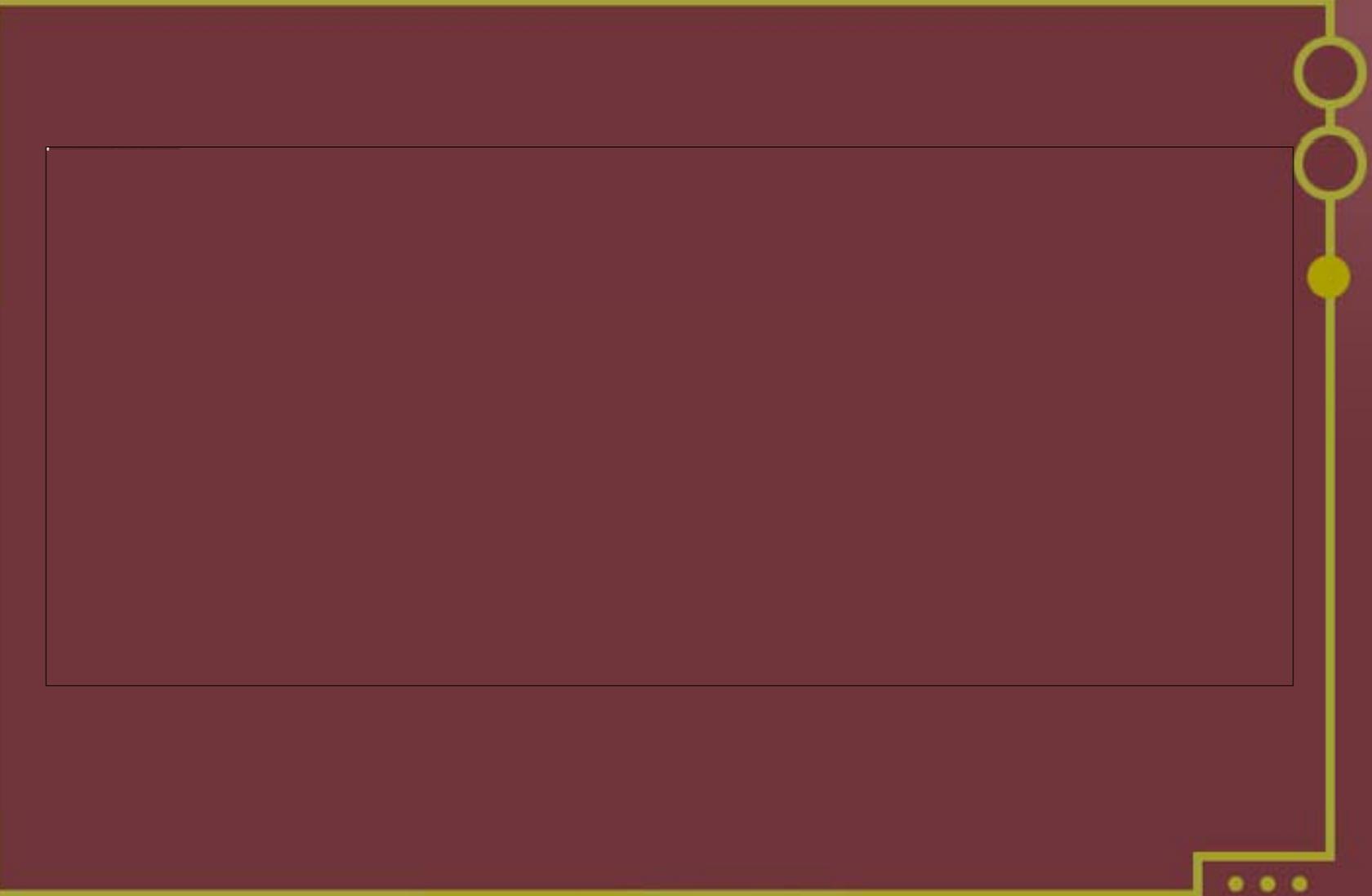


## ORGANIZATIONAL EXAMPLES

- Greenville Metropolitan Arts Council
  - Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust
  - West Valley Arts Council
  - West Valley Art Museum
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# REINVENTION - A NATURAL EVOLUTION





# THE IDEAL NON-PROFIT

## THREE LEGGED STOOL:

Strong Board

Strong CEO & Staff

Visionary Mission & Relevance





## KNOWING WHEN...

Sometimes only extraordinary forces  
cause change to happen.





# FORCES BEHIND REINVENTION

- Leadership Change
- Relevance to community changes
- Economic downturn
- Mission or other key change within organization





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### OUTGOING CEO

#### What happens?

- Board must determine direction - hiring of CEO
  - Example: Metropolitan Arts Council
  - Assessed Mission/Relevance to Community
  - Decision to Hire Arts Professional - Conduct national search
    - Former EDs were local, limited arts administration experience





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### INCOMING CEO

- Assess the situation
  - Interview staff, board, key stakeholders
  - Review programs, budgets, financials, attendance
- What works?
- What doesn't?
- Determine changes based on experience, feedback, vision, the sector





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Not acting as an arts council
- Events driven
- Building focused
- Board wanted to expand reach, membership, programming





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Focus on SW Valley ▲ Expand focus to all West Valley
  - How?
    - Cultural Planning - WV Cultural & Heritage Blueprint
    - Performing Arts Season
    - Network with all WV cities





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Not acting as typical Arts Council ▲ Incorporate programs that benefit artists & arts organizations
  - How?
    - Arts Member Program
    - Grants Program
    - Collaborations - The Big Read, Seats on City Arts Commissions, Fringe Festival, Innovation Fine Art Gallery
    - Short Term Loan Program





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Few Individual Donors ▲ Increase numbers/relevance
  - ISSUE: Four Large Events - associated with locations
  - SOLUTION: Performing Arts Season - in paper monthly, connecting to individuals directly at more intimate performances





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Building (PAC) Too Small ▲ Make It Larger
  - SOLUTION: Partner with EMCC
    - PROBLEMS - Board Focus, Took Too Long, Not Enough Money, Media Disaster
  - SOLUTION: Partner with Developer
    - PROBLEM - Restrictions on Land
  - SOLUTION: Offer Donors Money Back
    - PROBLEM - Not enough money left to build anything, Divided Board





## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

EXAMPLE: West Valley Arts Council

- Building (PAC) Too Small ▲ Make It Larger, continued
  - Old guard board resigned
  - New Board Pauses, Regroups (2 years)
    - Focus on WV Cultural & Heritage Blueprint
    - Branding
    - Strategic Plan
    - Vote not to pursue building
    - Vote to sell land



## LEADERSHIP CHANGE

### KEY CHANGES

- Expanded program number/type/style
  - From 9 to more than 200
- Shift from provider to supporter
  - Fund for the Arts
  - Grants Program
  - Management Consulting Assistance
- Collaborations/partnerships are key
- Focus on artists
- Resource for public, arts organizations, artists and schools
- Brand - Trusted Resource for Arts and Culture

## ... RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY CHANGES

### EXAMPLE: Metropolitan Arts Council

- Primary Focus - Downtown Alive
  - Weekly April thru October
  - Off season preparation
  - Paid the bills
- Organization was “not a player”
- Asked selves - “Are we needed?”

# ... RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY CHANGES

EXAMPLE: Metropolitan Arts Council

## SOLUTION:

- Outsourced Event
- Allowed time to focus on new vision
  - Arts Education
  - Cultural Tourism
  - Cultural Planning
  - Workplace Giving/Grants Program
  - More services to arts community

## ... RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY CHANGES

EXAMPLE: Metropolitan Arts Council

### WHAT CHANGED?

- Board willing to outsource event
- Board willing to hire professional
- Board composition changed drastically
- Relevance of Council improved significantly



# ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

EXAMPLE: West Valley Art Museum  
*Current Status - Temporarily Closed*

## CAUSES:

- Poor past management
- Past Board inexperienced/weak
- Debts & Cash Flow





# ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

## POSSIBLE REINVENTION SCENARIOS:

- Sell Museum - move to smaller location
- Merge with another organization
- Refinance debt & obtain line of credit
- Hope for a miracle

STAY TUNED...





# ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

## OTHER WAYS TO REINVENT

- Cut programs
- Cut staff
- Reduce focus
- Lower standards
- Find creative ways to increase revenue



## MISSION OR OTHER KEY CHANGE WITHIN ORGANIZATION

EXAMPLE: FLLW PRESERVATION TRUST

***CHANGE: Acquired The Robie House***

### ISSUES:

- Prepare for Capital Campaign (\$7 million by 2007)
- Increase Membership (had 330 donors)
- Organizational Culture
  - Introverted/Intellectual Board & CEO
  - Staff in Silos - No Collaboration/Communication
  - Fear & Unwillingness to Change
  - High Staff Turnover

## MISSION OR OTHER KEY CHANGE WITHIN ORGANIZATION

EXAMPLE: FLLW PRESERVATION TRUST

### REINVENTION:

- Change culture of organization
  - Inclusive staff meetings
  - Reward collaboration
  - Bring extroverts on to Board
  - Improve staff turnover
  - Open communication

## MISSION OR OTHER KEY CHANGE WITHIN ORGANIZATION

### EXAMPLE: FLLW PRESERVATION TRUST REINVENTION:

- Fundraising Preparation
  - Development Cycle - Whole Organization
  - Computerize Tour Sales for Prospect Collection
  - Hold series of dinners & parties to attract donors/break down walls
  - Be flexible with programming
  - Change relationships between staff

## MISSION OR OTHER KEY CHANGE WITHIN ORGANIZATION

EXAMPLE: FLLW PRESERVATION TRUST  
**WHAT CHANGED?**

***NOTHING!***

- Have \$5.5 million left of their goal
- Established a bank loan to assist with project

LESSONS LEARNED:

- ONLY THE CEO CAN LEAD CHANGE
- KNOW WHEN TO CUT YOUR LOSSES



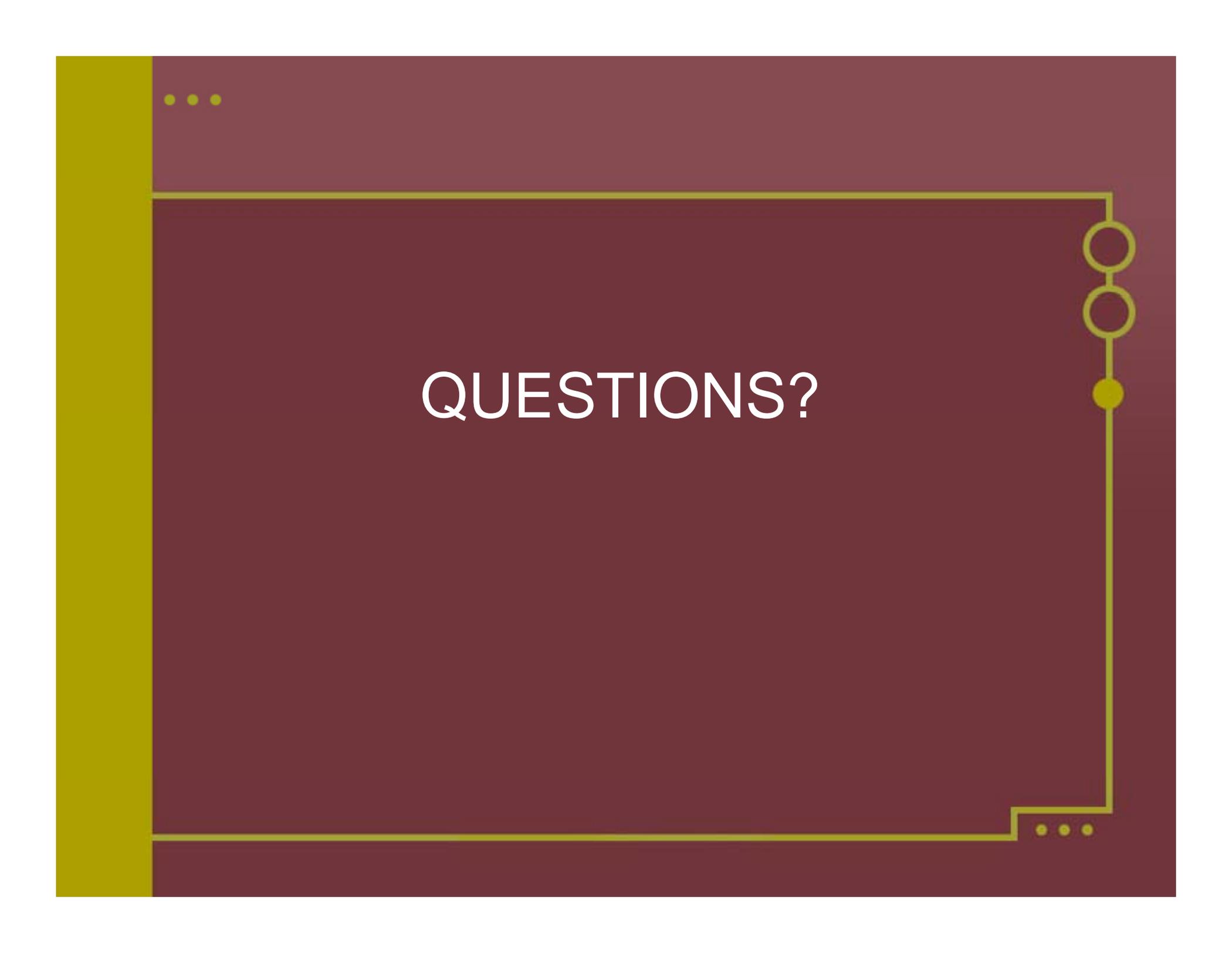
## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

- This Presentation
- Experience - no substitute
- Ask Questions - Listen to Answers
- Willingness to Change/Adapt to Situations
- Listen to Your Gut



# ... WORDS OF WISDOM

- Be willing to lead change
- Develop a thick skin - you are going to need it!
- Stick with it but know when to get out
- Find a balance outside of work
- Get on the Balcony



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

Julie Richard

623.935.6384

West Valley Arts Council

[jrichard@westvalleyarts.org](mailto:jrichard@westvalleyarts.org)

